

## **Biography of Mary Sutherland**

Many NZIF members will know that Mary Sutherland was a founding member of NZIF and designer of the official seal that is the basis of the current logo. She was a NZIF councillor (1935–36) and vice president (1941–42), and her bequest seeded the Mary Sutherland scholarship that is offered annually by the NZIF Foundation. What may not be well known is that she was the first woman forestry graduate in the world.

*A path through the trees: Mary Sutherland – forester, botanist & women's advocate* is a fascinating story of this remarkable woman, and includes early history of the Forest Service and formation of NZIF. The book is full of historical photographs of Sutherland and her family, forestry in Britain and New Zealand, and Mary's travels.

Because of this year's distractions — Covid-19, elections and other matters — a formal book launch has yet to take place. However, the book is on sale and details of where to purchase are below. It is also being printed in the UK to facilitate purchase by Bangor University graduates and others. Details will be available soon at [www.summerfieldbooks.com](http://www.summerfieldbooks.com)

Mary Sutherland graduated from the University College of North Wales (now Bangor University). It was daring to take up a male-only career in a time when women's contributions were generally disregarded. Her job prospects were also affected by two world wars and economic depressions in England and New Zealand. She emigrated to New Zealand in 1923 where the State Forest Service employed her until forestry retrenched in the 1930s.

The skills she developed as a forester enabled her to move into botany at Wellington's Dominion Museum and farm forestry with the New Zealand Department of Agriculture. She also championed women's right to higher education and was active in the Federation of University Women.

Author Vivien Edwards has worked as a freelance researcher and writer for over 20 years, and she contributed regularly to the *New Zealand Forest Industries* magazine (1980–90s), hence her interest in how Mary Sutherland came to be working in New Zealand forestry in the 1920s.

A review appeared in the *Sunday Star Times*, 22 November, and online:

[www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/books/300155954/book-review-a-path-through-the-trees-by-vivien-edwards](http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/books/300155954/book-review-a-path-through-the-trees-by-vivien-edwards)

Vivien spent years, without funding, researching and writing this important chapter in the institute's and forestry industry's history. Please show your appreciation — buy a copy and encourage others to do the same — \$45 plus postage and packaging, from [www.bookpublishing.co.nz](http://www.bookpublishing.co.nz)

Publication of the biography may never have occurred had the NZIF Foundation not applied to the Stout Trust for funding on behalf of the author — Stout Trust grants are only awarded to registered charities. While the NZIF Foundation put no funds into the work and has received no revenue from it,

the grant was sufficient to cover publishing costs. So please recognise the role the Foundation played in assisting publication. Your Foundation has a lot to offer. It could do even more with support from your donations. Please do.

*Andrew McEwen*

*Chair, NZIF Foundation*