

Domain Board. He was also a past director of the Napier YMCA. He had a lifelong interest in the Maori people, and worked closely with them in Northland, Bay of Plenty/Urewera and Hawkes Bay. While managing HBF Bill also ran a private family farming operation on leased land.

Following a company takeover in 1978, Bill moved to Napier where he developed a forestry contracting and consulting business. This led, in 1982, to his position as a National Field Advisor with the NZ Farm Forestry Association, when he travelled throughout the country advising farm foresters on managing and marketing their forests. In 1986 Bill moved to Southland as managing director of his consultancy dealing with indigenous and exotic forest management and marketing, an activity he maintained up to the time of his death.

Bill's interests included tramping, fishing and bird watching; in his younger years he was a keen fisherman and a strong and immensely fit hunter. He was a widely read man in both quality and variety. His well researched articles on forestry appeared in both The Southland Times and the Otago Daily Times. He was a member of Winton's Probus choir. He was a Full Member of the NZ Institute of Forestry and the NZ Farm Forestry Association, and served on local committees of both organisations.

Bill is survived by his wife of 53 years, Margaret, and his four children - Elizabeth, Jane, Susan, Peter and their families and 9 grandchildren; and his brother and 6 sisters.

Roger Washbourn
(with assistance from Chris Perley).

The original good keen man

Kenneth Henley Miers

18 March 1925 to 17 January 2010

At his funeral Ken was described in several tributes as being a big outdoors man with a commanding presence and with a big indoors office brain. With the benefits of reflection and hindsight one could almost conclude that the wide range of experiences he had, and the skills gained, along with the contacts made, in the first half of his life were destined to fit him for the outstanding leadership he contributed to changing and implementing a major area of government policy by 180 degrees in his later career.

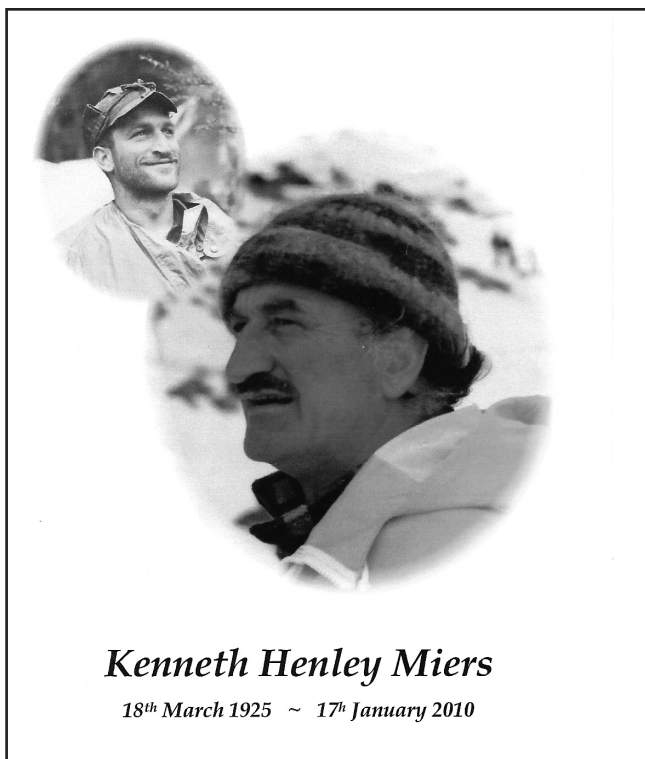
Kenneth Henley Miers was born at Manaia, in Taranaki to sharemilking parents, the eldest of a family of four boys and a girl. During the Depression he had to leave school at 12 (1937) and work the farm. He left home to start work in 1943 at 18 as a deer culler, starting at Ngamatea, a major sheep station running into the Kaimanawa Ranges in the central North Island but soon moved to work in Southland and Otago based at Hunter Valley. With a group of four including Snow Corboy, the hunting party killed 5000 goats in two weeks in the Shotover, which gives some idea of the level of infestation. He was managed and supervised by the legendary Skipper Yerex who was to become the inaugural Controller of Wildlife. Ken was appointed a sub-area supervisor at Monowai in the 1946/47 season and appointed to staff on 1/7/1947. Despite his fitness he was rejected for military service because of flat feet. He met his wife Elizabeth at a country dance at Arrowtown and married in 1949 or 50.

Ken's leadership potential was early recognised as a member of the Dr Geoffrey Orbell expeditions which found the takahe in the Murchison Mountains in November 1948. Orbell was also the founder of the NZ Deerstalkers Association so their relationship was no doubt useful over the years. Ken also participated in the 1948 wapiti

Fiordland expedition as 2 i.c. which was sponsored by Colonel Hunt of the USA to explore how the Wapiti had adapted in the Fiordland environment. In 1949 he was also responsible for exploring some caves in Takahe Valley which contained skeletons of moa and kiwi.

Ken was hugely influenced by the US participants on the wapiti expedition, and also by two of the participating biologists Ralph Kean and Baughan Wisely. All encouraged him to "have a go" at university, which he did in 1950 going to Canterbury University supported by his wife, studying along with John Morris who also spent much of his career in the mountains. This was no mean achievement by somebody who left primary school at 12.

He rejoined Internal Affairs after graduation as a biologist about 1953/54 and became an integral part of the Wildlife Branch science unit which, at that time included Ralph Kean, who transferred to the NZ Forest Service under the Noxious Animal Act 1956 as a leading opossum biologist. This change was welcomed by the NZ Deerstalkers Association who blamed Wildlife Deer Control Section for excluding recreational hunters from contributing to deer control, especially in operational areas. Ken stayed in the Wildlife Branch. Game bird research and management was a new focus then and Ken initially worked alongside Ron Balham on grey and mallard ducks, black swans and Canada geese. When Balham left to join Victoria University Ken took over all waterfowl research and completed a pioneering study on duck survival rates which was to guide Acclimatisation Society game bird management for a generation. In 1958 the Wildlife Branch established a game management extension service which Ken led for several years and it was during this time that he oversaw a major nesting study on Lake Ellesmere's black swans. In 1964 he was promoted to Scientific Officer and in 1965 was appointed



Kenneth Henley Miers

18th March 1925 ~ 17th January 2010

the deputy Controller of Wildlife under Frank Newcombe with particular responsibility for reinvigorating the depleted science unit and liaison with Acclimatisation Societies.

Ken moved to Wellington and set up home at Paekakariki in 1955 where he became heavily involved in fishing and netting, camping with five children in the hills behind and became known in the community as the “bird doctor” for injured and stray birds. His family remembers a large albatross with a broken wing held in a cot frame in the garage until deemed “ready” when it was stuffed in a pack and taken to the top of a hill where it was tossed into the air to fly or die. It is remembered heading into the sun after giving Ken a memorable look in the eye.

He was involved in the local volunteer fire brigade for around 25 years and became deputy chief fire officer, the local surf club, and was a borough councillor for many years. In February 1966 Ken transferred from Wildlife to become Superintendent of National Parks within Lands and Survey. This caused great concern amongst his Wildlife colleagues who saw him as their obvious “Controller in waiting”. Much of this collective angst focussed on his willingness to join with the devil - Lands and Survey was, at that time, viewed as a very major obstacle to the Wildlife Branch’s desire to address some critical endangered species issues, such as L&S restricting access to islands and parks that they administered and being generally unco-operative whenever possible. Furthermore L&S made very clear its desire to bring the Wildlife Branch into its ranks. Was Ken going to help them do that? Within about 8 months however, Ken moved again in November to become responsible for Protection Forestry in the NZ Forest Service, following after Peter McKelvey, where he was surrounded by many of his

old deer culling mates and former Wildlife colleagues who had transferred to the Forest Service when the deer control function was moved. Both organisations were housed in the Bowen State Building. Ken was promoted to wider responsibilities as the inaugural Director of Environmental Forestry in April 1971.

It soon became apparent that Ken’s appointment to a senior position within NZFS was the best appointment Wildlife could have made. He engendered a new and closer working relationship between the two organisations to the benefit of both. He was able to respond to Wildlife’s plea for concerted deer control in the Murchison Mountains for the benefit of the relict takahe population there, he encouraged the formation of Wildlife’s Forest Fauna survey unit which he saw as able to bring key information to bear on where to focus deer management for the greatest good, and he was an outwardly sympathetic ear in the sometimes troubled Wildlife -NZFS relationship of the 1970s. He was appointed to the Fauna Protection Advisory Council which was Wildlife’s consultative body on all matters of wildlife conservation and it was in this forum that Ken healed many an adversarial wound.

On a personal note Murray Williams particularly remembers how Ken would lunch each day in the basement cafeteria of the Bowen State Building.....same table, same colleagues....a mixture of deer/possum managers and old wildlife colleagues. Stories, laughs, lies aplenty and very wonderful company.

Ken served on the then National Parks Authority and Tongariro National Parks Board and Kapiti Reserve Committee. NGOs had respect for his responsiveness. He worked for all three Conservation agencies of the time, which was a unique achievement. He supported forest parks, ecological areas and “mainland sanctuaries” including after he retired. He was a helpful guide on many issues when appointed to the Protection Forest Research Advisory Committee. He overcame several jousts with cancer in the early 1970s through sheer guts and determination being resolute and often more cheery than his visitors.

Over Ken’s career probably the most significant contribution was in the changes in wild animal control policies in the decade over the late 1960s to late 1970s from policies which were aimed at extermination as a result of the impact on New Zealand’s forest and grasslands which had evolved in the absence of such grazing animals. This ravaging of mountains and forests had been recognised in several reports from the late 1800s until greater recognition of harm to soil and water values led to the setting up of the Animal Control Branch of Internal Affairs and the employment of deer cullers under various incentive schemes. As a result of reviews in the 1950s this responsibility was transferred to the NZFS under the Noxious Animal Act 1956. Much more support was provided through huts, tracks, and bridges which also encouraged recreation

hunters into more remote areas. In the mid-late 1960s the introduction of helicopters first led to hunting from the air and the recovery of venison and its export overseas; and then consequent pressure by helicopter hunters capturing live deer and bringing them out to begin deer farms to manage local herds. To recognise and provide legitimisation of these new pressures and opportunities there were amendments to the Act in 1967 and Deer Farming Regulations 1969 but uptake was slow.

It was not until a more radical and comprehensive policy change, including a shift from extermination to control, was made in the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, developed and introduced to the sectoral interest groups under Ken's oversight and leadership that deer farming began to expand. As well as providing more comprehensive provisions for deer farms and safari parks, and recovery operations it also made provision for Recreation Hunting Areas to better recognise the contributions of recreational hunters and allow their contribution in the management of such areas. When one considers Ken's skills and career it is difficult to consider many others with the experience and range of contacts to lead such far reaching changes in policies and practices.

On his retirement in 1985 Ken was presented with a lichen covered piece of timber with his name carved into it, salvaged from an old hut he'd visited as a culler many years before. Ken and his wife bought a caravan and spent several months each year travelling around the country fishing and yarning with old mates before returning to winter at home in Levin.

Ken is mourned by his wife Beth, five children and six grandchildren.

Ken Miers the original good keen man, with wide knowledge, experiences and political acumen

Ken was admitted as an Associate Member in 1968, advanced to Full Member in 1980, resigned in the early 1980s

(Prepared by Ian Trotman, Colin Bassett and Murray Williams with support and contributions by several of Ken's colleagues in Wildlife, NZFS and his family)

Sad loss to forestry

Kevin Jamieson (1945-2009)

Graduating as a NZFS forest ranger, Kevin worked at Gwavas and Karioi forests and then from 1973 to 1975 obtained overseas experience in Welsh and Danish forests. On his return to NZ he did another stint with the NZFS, this time at Golden Downs. After that he joined P F Olsen as an associate spending seven years in the Bay of Plenty. In 1985 he came to Wellington and set up as a freelance forestry consultant. Always an enthusiast for forestry, he took a group of forest owners and managers to the Elmia Wood conference in Sweden and organized a forestry tour of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Subsequently he attended the Emilia Wood Fair twice more and wrote and published articles about what he had learned.

Kevin did much to promote good forest practice. He was a past president of the Wellington branch of the NZIF, and for several years he organized the well-attended six-monthly forestry forums at Palmerston North that were designed to keep practitioners up to date with technical developments.

Kevin's demise is a loss to forestry practitioners in the Southern North Island. Our sympathy goes to his wife Christine their two daughters, Meredith and Erana.

Hamish Levack