

Smith, John Edward Nayler (from the Forester Dec 2011)

John Edward Nayler SMITH (JENS)
14 May 1937 - 30 August 2011

Forestry is the poorer for the passing of John Smith, Fellow of the IFA, a very professional forester and a gentleman in the best sense of the word.

John was born in Lancashire, England, moving with his family to Australia in 1955. He had finished schooling and decided on a forestry career before the move and started his forestry training in Sydney as a Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TPNG) cadet in 1956. After two years at Sydney University, a field year in PNG and two years at the AFS in Canberra he started his PNG career in 1961. University contemporary Brian Furrer (FCNSW) recalls a good and serious student. John's marriage to Marie, a friend of Brian's wife, Barbara, in 1962 cemented a friendship and extended the traditional pairing of Canberra foresters with Canberra nurses.

The next fifteen years saw John based consecutively in Keravat, Wewak, Bulolo, Mt Hagen (Regional Forester - Highlands) and Bulolo again, with a year in Armidale (NSW; 1973) to secure one of UNE's earliest Master of Natural Resources degrees. A constant theme was plantation forestry, in particular tropical pines. Those were formative years for PNG's plantation program and today's plantation estate and traditions there reflect in significant part John's contribution.

John left PNG with Marie and their three children in 1976 for a position with the South Australian Parks Service but in 1978 moved to Tasmania to become Forest Planning Superintendent with APPM Forest Products in the Launceston area. Evan Shield (also ex PNG) recruited him to the company and recalls as an important attraction his silvicultural experience and interest. John worked for APPM (later North Forest Products and Gunns) till his retirement in 2000, and for some time thereafter as a consultant. His work encompassed harvest planning and land management generally, but the interest in plantation forestry remained.

Perhaps John's outstanding contribution to Tasmanian forestry related to development of eucalypt plantation forestry in the state and engagement with the community by the profession and industry in some turbulent decades. He chaired the Tasmanian Division of the IFA in 1985-87, and was made a Fellow of the Institute in 1999. He also had a long association with Australian Forest Growers (previously AFDI) including as Chair of the Tasmanian Branch and National President (1998- 99). He was active throughout in the talks, guided tours and projects which underpin good community engagement.

In retirement John remained active in forestry and church affairs, but also discovered an interest in and talent for water colour landscape painting. He coped stoically with chronic health problems for some twenty-six years and it was a complication arising from these that finally took him.

Marie passed away suddenly in 1995 and John married Helen in 1999. He is survived by Helen, children Eleanor, Gail and Ian (also an ANU forester), their spouses and nine grandchildren.

Vale John. You are remembered with affection and respect as a thorough professional and a very decent man.