

# Obituaries

## Kenneth Walter Kiddle

1922 – 15 January 2012



Ken Kiddle: A man surely missed.  
Photo courtesy *The Orchardist*.

Champion of the co-operative philosophy, former New Zealand Apple and Pear Marketing Board chairman and Havelock North grower Ken Kiddle passed away January 2012 aged 90.

A desire to be their own boss prompted university graduates Ken and wife Marion Kiddle to leave their respective careers of industrial chemist and university lecturer to buy a 24-acre orchard near Havelock in 1956. The Kiddles found an open industry, with assistance and encouragement from the Fruitgrowers' Federation, Ministry of Agriculture advisory staff and the Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers' Association. They expanded on their initial 24 acres, and then went into partnership with friend and colleague Dr Don McKenzie in a new orchard development in 1964. New centre leader growing systems were established, and improved rootstocks were used.

In 1968 Ken became a grower director of the New Zealand Apple and Pear Marketing Board. Ken stepped up to the role of chairman after the traffic death of Don Sinclair in a car crash in 1974. Ken and Don were about the same age and overnight Ken took over the chairmanship he may have thought he would never assume.

The industry was under extreme financial pressure; Dr Alan Rae from Massey University was commissioned to do a report on the way forward. He concluded the industry was not viable. In an early interview he said "it claimed there was no future in

Europe, but that is where we have made all our money producing top quality fruit".

The very next year in 1977 the board made a record \$13 million profit, leaving the reserve account in credit by \$5.8 million. All debt was cleared and \$2 million was paid to growers.

During his time as chairman, the pipfruit industry and its infrastructure grew at an astronomical rate. Varieties changed from a reliance on Red Delicious and Granny Smith to New Zealand's own varieties Royal Gala and Braeburn. Production was expected to climb from 8 million cartons in 1981 to 13.2 million in the next five years.

Ken was a champion of the co-operative philosophy; he was his own man during his time as chairman from 1974 to 1986.

He received many industry accolades for his efforts, including being made a Companion of the order of Saint Michael and Saint George in 1982, and was awarded the industry Bledisloe Cup in 1989.

In 1993 he was made an Associate of Honour by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture for his contribution to horticulture in New Zealand, both as a grower and a leader of the NZAPMB.

He made a mark on his many colleagues and friends of his lifetime.

### Tributes

#### **Former NZAPMB Chief Executive Joe Pope:**

Ken Kiddle made a huge contribution to the New Zealand apple industry.

His direct nature and commitment to all growers meant that there was never any misunderstanding of his view on even the most sensitive of issues.

At the same time Ken embraced innovation evidenced by his support of the apple processing activities that resulted in the board dominating

the fruit juice market with its range of predominately apple juice based products.

Ken recognised that shipping, the industry's largest cost, required special attention, and became a skilled leader of the annual freight negotiations.

He was a good chairman, giving clear board direction to management.

It was a privilege and a pleasure to work with him.

#### **Fellow Orchardist and NZAPMB Director John Paynter:**

Ken played a pivotal role after the damning Massey report to ensure the industry could fight another day and keep it together in very difficult times. He never believed the report, and his faith in the industry was well placed; under his leadership the industry prospered. He was selfless in giving his time and was a master at solving conflict. He was an ordinary guy with a high level of intellect, combined with practical application skills.

At a meeting with immense tension, or a deadlock, Ken would call for a cup of tea and within 10 minutes all would be resolved.

He played a huge role in delivering a sustainable industry. He undertook an extremely demanding role, and he put a lot of his life into it. He would spend weeks and months at a time overseas negotiating – particularly freight rates; his wife Marion gave him the space and time to do that job. Ken always led the freight negotiations, it was the highest single cost for growers.

He was highly respected in the international environment; he was his own man, never swept away by big ideas or big talk.

Ken was a great driver in the development of new apple varieties; he was the person who led the charge to support the breeding programme, to start new varieties.

He was at home anywhere, on the orchard pruning his trees, or in the Claridges Ballroom in London making a speech to 200 guests.

**Former NZAPMB New Varieties Manager and Neighbour David Cranwell:**

I have lived next door to the Kiddles for 35 years; I am so lucky to have them as neighbours.

It was the most amazing funeral and a wonderful celebration of a man's life.

Ken stood up for what he believed in. His greatest legacy is his family; at a pre-Christmas get together he said he was the luckiest man alive to have such a wonderful family.

He was a straight shooter as chairman. I shared a plane ride to Wellington with him one time; a mark of the man, we caught a bus (no taxi for him) from the airport to the board offices in town. His level of integrity was amazing, he had a wicked sense of humour; he always had the best interests of growers at heart.

**Plant & Food Research New Varieties Breeder Allan White:**

Ken was a great champion of science and the pipfruit sector. He supported a range of science activities, the impact of his decisions 20 years ago are still with us today. Ken committed industry funding in 1983 to plant breeding programmes. It was the first example of an industry sector funding research at DSIR.

He was ahead of his time, his foresight led to funding of programmes which produced Jazz, Envy and the Pacific series. He was generous with his time and tolerant of a young scientist. He sometimes went into bat for old varieties too, he used his position to refuse to sign the death knell for the variety Red Dougherty (he had a reasonable planting in his own orchard). He later commercialised and held the Plant Variety Rights for the red selection of Royal Gala, Galaxy, from a chance seedling.

**Former Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers' Association President David Mardon:**

Ken's involvement in fruitgrowing politics began when he was elected to the committee of the association in 1961; he became a NZAPMB director in 1968. Ken dedicated many hours to his role on the board – he spent 100 days in 1973 away from home fulfilling the duties of that role.

He was involved when the industry was built up and established by total co-operation of small and medium sized growers. In 1989 Ken was awarded the Bledisloe Cup, the highest award in this industry, for services to fruitgrowing. I have often thought if Ken had been the chairman of the board in the latter half of the 1990s we may have a different industry than what we now have.

Ken was married to Marion for 66 years and he is survived by their five children, 19 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

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## **George Brington Malcolm, MBE** **27 November 1917 – 29 January 2012**



George Malcolm died in Christchurch on 29 January 2012 in his 95th year.

He was a founding member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Inc. (NZILA) and actively supported the Institute's endeavours throughout his career. George's earlier background was in horticulture and he was awarded the National Diploma

in Horticulture (Hons) in the early 1940s while working with the Parks and Reserves Department of the Christchurch City Council. In 1948, he joined the Ministry of Works, Housing Division as Landscape Officer. In spite of his background in plant production and municipal horticulture, he had emerging sense and awareness of the greater landscape that lay beyond. He consolidated this with his voracious reading of overseas landscape publications. He also started to amass his renowned reference library.

In 1962 he was appointed Senior Landscape Officer for the Ministry of Works with nation-wide responsibilities. This enabled him to start preaching the doctrine of landscape awareness throughout New Zealand. In pursuing this, George was singularly persuasive and tenacious, and he built up an amazing network of contacts at all levels within

the department. Because of his breadth of landscape awareness and appreciation, he became involved with larger civil works such as highways, and hydroelectric projects.

At this time there was a dearth of academically qualified landscape architects in New Zealand (those who were here had overseas qualifications), and George, typically, sought to remedy this by approaching Auckland and Canterbury Universities, but without success. Imagine, therefore, his reaction to Professor T. M. Morrison of Lincoln College telling him that the college proposed to establish the first course in landscape architecture in New Zealand in 1969. George described this moment as "a great thrill to me."

This, of course, provided George with the opportunity to realise his dream of having landscape architects

throughout the Ministry of Works and Development (formerly MOW) and he pursued this with typical dedication, vigour and success. In addition to providing employment opportunity and experience to many graduates, he also obtained departmental approval for study awards in landscape architecture, not only within New Zealand but also overseas in recognition of the important global perspective.

Throughout this period, George also corresponded with overseas landscape architects, and in 1972 received a New Zealand Government travel grant which enabled him to meet landscape architects in public and private practice and in educational institutions throughout the US, Canada, and Great Britain, and importantly, being as perceptive as he was, to get a feeling for where his various contacts fitted within those institutions and structures, and how influential they were.

George Malcolm was a very human and humane man. He nurtured his staff and ensured their welfare,

always providing wise counsel to express their ideas over the full continuum of landscape from planning to detailed design. He always championed sound design on the ground, and it is no coincidence, therefore, that the NZILA's premier design award is the George Malcolm Award.

This selfless dedication to the education and training of his staff was the true measure of George's breadth of vision and generosity of spirit. He was big enough to facilitate something he never had the opportunity to do himself.

George was recognised by numerous institutions: he was one of the two foundation Life Members of the NZILA; an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Inc.; a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Parks and Recreation Administration; and last, but by no means least, an Honorary Associate of the Institute of Landscape Architects (now the Landscape Institute, Great Britain) in recognition of his achievements. This is an honour rarely bestowed and without precedent in New Zealand.

George retired as Inspecting Landscape Architect from MWD in 1982 after so many years of dedicated service. This was recognised by the then Minister of Works and Development, the Hon M. A. Connolly being present at his farewell.

George, of course, did not 'retire'. He maintained a keen interest in the profession and its people, and his life is summed up eloquently and with great brevity by Earl Bennett, in this earlier statement, marking his death: "Farewell George, from a grateful profession. The world is better for your life, and a lesser place with your departure."

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