

Dr Rowan Emberson, Lincoln University Medal

Dr Rowan Emberson became a Lecturer in Entomology at Lincoln College in late 1968. Rowan spent his entire working career of 33 years at Lincoln College/University including a period as acting Head of Department. Since his retirement in 2002 he has continued his association with the university as an Honorary Senior Lecturer. Rowan has continued to advise many of the entomology postgraduates at Lincoln University over the last decade for both the Department of Ecology and the Bio-Protection Research Centre.

In his first years at Lincoln, Rowan's research concentrated on mites and beetles, especially Carabidae and Scarabaeidae, and he accumulated a broad knowledge of the New Zealand Coleoptera fauna. Rowan was involved in many ecological surveys, often in partnership with postgraduate students. A major project was documenting the Chatham Island beetle fauna for conservation purposes, which later led to collaboration with geologists on a project to determine the age of the Chatham Islands.

Rowan, in conjunction with Professor Roy Harrison, established a Lincoln University insect collection in the late 1960s, which became the basis of the Entomology Research Museum (LUNZ). The collection 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. The collection was built up in a series of annual summer field trips to different locations from North Cape to Stewart Island that persisted until 1991. Rowan spent considerable time throughout his career, in weekends and holidays, collecting samples to increase the collection.

Rowan's research interests were broadened through supervising student projects in agricultural entomology. He developed a particular interest in how pest and beneficial insects have adapted to the New Zealand environment. Many of his students have gone on to play important roles in New Zealand's bioprotection area.

Rowan 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.

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. Rowan was made a Fellow of the Entomological Society of New Zealand in 2014.

Rowan served on Westland/West Coast National Parks Board for a number of years.

In his retirement, Rowan has continued to work in the entomology area. He 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 by researchers using these mites for control of nuisance flies. Rowan has spent much of the last decade working with Department of Conservation surveying invertebrate diversity for tenure reviews in areas like the Murchison Mountains, Bankside and Coopers Knob. 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.