

Unsung Hero Leaves Enduring Legacy

Dr Michael (Mick) Ernest Hedley

20 April 1944 to 30 April 2011

Sadly Scion has lost one of its best loved characters. Dr Mick Hedley's death has left a huge gap for his Scion family, the national and international science community and the New Zealand timber industry.

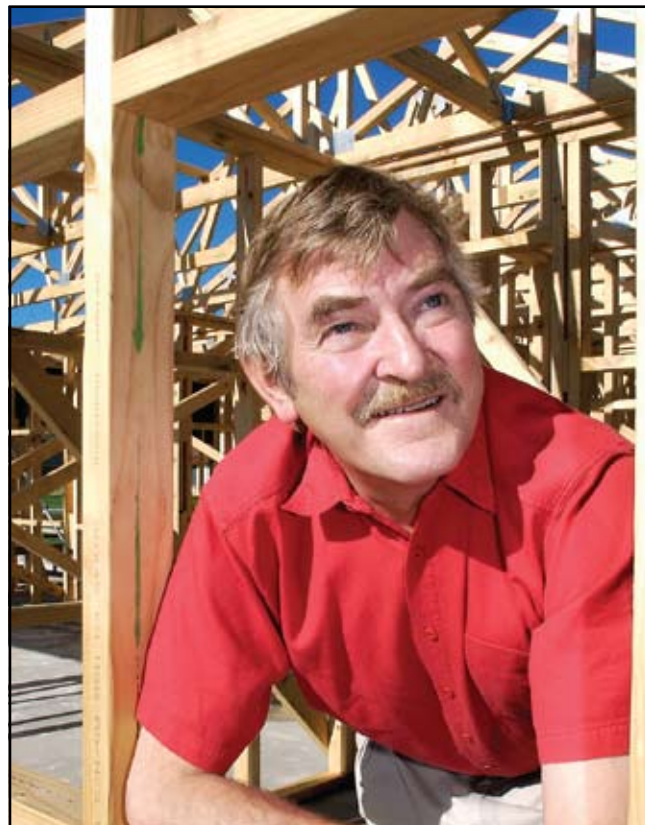
The ability to treat pine with preservatives so that it can be used in environments such as framing for houses, decking, fencing, landscaping or for poles and piles is so much part of our lives that we take for granted all the scientific and technical work that made this possible. Dr Hedley was one of the major contributors to this critically important field of science and the translation of that science into practice.

Forty one years ago Mick joined the New Zealand Forest Research Institute (now Scion) as a wood preservation scientist. He had completed a BSc and a doctorate at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, England; specialising in botany, chemistry and zoology. Working alongside others such as Sandy McQuire and John Butcher from the 1970s, he was instrumental in escalating New Zealand's international reputation in the wood preservation field.

These were the boom times for the New Zealand wood products industry and there was a pressing need to ensure that New Zealand's dominant wood species, radiata pine, could meet demanding performance required for application in a broad range of end-uses. This could only be achieved by the use of timber preservatives and the assurance that the resultant product would perform in service.

Within this work area Mick had many personal triumphs. Probably the most significant of these was the development of the rapid durability testing techniques that addressed the durability needs for timber framing and led to the recognition of a H1.2 level of treatment in New Zealand. This was pivotal in addressing the ongoing management for the protection of timber framing that can arise from the all too familiar weathertightness issues that dominated the late 1990s. A new treatment system was urgently needed to regain confidence in the use of wood within the construction industry and Mick spearheaded its development.

Mick served on many committees, sharing his experience and knowledge for the benefit of the industry. When the old Timber Preservation Authority specifications were rewritten to become the Timber Preservation Council MP3640 in the 1990s and then to the NZS3640 in the early 2000s, Mick was instrumental in putting the draft documents together and guided people through what was needed and why. He was also Chair of the TPC Technical Committee, a reviewer for applications for new preservatives and attended meetings on international standardisation and



represented Scion on the Australian TM-06 committee for timber preservation and related standards.

Mick became a member of the International Research Group on Wood Protection in 1977 and over subsequent years regularly attended annual meetings, presented papers on research and topical issues of the time and had also served on the Executive Council for a three-year term. He was a member of the Local Organising Committee for this year's meeting to be held in Queenstown next week. He was looking forward to seeing his worldwide colleagues and friends there but sadly that is not to be. No doubt there will be much reminiscing and revisiting of memories by his IRG colleagues. Many have sent their personal condolences.

The scientists undertaking the work in timber preservation are the unsung heroes of the industry ensuring that the wood industry can sustain market share in both domestic and international markets. Dr Mick Hedley has left an enduring legacy for the New Zealand wood industry and the international science community.

Dr Hedley is survived by his partner Maureen and his two sons Richard and Christopher and their families. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, colleagues, and the timber industry.

Russell Burton and Jeanette Drysdale