

Grassland Memorial Trust-NZ Grassland Trust

A History

By Dr Deric Charlton

In 1963 the well-known Dr Peter Sears, director of DSIR Grasslands and strong supporter of the NZ Grassland Association (NZGA), died suddenly while at a directors' meeting in DSIR Head Office, Wellington.

As a result of this sad and sudden news the NZGA Executive Committee met and agreed to set up an associated organisation - then identified as the Grassland Memorial Trust (GMT) - with a view to commemorating the great leaders in New Zealand's grassland progress.

Working Committee

Those involved in establishing the GMT included **Professor Tom Walker, Mr Harry Goodyear-Smith, Mr Stuart (Robbie) Robinson and NZGA Secretary Mrs Hazel Foster.**

They established a GMT chairman and a Working Committee to develop funding for a commemorative fund; and to select further prominent Names to add to the GMT list.

AH Cockayne was guest of honour at a social evening during the 1964 NZGA Conference in Greymouth, but it was his colleague **Sir Bruce Levy** who proposed that evening, that the Grassland Memorial Trust be established and an appeal be sponsored by NZGA to honour the eminent scientists Peter Sears and Sir George Stapledon.

Accordingly the current NZGA President, Professor Tom Walker set up a Working Committee.

This committee comprised **Sir Bruce Levy as chairman, with Bill Thurston as secretary; Lionel Corkill, Alan Johns, Angus Burgess, Don Edmond, Stuart Robinson, Murray Roche, Tim Tyrer and Eddie Suckling.** Some interest and financial support was already promised at this stage.

GMT Objectives

Tom Walker and Alan Johns gave a report at the AGM that set out the main objectives of the GMT as being to:

- Promote New Zealand's grassland farming;
- Provide travel awards, scholarships, grants and prizes to extend grassland studies and research;
- Apply the GMT funds for extending, broadening and disseminating knowledge of grassland farming in New Zealand and elsewhere.

They set the number of trustees to be at least five but no more than eleven, although they could appoint additional trustees should the need arise. At this AGM the following Founding Trustees were appointed:

Harry Woodyear-Smith (chairman); Lionel Corkill; Sir Bruce Levy; Ivor Elliott Alan Johns; Tom Walker; John Woodcock. Maurice Roche was appointed secretary and Val Goodall as treasurer.

Fund-raising

A brochure was designed and 40,000 copies were printed and distributed to farmers and agricultural business companies. But this only yielded \$200. Through the generosity of companies however, over \$16,000 was raised, most of which was invested in Government stock.

A year later at the Wanganui Conference the fund had risen to \$19,000 and a **first GMT Travel Award** of \$1,000 was made to George Banfield to attend the 1966 International Grassland Congress in Helsinki and to study the liaison between British research and extension services.

An initial Stapledon Memorial Award was also made to Don Edmond, to visit Australia and Britain, to study treading effects on pastures. He also attended the IGC in Helsinki and the National Tillage Laboratory in Auburn, Alabama, USA on the way back to New Zealand.

According to the brochure they published in the 1970s, the GMT's overall aim was then to "foster progress in the science and practice of grassland farming, on which New Zealand's export trade is almost wholly dependent, and in this way, to commemorate past leaders in such progress."

Another Name added

At the 1970 NZGA Conference held at Lincoln, Alfred Hyde Cockayne, who had established NZ agricultural research and NZGA, was added after his death in 1966.

An initial Farming Award was made at the 1969 Masterton Conference, to C Sandbrook of Te Rehunga, near Dannevirke, for his outstanding contribution to grassland farming. The following year, at the 1970 Lincoln Conference, a second farmer award went to JL Steele of Langley Downs, South Canterbury.

\$2,500 was set aside for GMT Travel Awards to the International Grassland Congress in the Gold Coast, Australia during 1970. Each award would be \$150, made to people in the different industry sectors.

In 1969 NZGA Vice President Dr Ray Brougham was elected as a GMT trustee, setting the annual trend that the Vice President came on as a trustee for a five-year period, and a trustee who had served five years stood down. So in 1970 Vice President Nelson Cullen was appointed and Harry Woodyear-Smith was re-appointed for another five years.

At this stage the Trust's fund stood at \$21,648, a little more than half the target of \$40,000. A fresh appeal was therefore launched, as a direct letter to pastoral industry companies and organisations. However, the country was suffering financial stress at the time, so only \$800 was raised.

Into the Seventies

When Dr Ray Brougham became GMT chairman in the early 1970s he developed a strong interest in GMT and he shaped it for the future. The GMT Committee decided those named would be principally New Zealanders who had led the impressive development of the country's grassland industry, especially through NZGA, and some leaders in the United Kingdom, who had greatly helped this country to develop its pasture research in the 1920s and 1930s.

Soon the GMT Names included North Island farmer RA Candy (in 1975 following his death) and Dr CP McMeekan was included in the GMT Names in 1973. When he died in the late 1980s DSIR geneticist/breeder Dr Lionel Corkill was also added.

However, even Ray Brougham found people reluctant to contribute to the GMT Fund and this languished at low levels. He continued as chairman for another two decades and ensured that the notable trustees, Sir Bruce Levy, Dr Lionel Corkill and Harry Woodyear-Smith were re-elected for further

terms, though by then were too old to attend the meetings. Several other past presidents, such as Nelson Cullen and Dr Robin Scott, tended to dispute suggestions and were not re-elected.

In 1972, Professor Reinhardt Langer of Lincoln, and DSIR Grasslands' regional station developer Jim Lambert retired as trustees and were replaced by the Vice President, Jim White, also of Lincoln. Farmer Bill Hurst joined the GMT in 1975, and the following year Bill Thurston was elected, when George Banfield retired after only one year. By then it was clear that some NZGA Presidents did not prefer to serve as trustees, as they were busy in their own particular careers.

The format of presenting two of the host region's farmers with excellence awards was set in place during the 1970s. In 1973 and 1974 special awards were made to the NZGA, for publishing a Part Two of the Annual Proceedings each year. However this only continued for 3-4 years.

Another innovation from the GMT in 1972 was a GMT Address, and the inaugural address was given at the Te Anau Conference by former DSIR Director-General Dr WM Hamilton. He summarised the achievements of Dr Peter Sears and Sir George Stapledon. Then in 1978 another GMT Address was given by chairman Dr Ray Brougham, summarising the GMT progress after 12 years.

In 1977 at Palmerston North, five farmer awards were given by GMT and a Special Award went to Mr Hoddy Pearse for his long effort to develop hill country subdivision.

During the year, Sir Bruce Levy offered his memoirs for publication by the GMT but this was declined because of the probable small sales demand. Instead the memoirs went to the Alexander Turnbull Library, now the National Library in Wellington. The trustees were the only people permitted to view the Levy Memoirs, as a condition stipulated by Dr Brougham.

When I became a trustee, I travelled to Wellington and spent a day reading Sir Bruce's memoirs, and after this I agreed that they would not have been a worthwhile investment as a printed book.

The early years of his career were of most interest, but his overseas travels occupied the main chapters, and these, together with the part on rivalry among DSIR Directors, would have been of minimal appeal to any reader.

Regional representative scheme

Another innovation by chairman Dr Brougham was to establish a regional representative scheme, to aid GMT matters across the country. He personally approached 16 people and listed them in his 1978 GMT Report:

Northland	Hugh Kirton
Auckland	Trevor Ellett
Bay of Plenty	Sir William Stephenson
Taupo	Robin Gordon
King Country	JM Fisher
Taranaki	D Rider
Hawke's Bay	Jim Inglis
Horowhenua	Malcolm Guy
Wellington	Tim Tyrer
Nelson	R Martin
Canterbury	Doug Fyfe
Ashburton	Russell Lobb
West Coast	David Wright
South Canterbury	J Symons
West Otago	F Hoare
Southland	SC Bowmar

At this meeting in Invercargill, MAF Senior Adviser **Ray Rankin** was given a special award for his long effort in promoting effective pastoral agriculture in Southland; and Professor Keith Syers, the soil science chair at Massey University in Palmerston North, received a travel award.

Sir Bruce Levy resigned as a trustee in 1979 after 15 years of service to the Trust, as he and Lady Levy were moving to Jerusalem near Tauranga, to be cared for by their adopted daughter. Terry Ludecke and John Lancashire were elected as trustees, and Harry Woodyear-Smith was re-elected again.

Three farming awards were presented at the 1979 Annual Conference in Rotorua, and Special Awards went to:

- BOP farm consultant DC Peterson;
- Six farmers forming a group at Broadlands;
- Omahu Demonstration Farm - Rangitaiki Dairy Company, Edgecombe;
- Peter Freeth, farming editor at the *NZ Herald*.

Professors Kevin O'Connor and Jim White, two Lincoln stalwarts, were recipients of travel awards.

GMT in the 1970s

At the time I became familiar with the GMT and its members I was able to meet the trustees socially at the Annual Conference, particularly in 1980, the 50th Meeting in Greymouth, when the Life Members were all invited and all were present. So what were they like in reality?

This was the Muldoon era when it was a decidedly male-dominated country - Prime Minister Robert Muldoon saw to that! The NZGA and GMT were no exception - apart from one prominent Life Member - Hazel Foster. Mrs Hazel Foster had served as the Secretary from 1955 to 1973. She retired at the first Annual Conference I attended, in Te Kuiti. However she hadn't served on the GMT.

Dr Ray Brougham, director of DSIR Grasslands since 1970, dominated the GMT in those times, in true Muldoon style, and he had all the Trustees agreeing with his opinion and wishes. He chaired the meetings in a jovial style but inveigled the distribution of travel awards and other decisions along the lines he desired, favouring those who had pleased him but setting aside others who hadn't followed the required pathways. His nominations for office were nearly always accepted, so he gathered in the GMT a group of effective trustees from several sectors, all of whom were "one of the boys."

But those who served in the GMT were all capable in their particular field.

Ray Rankin, the senior farm adviser in Invercargill, had a wealth of farmer experience but was learning the foibles of dealing with grazing livestock in other, somewhat different regions from his own area. A gentle spoken person, he would tender his opinion when he'd heard the others.

Bill Hurst was the farming guru from North Otago. He and pleasant wife Jesse, would host certain members after the AGM in their motel room, and I can recall some well-known contacts suffering hangovers the following morning. Bill's whisky must have been consumed in quantity as the conversation flowed too.

At least once a year Bill would visit DSIR Grasslands in Palmerston North to catch up with Ray and then visit a few researchers to discuss particular problems he might have encountered, or to find to about their work, possibly on Ray's advice. Bill was President in 1976 when Lincoln staff member Gavin Daly stated that the Executive Committee was a "bunch of old women"! I wasn't sure whether they or the old women were the more insulted that evening, but I doubt that any females were present at the AGM.

Terry Ludecke and Jim White were both lecturers in Lincoln's Plant Science Department but I doubt that either were sycophants to the Chairman at the

time. They were pragmatic speakers with good knowledge and authority and not short of their own opinions, though Ray may have persuaded them to agree with his verdict on an issue. Sadly Terry died suddenly, while refereeing a rugby game, so never really served on the Trust. Jim White served his five years term without any problem.

Bill Thurston was yet another Brougham fan, having been looked after at Grasslands where he was appointed Science Editor. Bill had an office adjacent to Ray's and they conferred daily over work and sport. Science papers drafts didn't go far without Bill's consent, obviously run past Ray before any action. The one exception to this was one geneticist called Mike Ross, an import like myself.

Mike was very much a loner and he worked in his office on theoretical genetics. He wrote papers and sent them directly to science journals, as neither Bill nor any colleague could understand Mike's work! A draft had stayed with Bill for long enough, so Mike didn't bother him anymore... He went to Denmark in the later 1970s, on a DSIR grant, but vanished without reporting to cover his bond. The only one concerned with Ross's disappearance was the divisional secretary Gerald Lockett, whose duty was to report on his progress. DSIR's Head Office was not amused...

Bill Thurston eventually retired, having the distinction of being one of the NZGA's "Old Women". He kept on socialising the Ray Brougham's group however, and after one afternoon he joined Ray, Cyril Armstrong and Jack Gomez in a visit to mate Kevin Church, the retired DSIR Grasslands carpenter. The group consumed at least two bottles of whisky before returning to Palmerston North and poor Bill tripped over his mailbox after being dropped off at home. He suffered some serious cuts and his wife had to take him to the hospital. I doubt that Bill was allowed out with Ray again...

John Lancashire was also a serving Trustee and had to go along with Ray at his work as Agronomy Group Leader at Grasslands. Lanc was politically astute, however, and I've seen him begin a meeting with aggression and then end it purring like a caged lioness. Eventually it was Lanc who quietly led the GMT away from Ray Brougham's grasp and developed it into a more democratic organisation.

Woodville farmer Jim Inglis was the other trustee who supported Lanc's trend to democracy. Jim and I eventually guided the Trust to hold one of the two annual meetings at Wellington Airport in the early 1980s, when Ray was tidying his desk to retire. This move led to Jim taking over as GMT Chairman with me as his deputy, and we ensured all the trustee opinions were heard, leading to an equable consensus on matter raised at the meetings.

Angus Burgess, the former farm advisory head in Palmerston North, served as a trustee following a short contribution as NZGA secretary after Hazel Foster's reign. He stepped down in 1981, along with the stalwart Stuart 'Robbie' Robinson, a long time agronomy lecturer at Massey University, both having served five years. After retiring from Massey, Robbie went on to lead the Turf Research Group at DSIR Grasslands for several years, before retiring once more to join the NZ Turf Culture Institute, also in Palmerston North.

The final trustee in this decade was Alan Harris, OIC at Grasslands Gore. He was always going along, very obviously, with his director and checked with Ray before making his views known. When Ray left the GMT, Harris didn't linger either.

Into the Eighties

So the GMT moved into the 1980s, as an all-male organisation and was generally regarded as a "gang of mates" that eventually evolved into a much fairer team as the decade passed.

John Toxopeus, fertiliser scientist at MAF Ruakura, joined the Trust in 1982 when he served as NZGA President and he livened the meetings with his contributions in several ways. Tox wasn't always clear in making his points but it was interesting to see where the discussion headed! He and Ray Brougham visited the farming nominees in the Gisborne area in 1983 and the presentations to Guy Trafford (farming on pumice soils), John Lane (pumice/mudstone soils) and Owen Bartram (mudstone soils) in the Poho-o-Rawiri Marae on 7 November were colourful and gained high interest from the local farming community.

Marlborough farmer and lucerne seed grower Jim Cresswell was the new trustee in 1982, and contributed a pragmatic viewpoint. At the Blenheim Conference, held unusually in a new church venue, Mr Ossie James, who pioneered agriculture aviation through his company James Aviation in Hamilton, was given a special award by GMT in recognition of his lifelong achievements.

New blood appeared in the Trust in the form of Dr Gavin Sheath, then leading MAF's hill country research team at Whatawhata. Gavin brought fresh ideas into the NZGA Annual Conferences and gave probing contributions at GMT meetings, having done thorough in-depth homework to prepare for them.

At this point I would like to acknowledge the consistent background effort given by Ray Brougham's Divisional Secretary, Gerald Lockett and Ray's PA, Miss Judy Greer. Too often these valuable efforts were officially mentioned in

the Annual Reports but few people were aware that they served Ray Brougham for many years while he led the GMT. They retired and enjoyed a more relaxing life after DSIR, when Ray's successor John Lancashire appointed a new secretary/treasurer in plant breeder Mr John van den Bosch and used his reigning PA for correspondence and minutes production.

1986 proved to be a milestone year, when the GMT saw its last GMT trustee Dr Lionel Corkill, who had served 21 years, step down. Corky was always an impressive leader and he saw the Trust and Association through many crises to continue their successful roles in the country's grassland industry. Corky sadly died in the year in Palmerston North and his name was added to the list of those commemorated by GMT.

That year Ray Brougham and Bill Hurst were both re-elected and Deric Charlton, as NZGA Vice President, joined as a trustee. The long-serving Harry Woodyear-Smith was given a Special Award at Whangarei, and near Tauranga, Sir Bruce Levy died following pioneering New Zealand's grassland research since 1912.

In 1988 Ray Brougham eventually resigned as GMT Chairman but remained an active trustee; and Woodville farmer Jim Inglis was elected his successor at the August 1988 AGM. At the end of the decade, Gerald Lockett retired as the GMT Secretary/Treasurer after 17 years of consistent service and Mr Ross Dalton, an administrator at DSIR Grasslands, took his place. By this time the trustees appointed

Changes in the 1990s

The Trust continued in its traditional format under the chairmanship of Jim Inglis, but he steered the Trust to a much closer relationship with NZGA. Jim retired in August 1995 and the trustees elected Dr Deric Charlton to replace him. Deric focused on recognising excellence in service for the industry and encouraging initiative through student and travel awards. During 1995 the book Grasslands for Our World, an initiative of the late Ray Brougham and containing the plenary papers and discussion conclusions from the 1993 IGC sessions, managed to exceed the cost of its production. Sales of remaining copies went to the NZGT fund, which was significantly boosted by financial surpluses from the IGC budget.

By this stage the GMT format had settled in and become well established. There were two meetings in a year, organised to be held at DSIR Grasslands. These were held in March and August, the latter being the AGM where trustees were elected or re-elected. For these events the trustees arrived in Palmerston North and were accommodated in a motel, any costs the

trustees submitted being covered by the Trust, unless they were paid for by the employing body, such as DSIR, MAF and the companies. These organisations considered this part of their sponsorship effort, as it was all in aid of the grassland industry. Some farmer trustees never submitted their expenses anyway, considering it their contribution.

The formal GMT meeting was held at Grasslands the following morning, when the agenda was worked through and decisions re awards and travel grants were finalised. A generous lunch was supplied and enjoyed, and the friendships among the trustees developed over the good food. After this the trustees caught up with researchers and other local contacts before departing for their home base. Voting was usually by voice, rather than a show of hands, and motions were debated and then proposed, seconded and formally voted on, as in any meeting. Suggestions came from the trustees around the table and were then debated.

The GMT farm awards were received as nominations, arranged through the MAF Regional Adviser, who was well aware of the best grassland farmers in his region. He would distribute the nomination forms to these farmers, gathering around five or six enterprises for the judges to visit. Two or three GMT trustees would be chosen as judges for the particular region, those nearest or familiar with the conference region's farming being the obvious choices.

The judges would arrange for a tour of the nominated farms during winter, to gather their recommendations in time for the August GMT meeting to approve of the decisions. Later in the 1990s a visit to at least one of the award-winning farms would be included in the conference field trip.

The judges would be accompanied around the farms by the regional adviser or a senior adviser, and each visit always began with a session at the farmhouse. One GMT trustee was considered to vote on these awards by his judging the farming spouse's scones, rather than the farm!

The profitability of the business was the prime consideration, as the Trust did not care to give a farm award to an enterprise that failed shortly afterwards. The livestock condition and the state of the pastures were the other criteria considered, and increasingly, the sustainability of the property and its management were also weighed into the final decision. This was, after all, the era before climate change, although the GMT judges soon realised that the best farmers were those who ensured their land was in a better condition when they left it, than it had been when they began farming it.

The GMT Awards were presented at the Conference, usually before lunch on the first day when the attendance was high and the media were present.

Chairman Ray Brougham was at his best in this presentation and it always went well. When Jim Inglis took over the chairman's role, he used his dry wit and extensive farming knowledge to make successful award presentations. When Deric Charlton and Bryan Guy were in the chair the awards were given after the Conference Dinner and were in place of unsuccessful entertainment events. Deric tended to punctuate his presentations with amusing and passable stories. He stood down as chairman in August 2002.

Fund Boost from the International Grassland Congress

In February 1993 the XVII IGC was held in Palmerston North with satellite meetings in Christchurch and Hamilton and a tropical session in Rockhampton, Queensland. Ray Brougham had made an impressive effort raising sponsorship funds to allow representatives from 91 countries to attend, and after the accounts were all settled its organisers invested surplus funds in the NZ Grassland Trust, with an amount also going to a similar Australian trust.

NZGT opted to maintain its capital fund value while financing a range of awards from the interest received. Ray died suddenly in early November that year and in 1994 the Ray Brougham Trophy was instigated to recognise significant achievement in NZ pastoral agriculture. The Brougham family donated a bronze sculpture of a sower to the Trust, to be awarded annually.

NZGT Secretaries

The background job of secretary has been undertaken through the years by several willing people. Bill Thurston was appointed Secretary of the GMT Steering Committee during its establishment in 1964 and Maurice Roche, an administrator at DSIR Grasslands, took on the position a year later.

When Ray Brougham became Trust Chairman in 1971 his divisional secretary Gerald Lockett was given the position after Maurice Roche was retiring, and Gerald served as Secretary for 17 years. He retired from the position after Ray retired in 1988 and another Grasslands administrator, Ross Dalton, took on the role. He was followed by plant breeder John van den Bosch, and then AgResearch plant scientist Dr Grant Douglas who accepted the position when John van den Bosch was dis-established and moved to Wrightson in Christchurch to work on cereal crops. And when Dr Douglas was made redundant in 2011, Mr Bruce Belgrave, the assistant to Dr John Caradus in Grasslanz Technology, which manages the PVR royalty income from Grasslands pasture cultivars, became NZGT Secretary.

New Trustees

As the incoming NZGA Presidents were elected as trustees and former trustees stepped down after their five-year terms, the personality of the Trust evolved, as a result of the new blood and flow of ideas.

In particular, Dr Gavin Sheath offered new ways to keep the GMT evolving, and when Dr Deric Charlton was elected as Chairman to replace Jim Inglis after several years, he also brought in new ideas.

Together in the year 2000, the trustees decided that, rather than principally revere the NZ Grassland pioneers, the emphasis of the Trust should be jointly as:

- An awarding body, to recognise exceptional contributions to the NZ grassland industry;
- To give student scholarships to encourage those entering the pastoral industries to work towards successful careers.

Accordingly they voted to change the Trust's name to:

The New Zealand Grassland Trust

to bring it closer in operation to NZGA as its financial arm. This enabled closer cooperation with the NZGA Executive Committee at a time when there were sweeping changes in funding NZ research and development and a heightened business model was being emphasised by the Government.

NZGT thus became the investment and awarding arm of NZGA and its funds grew as the years passed, with funds being managed judiciously by finance company Forsyth Barr, based in Dunedin.

New Trust Deed

In 2014 the trustees reviewed and modified the Trust Rules and Objectives, to better reflect the environment of the new age, and the new Trust Deed was lodged, as required, with the Charities Commission. Some key changes were:

1. The Trust shall consist of not more than eleven nor less than seven trustees.
2. The office of a Trustee shall become vacant if that Trustee has served a five-year term.
3. Vacancies in membership of the Trust Board shall be filled by the NZGA Incorporated upon recommendations from the Trust.

By 2017 the NZGT was being served by trustees John Caradus (Grasslanz Technology CEO), Noel Johnston (TR Ellett Trust), Derek Woodfield (PGG Wrightson Innovation Manager), Castlepoint farmer Anders Crowfoot, retired Feilding farmer Bryan Guy, retired AgResearch senior scientist Dr Gavin Sheath, AgResearch Invermay scientist Dr David Stevens, Central Otago farmer Pat Garden, and PGG Wrightson chief scientist Dr Alan Stewart. This high quality of representation indicates its value to the NZ Grassland Industry.

The Trust funds were further enhanced in 2017 by a bequest from the late Dr David Scott, whose research contributed significantly to pastoral improvement in South Island high country. The total fund is now around \$700,000, by retaining its base sum financially - ie, only making awards from interest created. NZGT has also in recent years, become a partner with the TR Ellett Agricultural Research Trust, with Ellett trustee Dr Errol Thom now representing the latter at NZGT meetings.

GMT/NZGT Chairmen

Over almost 60 years, the Trust has been chaired by the following:

1964 - 1965	Sir Bruce Levy
1965 - 1968	Harry Woodyear-Smith
1968 - 1970	Lionel Corkill
1970 - 1984	Ray Brougham
1984 -1995	Jim Inglis
1995 - 2002	Deric Charlton
2002 - 2012	Bryan Guy
2013 - 2017	Gavin Sheath
2017 - present	John Caradus

1974	\$25,000
1981	\$26,750
1994	\$300,000
2012	\$400,000
2014	\$458,300
2016	\$480,000
2019	\$695,243

