

A strong tree gathers many branches

Jim Smith (1928-2009)

Jim Smith passed away just prior to Christmas 2009, having fought a battle with cancer over the previous 13 months. Jim's funeral was well attended by a wide range of people that reflected his interests and contribution to life. That such a large number attended his funeral between Christmas and New Year, with many travelling some distance from their holidays, showed the respect with which Jim was held.

Jim was born in Invercargill and brought up on the family farm at Waimahaka, near Fortrose. He attended Southland Boys High School, where he boarded during the school week, travelling home at weekends by train. After leaving school Jim joined the New Zealand Forest Service, timber cruising in the Catlins forests. This was an area he would come to know well through his work and his interest in the outdoors. Jim married Daphne in 1951, and they remained in Invercargill until the mid 1950's, when he took up a position as a timber inspector based in Dunedin. Jim spent the remainder of his career based in Dunedin, servicing sawmills, timber processors and exporters throughout the region. A highlight for Jim was two trips to Guyana in 1970s, where he gave advice to the timber processing industry on timber preservation. Jim retired when the NZFS was disbanded in 1987. However, he remained active in forestry through the Otago/Southland Section of the NZIF. Jim made a significant contribution to the running and activities of the local section, often with the help of his wife Daphne, and for this service was made an Honorary Life Member of

the Otago/Southland section in 2008.

Jim was a tireless worker, with real enthusiasm for forestry and the work of the Institute. His organising of the annual tramp is legend, as is his organising and catering of the many meetings held at the Zingari-Richmond club rooms. Jim was always keen to see the local section actively promote forestry in the region, and participated fully in local section and committee meetings. His infectious enthusiasm was greatly appreciated, and will be sorely missed. Jim and his family also tended a grove of kauri established in the Akatore Creek area of Otago Coast Forest by AH Reed. The grove still exists, and the local section is investigating whether it is feasible to take some role in helping maintain it.

Jim had a wide range of interests outside forestry. He was a Life member of the Zingari-Richmond Rugby Football Club, a founding member of the Hawksbury Community Living Trust established to take over the care of many Cherry Farm patients after it closed in 1992, a member of Probus, and a keen gardener. He was also a proud and devoted family man. Jim's was a life lived well and to the full. A tree will be planted to commemorate Jim, along with a plaque, at Jolendale Park in Alexandra on Sunday 16 May.

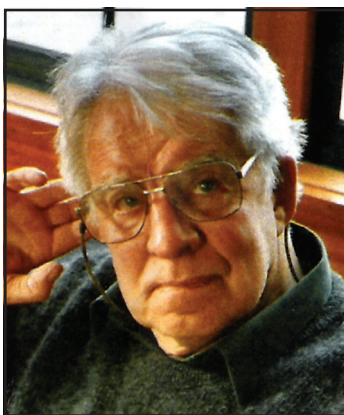
Angus McPherson

A forester exemplar

William John (Bill) Gimblett 1928-2010)

If you wanted to put forward an exemplar of what it is to be a forester - set apart from the pressures to make us into radiata pine agronomists - then you couldn't go far past Bill Gimblett. He was a man who easily straddled all the meanings associated with forests: from community to commerce; from sense experience to - yes - spirituality. Bill loved many things; land, landscape, ecology, history, the social links to places that gave them meaning, ideas, but he most especially loved people and community.

He built and maintained his own community through his good-natured conversations. He could always be guaranteed to provide some interesting snippets, some thought provoking words, always with a smile and a gentle laugh. He remained a gentleman and a thoroughly decent one, supported so well by Margaret and his family as his body began to slow in later years. His mind more than made up for his dicky ticker. He was liked and loved by many, and as a personality, is already greatly missed.



Bill was born in 1928 in Dannevirke, the eldest of a family of eight children (the scion of EJ (Ted) Gimblett who made his career in the NZ Forest Service). He was educated at Southland BHS and Lawrence District High School. He commenced work as a labourer with the NZ Forest Service in 1946, joining the permanent staff as a technical trainee in 1947. He was promoted to Forest Ranger in 1950, and spent the next 15 years in indigenous forest management at Waipoua, Ahaura and Whirinaki Forests, the National Forest Survey, as Logging Officer at Minginui Forest, time at Waipa Sawmill, at Tauranga and Wellington ports as a timber inspector; and in Head Office on the Kaingaroa working plan.

Bill resigned from the Forest Service in 1961 to take up an appointment as Forest Manager (and later, as its Managing Director) with Hawkes Bay Forests Ltd. Whilst there he was involved in the restoration of Lake Tutira as a trustee of the Guthrie Smith Trust Board, and was Chairman of the Tutira

Domain Board. He was also a past director of the Napier YMCA. He had a lifelong interest in the Maori people, and worked closely with them in Northland, Bay of Plenty/Urewera and Hawkes Bay. While managing HBF Bill also ran a private family farming operation on leased land.

Following a company takeover in 1978, Bill moved to Napier where he developed a forestry contracting and consulting business. This led, in 1982, to his position as a National Field Advisor with the NZ Farm Forestry Association, when he travelled throughout the country advising farm foresters on managing and marketing their forests. In 1986 Bill moved to Southland as managing director of his consultancy dealing with indigenous and exotic forest management and marketing, an activity he maintained up to the time of his death.

Bill's interests included tramping, fishing and bird watching; in his younger years he was a keen fisherman and a strong and immensely fit hunter. He was a widely read man in both quality and variety. His well researched articles on forestry appeared in both The Southland Times and the Otago Daily Times. He was a member of Winton's Probus choir. He was a Full Member of the NZ Institute of Forestry and the NZ Farm Forestry Association, and served on local committees of both organisations.

Bill is survived by his wife of 53 years, Margaret, and his four children - Elizabeth, Jane, Susan, Peter and their families and 9 grandchildren; and his brother and 6 sisters.

Roger Washbourn
(with assistance from Chris Perley).

The original good keen man

Kenneth Henley Miers

18 March 1925 to 17 January 2010

At his funeral Ken was described in several tributes as being a big outdoors man with a commanding presence and with a big indoors office brain. With the benefits of reflection and hindsight one could almost conclude that the wide range of experiences he had, and the skills gained, along with the contacts made, in the first half of his life were destined to fit him for the outstanding leadership he contributed to changing and implementing a major area of government policy by 180 degrees in his later career.

Kenneth Henley Miers was born at Manaia, in Taranaki to sharemilking parents, the eldest of a family of four boys and a girl. During the Depression he had to leave school at 12 (1937) and work the farm. He left home to start work in 1943 at 18 as a deer culler, starting at Ngamatea, a major sheep station running into the Kaimanawa Ranges in the central North Island but soon moved to work in Southland and Otago based at Hunter Valley. With a group of four including Snow Corboy, the hunting party killed 5000 goats in two weeks in the Shotover, which gives some idea of the level of infestation. He was managed and supervised by the legendary Skipper Yerex who was to become the inaugural Controller of Wildlife. Ken was appointed a sub-area supervisor at Monowai in the 1946/47 season and appointed to staff on 1/7/1947. Despite his fitness he was rejected for military service because of flat feet. He met his wife Elizabeth at a country dance at Arrowtown and married in 1949 or 50.

Ken's leadership potential was early recognised as a member of the Dr Geoffrey Orbell expeditions which found the takahe in the Murchison Mountains in November 1948. Orbell was also the founder of the NZ Deerstalkers Association so their relationship was no doubt useful over the years. Ken also participated in the 1948 wapiti

Fiordland expedition as 2 i.c. which was sponsored by Colonel Hunt of the USA to explore how the Wapiti had adapted in the Fiordland environment. In 1949 he was also responsible for exploring some caves in Takahe Valley which contained skeletons of moa and kiwi.

Ken was hugely influenced by the US participants on the wapiti expedition, and also by two of the participating biologists Ralph Kean and Baughan Wisely. All encouraged him to "have a go" at university, which he did in 1950 going to Canterbury University supported by his wife, studying along with John Morris who also spent much of his career in the mountains. This was no mean achievement by somebody who left primary school at 12.

He rejoined Internal Affairs after graduation as a biologist about 1953/54 and became an integral part of the Wildlife Branch science unit which, at that time included Ralph Kean, who transferred to the NZ Forest Service under the Noxious Animal Act 1956 as a leading opossum biologist. This change was welcomed by the NZ Deerstalkers Association who blamed Wildlife Deer Control Section for excluding recreational hunters from contributing to deer control, especially in operational areas. Ken stayed in the Wildlife Branch. Game bird research and management was a new focus then and Ken initially worked alongside Ron Balham on grey and mallard ducks, black swans and Canada geese. When Balham left to join Victoria University Ken took over all waterfowl research and completed a pioneering study on duck survival rates which was to guide Acclimatisation Society game bird management for a generation. In 1958 the Wildlife Branch established a game management extension service which Ken led for several years and it was during this time that he oversaw a major nesting study on Lake Ellesmere's black swans. In 1964 he was promoted to Scientific Officer and in 1965 was appointed