

Nomination of Dr Rowan Emberson as a Fellow of the Entomological

Society of New Zealand

Rowan Mark Emberson graduated from Edinburgh University with a degree in forestry, writing his honours dissertation on mesostigmatid mites in soils in ancient pine forest. This led to further study of soil inhabiting Mesostigmata for a PhD at McGill University in Montreal, Canada with Professor Keith Kevan. During the last year of his PhD studies Rowan taught an entomology course at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. He moved to New Zealand in late 1968 to take up a position of lecturer in entomology at Lincoln College in the Department of Agricultural Zoology, which soon after changed its name and focus to become the Department of Entomology. Rowan spent his entire working career of 33 years at Lincoln College/Lincoln University, and since his retirement in 2002 has continued his association with the university as an Honorary Lecturer.

In his first years at Lincoln, Rowan concentrated on macrochelid mites, which led to an interest in their dung beetle hosts. This allowed him to develop his long-standing passion for beetles that began in his childhood days in the UK. His mother, an accomplished naturalist, possibly initiated this interest when she put large dung beetles in the one-year-old's pram for him to play with, while they were living temporarily in South Africa. Over Rowan's lengthy career, he has studied beetles, especially Carabidae and Scarabaeidae, and accumulated a broad knowledge of the New Zealand Coleoptera, even some of the more obscure groups. One of Rowan's more unusual research topics involved determining the publication dates of the individual invertebrate plates of Dumont D'Urville's *Voyage au Pol Sud*, as these constituted the first publication of some of the names of New Zealand Carabidae. An outcome of becoming familiar with New Zealand Coleoptera has been Rowan's involvement in ecological surveys. A major project was a detailed study of the beetle fauna of the Chatham Islands for conservation purposes, which later led to collaboration with geologist Dr Hamish Campbell on a project to determine the age of the Chatham Islands.

A major achievement in Rowan's early days in the Entomology Department was the establishment in the early 1970's, with support from Professor Roy Harrison, of an insect collection, which became the basis of the Entomology Research Museum (LUNZ). It is especially strong in South Island material, and is one of the largest and most diverse insect collections in the country. It is widely used by students and researchers and contains type material of a number of New Zealand species. In order to build up the collection, Rowan and Roy began a tradition of annual summer field trips to different

locations from North Cape to Stewart Island that persisted until 1991.

Rowan's teaching responsibilities covered a broad range of subject areas from introductory invertebrate zoology through to advanced classes in insect morphology and insect systematics. A practical approach to systematics training was developed with individual student collections as a key component. Students were required to use their collections to develop their classification and identification skills. When courses were established for Parks and Recreation students, Rowan taught them New Zealand natural history, introductory animal ecology and biogeography.

Rowan's research interests were broadened through the need to supervise graduate student projects in agricultural entomology. He developed a particular interest in how pest and beneficial insects have adapted to the New Zealand environment. The technique of dissecting reproductive organs to determine their physiological state was carried out by a number of students, beginning with Dr Stephen Goldson's PhD project, which showed that Argentine stem weevil was relatively maladapted to New Zealand conditions because of an obligatory photoperiod-induced diapause.

Don't underestimate the beneficial influence a good supervisor has on his students. Rowan has quietly gone about this work over many years, making a further and special major contribution to New Zealand entomology (in addition to his own research) through the training of a number of entomologists/ ecologists. Rowan is held in high regard by his former students (who are making their own valuable contributions, some even presenting keynote addresses at conferences), as well as by colleagues and researchers both here and overseas.

Rowan has been an active supporter of the Entomological Society of New Zealand, serving as President from 1993-95. With Dr Eric Scott, Rowan compiled the 'Handbook of New Zealand Insect Names' and for a number of years prepared submissions on behalf of the Society to the Environmental Risk Management Authority on proposed new introductions.

In his retirement, Rowan has followed up on his studies of the New Zealand and UK faunas of Macrochelidae with a revised classification of the family, which is now widely used internationally. Researchers using these mites for control of nuisance flies require a sound classification system on which to base their work. Rowan has also continued his interest in dung beetles, through collaboration in research projects in Thailand and Nigeria. Further, Rowan's expertise is still being put to good use as a member of the editorial board of the *Fauna of New Zealand*.

It is our pleasure to commend Rowan Emberson to you as a most worthy nominee for consideration as a Fellow of the Entomological Society of New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Eyles

Ian Townsend

25 January 2014

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