

Over the Fence



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For twelve years I wrote a weekly column in *Hawkes Bay Today* under the by-line *Over the Fence* until a few months ago when the editor replaced me with Paul Holmes. The number of expressions of regret that I have had since has prompted me to start a newsletter, initially fortnightly, so that I can relate what's on my mind. It will involve editorial comment, a bit of history, something about trees and the environment, a guest piece, feed-back, maybe a good quote – indeed, anything goes.

I hope you find it interesting.

Cheers

Ewan McGregor



New \$47 million wharf opened at the Port of Napier last Friday

BIG DAY AT THE PORT OF NAPIER

Last Friday saw the opening of a major development at the Port of Napier. This brings to an end what I will describe as the third era in the Port's development. Let's look back at the Port's fascinating history, the very gateway of our economy.

Napier is one of three completely artificial harbours in New Zealand – that is they have been established on an open shoreline. The other two are Taranaki and Timaru but unlike them, ours is an artificial *port* in that the entire port complex is the creation of man. The other two are backed by near flat land whereas ours was established at the base of a bluff. Therefore all the back-up land, essential to a modern port had to be created, in addition to safe harbourage

Breakwater Era: 1886-1909

In 1886 the (then-named) Napier Harbour Board (formed 1875) began the construction of the breakwater, enabling the construction of a wharf to handle large vessels. What a courageous decision this was!



Hitherto trading vessels used the well-protected but shallow Inner Harbour. However, problems securing the breakwater against heavy seas lead a shift in Board politics to a return to the Inner Harbour, and in 1909 the Board resolved to develop the Inner Harbour as the primary port.

Little had been achieved to develop the Inner Harbour by the time of the Earthquake in 1931. Equally little was done to even maintain the Breakwater Harbour. The Board was divided and impoverished. As it turned out, the development that could have been done to either harbour would have

been either wrecked or rendered unserviceable with the dramatic swallowing caused by the land up-thrust.

Finger Pier Era: 1934-1970

With the shallowing, constant siltation and narrow entrance the days of the Inner Harbour as an option were over. But the remnants of the Inner Harbour faction, lead by the long-standing Board member Albert E Jull, a Waipawa Brewer and Member of Parliament, went down fighting.

After the Earthquake crisis was behind it the Board voted to redevelop the Breakwater. This necessitated the raising of a loan which required sanction from the (then) Board ratepayers. This lead to a series of torrid public meetings through the region in 1934, but the vote was decisive; "Get back to the Breakwater". Thus ended division of the Harbour Board which had paralysed it for decades, arguably the most protracted and bitter controversy in New Zealand's local body history.

So it was all go at the breakwater. One necessity was to deepen it, and so the Board purchased a steam bucket dredge from the Wellington Harbour Board, the *Whakarire*. This old girl did stirring service until she was sadly decommissioned and towed to Auckland for scrap in the early 1970s. Those living on the north side of Napier Hill will remember the background grinding and clatter of her working the harbour, day in and day out.

The first ferro-concrete wharf was opened in 1939, the second in 1944, another to replace the old wooden Glasgow wharf in 1960, and finally the last in 1969. But the days of the narrow finger pier, with a ship loading or discharging on either side, was coming to an end.



Quay Side Era: 1970 ...

The Harbour Board embarked on a new form of Harbour development in 1970, that being initially to reclaim land backing the eastern most pier where wood products from the soon to be open Pan Pac mill could be accumulated for shipping and phosphate rock and sulphur for the Awatoto plant could be held after discharge for orderly removal by purposed built trucks. Next was the reclamation westward of the Kirkpatrick wharf, now the container terminal. This latest development completes this process with the strengthening of the number 3 wharf and a triangle of reclamation backing it. The No 2 Wharf (1939 vintage) will eventually be removed.

DOES HAWKES BAY TODAY DO US JUSTICE?

Last week saw the anniversary of one of the most celebrated events of the 20th Century – the fall of that awful symbol of repression, the Berlin Wall. (As John F Kennedy said in 1963: "There may be a lot wrong with our system, but we don't have to build walls to keep our people *in*.) This event symbolised the collapse of Soviet-dominated communism in Eastern Europe, and foreshadowed the Soviet's fate two years later.

The world's media's celebration of this landmark was fulsome, but it hardly rated a mention in *Hawkes Bay*

Today. The news, editorials and columns were consumed with a couple of snouts-in-the-trough politicians making fools of themselves. Well, if we really do live in a global village shouldn't we show some interest in the celebrations taking place in the next street?

TREES OF HAWKE'S BAY

THE EUROPEAN BEECH – *Fagus sylvatica*

There are eight species of Northern Hemisphere Beech of which European or English Beech is one, and commonly cultivated in New Zealand. (Beech is the only temperate tree genus that is found in both hemispheres, the southern form known as *nothofagus*, of which New Zealand has five species, all evergreen.)

Beech like calcic soils and thrive best in southern Britain and across the channel in Normandy. Accordingly here they grow best on the limestone soils and the alluvial Heretaunga Plains. In my experience they struggle with clays and mudstones.

By far the most commonly grown here is the 'Copper Beech', the result, I understand, of a 'sport' that was founded in a German forest in the 18th Century, and since enhanced through breeding. This is a beautiful tree and makes for a splendid specimen, but I think should be avoided in mass.

There is a short avenue of them leading to the Crematorium at the Hastings cemetery, which is very impressive, but that's about the limit of a mass planting. It's a pity though that the normal green Beech is not grown more, for it is a beautiful tree and doesn't deserve the fate of playing second fiddle to the copper form.

No species has a smoother bark than a Beech and with their interesting branching they make great trees for kids to climb. I found this in my childhood as we had a magnificent Copper Beech (since removed) on our family section at Milton Terrace on the Napier Hill, planted in 1905 to commemorate my mother's birth.

One characteristic of a Beech forest is the understory, influenced by its close leafy canopy. After leaf-fall this creates a carpet of colourful litter in which such flowering plants like bluebells thrive. Regrettably I know of no such forest in Hawke's Bay, which would be a great recreational feature. I suggested this for the northern side of Pakowhai Country Park a few years ago, but an arboretum was instead favoured. We are weak on developing amenity theme tree planting in New Zealand.



Copper Beech, Tomoana Showgrounds, Hastings



Green European Beech, Waikoko Gardens, Hastings



Copper Beech, Avenue to Hawke's Bay Crematorium

GUEST WRITER – RU COLLIN, DIRECTOR, HORTICULTURE NZ

HAWKE'S BAY HORTICULTURE

During my term as an industry representative that started in 1999, I have seen dramatic changes within this region – the main one being representation has become much more organised and that the industry has become more diverse in nature. The issues facing horticultural agribusiness have increasingly got more complex over the last 10 years. As each industry problem arises, I see more affected parties become stakeholders, and therefore parties to final decisions that affect horticulturists. Other dramatic changes include communication styles have changed dramatically to handle the volume of information. The importance of sound communication channels has always been critical to effective governance and management, however the types of effective channels adopted now have had to be found to meet the pace of life of 2009 rather than that of 1999 or of that of 1989.

Hawke's Bay horticulture offers a widespread and diverse industry. It is a resilient one that has the ability to take a hit in one part of it, while another part flourishes. It is quite used to the economic, socio, environmental and regulatory 'shocks' that each of these areas delivers from time to time. Very rarely does the industry suffer a widespread downturn, although 2009 may prove to be the exception to that. Yet despite what is thrown at the industry HB horticulture continues to grow as an industry year on year by the rate of about 5%. It is an industry acknowledged and considered core to the regions' prosperity and should be viewed by all as an asset for the whole community.

The industry continues to build relationships with councils, with its viticulture cousins, between its product groups and with its representative bodies. The Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers Association plays a pivotal part in representing the region's industry. The HBFA represent local horticulture and vegetable growers at diverse events, council planning sessions, resource hearings, at educational and youth development meetings, with seasonal labour and organising events like youth development. There are many other entities that quietly work away at adding value within horticulture, notably PipfruitNZ, SNZI, NZKGI, HBVGA, Olives, HBLGG, and Oanz.

In this issue I have been asked where I think it's going and I wanted to identify key common issues concerning horticulture and the community.

I guess to answer the first question - where it's going, the best place to start is to measure the HB industry against the key messages of the recently released Horticulture Industry Strategy, "Growing a New Future", the most significant industry-wide work done for New Zealand's horticulture industry for many years. The plan aims to lead New Zealand's horticulture industry to its goal of an industry value of \$10 billion by 2020. This means doubling the value of the industry in 10 years. And that means Hawke's Bay being one of the largest horticultural regions will play a significant part.

The key messages for the readers of this strategy to take away with them are:

- Industry revenue of NZ\$10 billion by 2020 is achievable – if the large industry sectors increase their investment into intellectual property and all industry participants act now to achieve scale or proxies for scale;
- While the New Zealand market provides a solid foundation – industry growth will be export-led;
- Science and technology innovations will enable greater value-add products and processes to be developed, commercialised and controlled from New Zealand;
- A unified New Zealand story developed in conjunction with Tourism New Zealand identifying our unique cultural and quality attributes creates a point of differentiation in markets;
- The industry needs to build on its past successes and continue to increase its competitiveness and sustainability advantages;
- The Government needs to support the industry's growth aspirations and align government department's activities if the industry's goal is to be achieved.

When I judge the HB industry against these messages, point by point, I see that the region is poised to double its value by 2020, but has some serious challenges to meet in doing so. The region has to continue to work closer to develop scale. This is difficult as it's all about changing attitude and collaboration is the key factor. Market focus is steadily looking to export markets, and particularly from west to east, where now the Asian theatre offer the most potential to NZ. HB is well placed to maximise this opportunity, if it is smart and forward thinking. The third point is somewhat seen as a weakness. I am not seeing enough innovation being applied throughout the industry. We have some excellent isolated examples where innovation has added value, however our industry has not really adopted an integrated approach. The last 2 points I can see, at last, being actively demonstrated at local council planning processes. The Heretaunga plains is recognised for its productive and versatile soils that are to be protected (by council) and we continue to work effectively across all levels of the industry for support by central government.

There are many facets to the industry, each one a chapter on its own. For my part I see myself at HorticultureNZ as trying to minimise risk for my agribusiness members.

There are a number of region-wide issues HB horticulture will get more involved in to protect its asset base and its integrity. They include:

- Plains urban and rural planning on 1 year, 10 year and 30 year cycles
- Water
- Food safety
- Biosecurity

It is important to note that industry involvement does not want to hamper or stifle regional developments. Our view is, generally speaking, quite the reverse.

WELL SAID

At last month's very successful Hawke's Bay Environmental Awards, Chairman and MC Dave Pipe came up with a good quote from **Gaylord Nelson**, former governor of Wisconsin and founder of Earth Day.

***The ultimate test of man's conscience
may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations
whose words of thanks will not be heard.***

Feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone who may find it interesting. To become a subscriber, or if you have a comment to make, then email me at ewan-mac@xtra.co.nz. To unsubscribe, simply reply to this email and write 'unsubscribe' in the subject field.

SQUADRON LEADER JOHN PATTISON

Recently Hawkes Bay's John Pattison died. We will never see his like again. Believe it or not, only two countries had more pilots in RAF Fighter Command than little far-off New Zealand (pop'n. 1.5 million); the UK and Poland. If we Kiwis can't be proud of that, what can we be proud of? Below is the obituary from the UK's *The Daily Telegraph*. It may be of interest.

"Squadron Leader John Pattison, who has died aged 92, was one of the few remaining New Zealanders who fought during the Battle of Britain, during which he was shot down and severely wounded; he recovered to have a distinguished war, being awarded a DSO and a DFC.

Pattison arrived in Britain at the end of July 1940, and with the RAF short of fighter pilots he was rushed through battle training in a few days. With just a handful of sorties flying Spitfires, he joined No 266

Squadron at Debden, Essex, during an intense phase of the Battle on August 26.

On his first operation the squadron intercepted a force of 40 enemy bombers and their fighter escort. Pattison became separated from the rest of his squadron, ran out of fuel and made a wheels-up landing in a field bristling with anti-aircraft obstacles. He was greeted by pitchfork-wielding farmers who took him for a German. Two weeks later he was posted to No 92 Squadron, based at Biggin Hill.

At this point the Battle was reaching its climax, and the squadron was operating at maximum intensity. The pilots were flying three or four sorties each day.

After the major engagements of September 15, the Luftwaffe switched its attacks to London, and on September 23 Pattison was attacked by a Messerschmitt Bf 109 over Gravesend. He received serious wounds to his right thigh from a cannon shell and crash-landed as he attempted to come in at West Malling airfield. He spent the next eight months in hospital, but recovered to rejoin the squadron in June 1941.

John Gordon Pattison was born on January 27 1917 at Waipawa and educated at Wanganui Collegiate School before going to work on his father's farm. As a young man he joined the Civil Reserve of Pilots, and learned to fly Tiger Moths at the Hawke's Bay and East Coast Aero Club. With many others of his countrymen he volunteered for service with the RAF the day after war was declared. He completed his training and sailed for England.

A month after returning to operational flying following his serious injury, Pattison was made an instructor. A dashing pilot, he did not always set a good example to his students. He was not averse to some daring escapades and once "borrowed" another pilot's Hurricane (without his knowledge) to get himself to a party. Later he was reprimanded and lost three months' seniority for flying his Spitfire under the Severn railway bridge. In April 1942 he returned to operations, joining No 485 (NZ) Squadron, one of three that made up the Kenley Wing.

On April 26 he was taking part in a sweep over northern France when his formation was "bounced" by a force of Focke-Wulf 190s. Four of the New Zealanders were hit and two were lost. The engine of Pattison's Spitfire was damaged, but he managed to glide across the Channel before bailing out near the Sussex coast. After 90 minutes afloat in his dinghy, he was rescued by an air-sea rescue launch.

Over the next 12 months he flew on many sweeps and low-level strafing attacks against transport targets over France. In July 1943 he was awarded a DFC for his "determination, zeal and courage".

After a spell as the chief flying instructor of a fighter training unit, Pattison returned to operations in March 1944 with No 66 Squadron. Armed with bombs, he attacked targets in his Spitfire IX during the pre-invasion offensive, including the new V-1 sites in the Pas de Calais region.

On July 6 he was flying an offensive support mission when he intercepted a Messerschmitt Bf 109 near Chartres. He attacked the enemy fighter and registered hits before the German pilot bailed out. A month later he was flying a similar operation when he engaged and shot down a Focke-Wulf 190 near Montrichard. The squadron had just moved to a makeshift airstrip in Normandy, where Pattison flew many armed reconnaissance sorties armed with bombs and cannon.

Pattison was appointed to command his old squadron, No 485 (NZ), in September and he led it with great verve and tenacity as it supported the advancing armies through France and Belgium into Holland. He destroyed many enemy vehicles. When No 485 was withdrawn from the front line to convert to the Tempest, Pattison was rested and given a staff job with HQ 84 Group.

On March 20 he was awarded a DSO, the citation concluding that "he has set the highest standard of skill



and courage and shown the finest qualities of leadership both in the air and on the ground".

After being discharged from the RAF, in January 1946 Pattison returned to New Zealand. For the rest of his life he farmed at Waipawa before retiring to Havelock North.

Fearless in combat, Pattison was the epitome of the colourful fighter pilot. He was never afraid to enjoy himself or to take on authority, and his sense of humour remained sharp and direct throughout his life. When asked about his wartime flying he commented: "Wonderful times to have lived through, and with fantastic mates."

He remained a champion of the 485 (NZ) Squadron Association, rarely missing their annual dinners. At the reunion of 2005 he was presented with a working scale model of the Spitfire he had been forced to abandon in April 1942. He noted that its miniature engine did not give off the sound of "the Rolls-Royce Merlin 12-cylinder symphony", but agreed that it was like meeting up again with a faithful friend.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of D-Day in June 1994, President Chirac appointed him to the Légion d'honneur.

John Pattison died at Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, on September 11. He is survived by his wife [not correct: his wife predeceased him. EM] and four sons."