

indices, quality and management system development, forest operations and management auditing, feasibility and investment advice, operational benchmarking, forest valuations, provision of expert advice and information services, clearly demonstrate his wide knowledge and versatility.

Throughout the last 26 to 27 years, Jon was also sought after as a forestry consultant by overseas clients and resulted in engagements in Australia, Asia, North and South America, Europe and Africa, as well as a presenter at numerous forestry sector conferences both in New Zealand and offshore. Just prior to his death in May this year he spent three months in Kenya working with the Miti Mingi Maisha Bora (More Trees Better lives) project. Here he reviewed contracting approaches using work measurement and method study methodology. Jon's work stood high and will carry positively into the future there. He introduced new technology and systems and built the capacity in staff to manage these. He was genuinely interested in the Kenyan forest landscape and all the people he met there, irrespective of ranking or station in life, and made many new friends.

Jon adored his family and was a loving and caring husband and father and, more recently, an extremely popular grandad. There were two things he enjoyed the most when relaxing – fishing in the rivers near Hari Hari in South Westland and riding his Harley Softtail. He loved to share a good whiskey with mates, managing most times to keep himself under control in the process.

Jon contributed widely to the profession of forestry in New Zealand. He respected and valued the advice, guidance and reputations of foresters before him and he strongly supported the existence and objectives of the NZ Institute of Forestry, including the maintenance of the Institute's registration scheme. He was a Registered Member since 1990 and he contributed to the Southern North Island section, including the organisation of Institute conferences in that region. He loved forestry with a passion, was widely respected, unflappable, and good fun to be around. Jon is sorely missed by family, friends, and work and industry colleagues alike.

Contributors: the Dey family and Sheldon Drummond

Lewis Arthur Skudder

Born Kawakawa 1927, died Rotorua 2014

Prepared by Dave Field

Lew Skudder was born in 1927, the year that the New Zealand Institute of Foresters was established. He became a keen and active member and was pleased to see it renamed the Institute of Forestry, acknowledging a wider accommodation of the various professionals and practitioners now involved in the business of forestry.

When he retired on his 60th birthday on 31 March 1987, the same day that the New Zealand Forest Service was disestablished, Lew was the acting conservator of forests for the Rotorua Conservancy, the most senior state field forester in the country. This day must have had mixed blessings for a man devoted to his work and his state employer. He would not have enjoyed this final year of his work because of his loyalty to the Forest Service, his pride in its achievements, his commitment to his field staff, and his concern for their welfare. He was justly awarded an MBE for his services to forestry.



Lew was not the sort to mince words or suppress his opinions. He wasn't renowned for long-winded reports or flowery letters, but his verbal expressions were clear and measured. He surprised his family and colleagues by writing some 37 pages on his life in forestry and he had strong views on the politics of state forestry and the conservation movement which hastened the demise of the Forest Service. His notes and a page on his membership of the Institute were a valuable resource for this obituary.

Lew's maternal grandfather worked with the Kauri Timber Company in Northland and his father in sawmills in the King Country, clearing bush for Taihape farms and in several sawmills in Northland. Lew thought his own move into forestry was 'a bit of a fluke' when he was invited to become a technical trainee in the State Forest Service, having missed out as a rural field cadet. His first posting was on

VE Day 1945 to Waipoua Kauri Forest where he worked on raising kauri seedlings in the forest nursery, noting the prolific kauri regeneration along the forest edge and logging tracks.

He later noted with irony how rimu and kahikatea were also prolific on disturbed ground during the selection logging debate of the 1980s. A brief time in head office was followed by a posting to Te Kuiti, catching the tail-end of the 1946 Taupo fires, and where he was introduced to timber cruising for sales of the burnt native forest. A spell in the forests of the Catlins and Longwoods demonstrated the potential for beech management before being sent to Waipa, Rotorua where he soon realised that exotic plantation forestry was the future.

More native timber cruising followed in the Ohakune district before he became an inaugural member of the National Forest Survey, which took 10 years. This was the comprehensive assessment of the nation's native forests to determine remaining timber volumes, but it also produced a classification system for typing native forests. The first National Forest Survey reunion was in 1956 and coincided with Lew and Enid's wedding plan. Forest Service colleagues petitioned Enid to delay marriage for a week, although that upset the clergyman because it meant the wedding would be in Lent. 'Never mind,' said Lew, 'I'll give up sugar in my tea' and the NFS blokes promised to behave for the week! The reunion and the Skudder wedding were great successes.

Posted to Kaingaroa, Lew was one of the early instructors for the Woodsman Training Scheme and gave credit to director-general Alex Entrican who had initiated it. Lew's work with training field staff led to an interest in radiata silviculture and eventually progressed to oversight of thinnings, clearfelling and cutover inspection. He hankered for even more responsibility and was appointed officer in charge at Waimihia in southern Kaingaroa. One of the bleakest and lonely posts in the North Island, it was well-known as '60/8' after the original grazing run and planting campsite numbers. For him it was an eight-year term of 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Lew and Enid worked hard in that remote community, re-establishing a school and completing many tasks outside conventional forestry. This

included search and rescue, assisting the Taupo police with finding escaped prisoners, vehicle accidents on the state highway and general communications. During a field visit by Rotorua foresters in 1960 to look at beech management, Lew was inspired by their 'forestry conversations' and he joined the Institute as an associate member. He later became a full member and served two terms on the council, becoming a life member in 1987.

After his 'hardening-up' in 60/8, Lew and family returned to Kaingaroa village and he honed his skills in logging management, work study, fire control and dealing with industrial disputes at a time when log production for the mills at Kawerau was paramount. This experience prepared him well for his next move to the Rotorua Conservancy office, but his horizons expanded with the burgeoning East Coast project, planting the depleted catchments of Mangatu, Ruatoria and elsewhere, and the developing relationship with the Maori land owners of East Taupo blocks. He was proud of the progress with Tuwharetoa and pleased to see the forests established for eventual Maori ownership.

Lew maintained his support of the various Forest Service training schemes and was secretly pleased with his appellation, 'Honest Lew, the trainees' friend'. He had oversight of around 250 field staff and was disappointed if he could not recognise 95 per cent by their first name. It was reliably rumoured that when placing young staff around the Conservancy he had already researched their rugby prowess to see how that might be utilised in the Conservancy team playing in the Forest Service rugby competition. Rugby was one of his passions.

Lew worked with many senior staff in the Forest Service including other conservators, directors from head office and a number of the directors-general. He did not always enjoy the political directions from Wellington, but he respected the ability and experience of his head office colleagues and they respected him. When he first moved into the Rotorua office the conservator was Dave Kennedy, with whom Lew got on well. Dave was renowned for his literary ability and wrote many impressive and colourful reports and letters. Lew once told me that Dave had described some uninspired individual as being 'agag with indifference'. No-one could have ever used that expression about Lewis Arthur Skudder.

Back cover: (Top) Camera mounted in the cutover; (Bottom) CutoverCam monitor in the cab of FPNZ Ltd yarder working for PF Olsen Ltd at Manawahe Forest, Bay of Plenty

