

Forestry leader and outspoken critic of government policies plays his final round

Lindsay (Alick) Poole, CBE, B(For)Sc, MSc, NDH, Hon DSc, outstanding forester and public servant; B March 4, 1908; d January 2 2008

Born and initially brought up at Whatatutu in the Gisborne region, Lindsay Poole was only two months short of being 100 years old when he died suddenly in Wellington.

By the time of his demise this popular man was widely acknowledged as New Zealand's pre-eminent forester and an outstanding environmentalist, scientist and administrator.

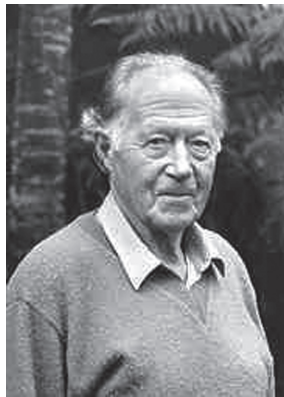
Wanting him to have a good education, his parents sent him to Belmont School in Auckland. At the start of every term this involved a five day voyage beginning with him being loaded aboard a coastal steamer by basket. His secondary education was at Kings College, Auckland.

He joined the NZ Forest Service in 1926, and during the following three years, with the help of a Smith-Wiley scholarship, he was able to obtain a forestry degree. During the depression years he gained valuable practical experience, as a forestry laborer, nursery manager, quartermaster in unemployment camps, ecological surveyor and deer culler.

Fuller recognition of his abilities came in 1937 when he successfully applied for a job as a scientist at the Botany Division of DSIR. In 1939 he volunteered for service in the 15th forestry company, NZEF, located in Hampshire, England. From there he was shoulder-tapped to become the New Zealand's Scientific Liaison officer in war-time London.

After VE day he joined the Forestry and Timber section of the Military Government in the British Zone of Germany, and worked closely with the German Forest Service. On returning to New Zealand in 1947 he was appointed Assistant Director, Botany Division, and in 1949 Director. His MSc. was conferred by Victoria University in 1948 for his thesis - "The relationships of New Zealand's Southern Beeches". In 1951 Lindsay became Assistant Director of the NZ Forest Service and was responsible among other things for planning the expansion of the Government's planting program and the setting up of the "Taylor Committee" to report on solutions to serious erosion on the East Coast. From 1961 to 1971 as Director General of the Forest Service, he was in charge of the management of about a quarter of the area of New Zealand and presided over a period of major forestry development and a burgeoning timber harvest.

At various times, in recognition of his extensive experience, he held Directorships of the Cawthron



Institute, Baigent's Forestry Limited, Tasman Forestry, and Scollays, and from 1971 to 1978 he was chairman of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council.

In his 'retirement' he continued to produce numerous books and articles. His papers on forestry, botany and horticulture number around 100 and he wrote several books. Particular mention should be made of "Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand" with illustrations by Nancy Adams (now in its 6th revision), and "Wild animals in New Zealand". Books written after he was 60 include "Forestry in New Zealand" (1969), "Catchment Control in New Zealand" (1983), "Southern Beeches" (1987), "Tomorrows Trees" (1992), "Trees Timber and Tranquility" (1992).

At various times he served as President of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry, the New Zealand Ecological Society, and the Wellington Branches of the Botanical Society and the Royal Society of New Zealand.

His awards include being made a fellow of the Royal Society, a fellow of the Royal Institute of Horticulture, Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Foresters of Britain, Silver Jubilee Medal, Coronation Medal, Medal of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, and the Kirk Medal. He was also made a Companion of the British Empire (CBE) in 1971 and Honorary D.Sc. by the University of Canterbury in 1999.

Ever since the dissolution of the New Zealand Forest Service in 1987 he was strongly critical of the Government's forest policies, and in 2006 he co-authored a highly enlightening book, "The Great Wood Robbery, Political Bumbling Ruins New Zealand's Forests", which was his last. In this book he and his co-authors argue that over the last two decades unenlightened policies backed by a misled constituency have taken New Zealand forestry down the wrong path. They explain the importance of forestry, and how dysfunctional governance has led to a loss of forest biomass and area. The book will have helped influence the Government to unveil forestry-friendly emissions trading schemes last September, but an even better tribute to Lindsay would be if Government also reassembled a multi-functional state forestry organization to oversee the sustainable management of Crown-owned indigenous forests, to do more to encourage the private sector to deliver forest environmental benefits to society, and more importantly to provide unbiased and holistic forest policy advice to the Government.

Lindsay is survived by his wife, Barbara, son Michael, daughter Jacqueline and grandchildren.

Hamish Levack

A further anecdote about Lindsay Poole from Wink Sutton:

In late 1968 I was a young scientist at the Forest Research Institute. The leader of our research group, Dr. Bob Fenton, had sent a telex to Head Office critical of some Forest Service policy.

I was then on a visit to Head office and completely unaware of the upheaval Fenton's telex had caused. I was

having lunch with Gerry Yska and John Wendelken in the Bowen State Building staff cafeteria when Lindsay walked in. Seeing me he made straight for our table and said something like "What right did FRI have to comment on Forest Service policy".

I responded "Every right" and spent the next hour defending Bob Fenton's arguments. At the conclusion of our debate I said to Gerry "Well there goes my career." "No" he said "He is the Director-General. He heard some things he would normally not hear. If he had wanted he could have terminated the debate at any time."

In all the years I have known Lindsay he was always a gentleman and he never unfairly asserted the power that came with his position as Director General.

president's comment

How to feed a dragon - a glimpse of forestry in China

Have you ever thought what it would be like to be in charge of the state forestry in China with a requirement to feed a construction boom fuelling an eleven percent annual growth in GDP which requires forest products sourced predominantly from China? We all have images of the coal ships at anchor off the coast of Newcastle, Australia and nearly a quarter of the shipping in the world tied up taking products and goods to and fro from China. But can you imagine being required to produce the forest products "in-house"? It's mind boggling!



use forestry. All land in China is owned by the government, who determines tenancy, land use and development. There is strong public support for growing trees, and research programmes and universities are well funded. Reforestation and upgrading of existing ecological forests is happening on an enormous scale, driven by government funding, regular inventories and five year plans.

We were extremely well looked after and are grateful to the Society. We gained a much better appreciation of the challenges they face and I look forward to an ongoing relationship between our two organisations.

Just before Christmas 2007, NZIF councillors Howard Moore, Sally Haddon and I joined the Chinese Society of Forestry, as their guests, on a 7 day whorl wind tour of forestry in China. The scale is massive and the need for forestry production intense yet this must be balanced by the need to look after the ecological values of the forests. We visited a range of forests with field trips included a bamboo forest and bamboo reprocessing factory, Tianmushen Nature Reserve, a ten year old MDF company with 9 lines, plantation forest, urban forests and Longdong National Forest Farm. We also visited the Great Wall and Xihu Lake.

Official visits included the Chinese Society of Forestry, the State Forestry Administration, and the Forestry Department of Zhejiang Province. We also visited the Zhejiang Forestry University with 20,000 students and the South China Agricultural University in Guangzhou with 40,000 students. The Chinese Society of Forestry is keen to work on student exchanges and Sally has already been invited to do her masters there!

The concept of forestry in China covers everything from tea bushes to National Parks and embraces multiple

We will be presenting a paper at our May NZIF conference. This winter we also intend to plant some ginkgo trees (the Society's emblem), rimu (NZIF emblem) and celery pine (a NZ tree with flattened stems like the Ginkgo) at my Nikau Forest in Marlborough to mark the visit and also counter the carbon emissions we created by going there.

Jaquetta (Ket) Bradshaw
President and Registered Member
NZ Institute of Forestry
Te Putahi Ngaherehere o Aotearoa

Erratum: In the August 2007 issue of the NZ Journal of Forestry, John Schrider's name was misspelled as "Shrider". We apologise to John for this error.