

Obituaries

Joan Marjorie Dingley OBE, MSc, DSc (h.c.), AHRIH 14 May 1916 – 1 January 2008



Miss Dingley was born and lived in Auckland all her life, apart for brief periods overseas. She completed an MSc in botany at Auckland University

College in 1940 with a thesis on the tree fern *Dicksonia*. Shortly afterwards, she was appointed to the staff of Plant Diseases Division, DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) at the Mt Albert Research Centre and continued there until her retirement in 1976. Her appointment was due in part to the absence overseas of men

of military age and she was one of the few women at that time to be appointed to a scientific position. She could claim with justification to be amongst the very first women to be professional horticultural scientists in New Zealand.

At Mt Albert, her first research project was the rot-proofing of canvas, an important contribution to the war effort, as canvas was quickly destroyed under the tropical conditions of the Pacific war theatre. She then worked on the taxonomy of fungi pathogenic on plants, studying for a period at the Commonwealth Mycological Institute at Kew. For many years she was the leading taxonomic

mycologist in DSIR, especially after the retirement and death of G.H. Cunningham. She brought several of Cunningham's bulletins through to publication. In 1959, she identified the fungus that causes facial eczema in sheep, then one of the most serious livestock diseases of sheep. Ten years later, she published one of her most important works, the first list of plant diseases found in New Zealand. This list and subsequent updates were widely used by Department of Agriculture field staff. She also built up the Fungal Herbarium of Plant Diseases Division and brought together much of the necessary old taxonomic literature. She was

described by G.H. Cunningham as the best collector he knew and by the time she retired, the Herbarium had increased from 4000 specimens to about 35,000 specimens.

Joan was an active member of the Auckland Botanical Society, Alpine Sports Club, University Field Club and Auckland Tramping Club and so became very familiar with the bush and native plants – indeed her research demanded a good knowledge of the hosts as well as the fungi that attacked them. She developed an extensive knowledge of introduced plants as well and for many years she was, in effect, the resident botanical expert at Mt Albert. Her knowledge was not just theoretical as she was also an enthusiastic gardener with a large property at the top of Victoria Avenue in Remuera, Auckland.

Joan's membership of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture dates back to 15 September 1959. In those days there was a Dominion Council – quite a large body with representatives from scientific, horticultural, grower/trade and amateur organisations. Joan was the DSIR representative for a number of years and she travelled by train to Wellington every three months to attend meetings.

She was also a member of the Auckland District Council / Auckland Branch committee for many years, serving a term as Chairperson. She was a strong advocate of horticultural education and took many evening classes for National Diploma of Horticulture students who at that time studied by correspondence. She included basic botany, plant identification, plant diseases and their control in these classes. The Branch also conducted a number of Oral and Practical sessions for students about to sit their exams. Many students worked in nurseries doing repetitive jobs, and had no experience of, for example, sowing and pricking out seedlings or of propagation

techniques such as budding and grafting. Joan's work at Plant Diseases Division meant that she was in touch with growers and their organisations, so she knew who to ask to provide expertise in the various areas that needed to be covered if students were to pass their practical examinations. Joan also served on the RNZIH Examining Board for a number of years, being first appointed in 1966.

Joan was one of a group of Auckland members who felt there was a need for a scheme to help the public choose suitable plants for their gardens and after some persuasion and fine tuning, the RNZIH Award of Garden Excellence was instituted in 1965. The aim was to draw up a list of (initially) one hundred 'good garden plants', not an easy task when the range of climatic conditions throughout the country is considered. Sadly, for reasons that were never made clear, the plug was pulled on the scheme just as it was gaining support from other branches and nurserymen.

Joan was elected Associate of Honour in 1969 but a full citation was never published. She used to relay with a chuckle how, at one of the Dominion Council meetings, when the awards were being discussed, someone said she should be nominated. So there and then she was nominated and elected without a proper citation being prepared. Her high standing in the horticultural community and her many contributions were just so obvious. She received many other honours: she was appointed OBE and she was very proud of the degree of Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*) bestowed upon her by Massey University.

Joan was also the first Life Member elected by the Friends of the Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens. She had been associated with the Gardens since their inception. She was a great mentor and trusted confidante

of the late Brian Buchanan, the first manager of the Auckland Gardens, and served on the Gardens Technical Advisory Panel from 1975 to 1982. In December 1981, she was appointed Chair of the New Zealand Native Plant Evaluation Panel, which provided advice about native plants and prepared a series of advisory leaflets. She also served terms on the Friends Executive and as a Trustee. She assisted the Friends in many ways, supporting the garden rambles, selling plants, manning the Information Centre at weekends and, in particular, generously supporting the Friends horticultural library. Joan was a great 'book' person who read widely, including children's books, which seemed to be a special interest. Her friends' children benefited at Christmas and on birthdays when she passed on her purchases. The Library at the Gardens also benefited as Joan read and then donated a great many books.

Joan could be strong minded – perhaps stubborn is a better description. She was one of a remarkable group of equally strong-minded plants people in Auckland – including Jean Veal, Hugh Redgrove, Dave Bull, Max Goodey and Arthur Farnell – who really relished a good and vigorous argument on the merits of a particular plant and its nomenclature. Their discussions enlivened the regular Branch meetings. Joan and Jean Veal in particular were keen supporters of the Botanic Gardens and often gave Jack Hobbs explicit advice on how they should be maintained. We remember her for her passion for plants and as a very generous and kind-hearted friend.

Obituary compiled by Sue Davison and Ross Ferguson.

Based in part on the citation for her honorary DSc prepared by Rod Bieleski and a dedication marking her 90th birthday prepared by Gary Samuels.

John Pilkington Hudson CBE, AHRIH 24 July 1910 – 6 December 2007



'Prof' Hudson will be remembered by those in the fruit industry, not only by those who trained at Nottingham University, where in the late

1950s he was Head of Horticulture, but also for those who travelled west to visit Long Ashton Research Station, where he was Director from 1967–1975 whilst holding a Chair in Horticultural Science at the University of Bristol. Derbyshire-born John Hudson was a truly remarkable man, serving horticulture for most of his career, and only revealing his wartime escapades after a glass or two of the 'infamous' Long Ashton Vintage Perry. Leaving school at 16 he enrolled on a horticultural course at the Midland Agricultural College near Nottingham hoping to join his father in a nursery venture. Having passed with distinction he was advised to enrol for a BSc at Nottingham University, where he met his wife Gretta, studying at Sutton Bonington. In the mid 1930s John Hudson took up an appointment as horticultural adviser with the Sussex Council, based near Plumpton, where he joined the TA. After the war he journeyed to work for the New Zealand Department of Agriculture,

before returning to Nottingham to lecture, but soon become Head of Horticulture, later to be the Dean of the faculty of Agriculture. In the 1960s he spent half his time at the University of Khartoum, developing a passion for tropical agriculture.

For many 'seniors' in the fruit industry today it was his time as Director of LARS that will be remembered. His team of Luckwell, Campbell, Stott, Williams, Childs, Beech and Abbott (to name but a few) were remarkable for their interface with the fruit industry in the east and west of the country, across a wide range of pomological disciplines. He will long be associated with the 'Meadow Orchard' concept, where dense lines of single stemmed tree shoots would potentially produce phenomenal yield per hectare whilst having the capability of being combine harvested! His initiative at that time, with a group of young Kent growers, to establish the Under 40s group endures to this day, leaving behind a legacy of wider understanding across research, development and advice for the growing industry. With the alchemy of the Cider House at Long Ashton to assist him, 'Prof' Hudson oversaw an innovative, if not noisy, dialogue throughout the industry at the biennial January gatherings of young fruit growers at the Station. Generations of students passing

through the University, and growers of all ages through the Research Station, found inspiration alike in his horticultural skills as teacher and scientist. He was appointed a CBE in 1975 and awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour from the RHS in the following year.

But it is for his wartime service that John Hudson will be remembered. Evacuated from Dunkirk, he served in the Bomb Disposal Unit based initially in Yorkshire, then in London during the blitz. He won two George Medals, first after neutralising a 500kg bomb in London, the second following his defusing of a dreaded Flying Bomb south of London, securing the weapon intact for the first time. Rising to the rank of Major, he was awarded a military MBE following his work in sharing his expertise in the USA and with the UK's RAF and Naval services. 'Prof' Hudson was truly one of the 'greats' of our modern industry.

Reproduced with permission from *The Fruit Grower*, January 2008, p. 8, written by Malcolm Withnall, a founding member of the 'Under-40s Club' that he initiated for young growers.

For more information, see the webpages compiled by his son Richard (Dick) Hudson at <http://richardhudson.byethost2.com/family/jph/johnhudson.htm>

Dr Alick Lindsay Poole CBE, FRSNZ, AHRIH 4 March 1908 – 2 January 2008



Forester decried sell-off

[Alick] Lindsay Poole was New Zealand's pre-eminent forester for a large part of his working life.

He knew more about trees, their growth and management, than most other New Zealanders, and what he didn't know was reliably enshrined

in the intellectual bank of research institutions and the now-defunct Forest Service.

A professional forester, botanist and public servant, he was director-general of forests for a decade till 1971. When he retired that year, he knew that New Zealand's vast state forests were in good hands. He spent the next eight years as chairman of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council, where his forestry expertise was an ideal tool for giving

farmers advice on how to prevent erosion and river authorities how to avoid floods.

However, Poole developed a chip on his shoulder.

To his lasting regret, politicians had the last word on 100 years of the national forestry estate and the intellectual property that went with it.

In the state restructuring frenzy of the 1980s and 1990s, when the need to renovate New Zealand's tottering

economy was paramount, politicians consented to the sale of half a million hectares of state forests and ancillary infrastructure. The Forest Service was dissolved in 1987 and subsumed into a Forestry Corporation. Most of the service's 3200 workers lost their jobs.

Poole was horrified. Not naturally combative, he was stirred by what he said was a criminal act, and he let politicians have it between the eyes. The Forest Service was "thrown to the wolves without any parliamentary discussion and no private discussion – that's why it is criminal."

His horror was matched by the private sector's glee. They got first-class forests, among them some of the world's biggest single-species plantations, without strings – or, as Poole pointed out, no requirement to manage them or replant. Trees, he argued, were like any other agricultural product. They could be planted, managed and milled sustainably with the added benefit of turning marginal lands into productive contributors to the economy.

The government had marked down state forestry as a loser, but it had not reckoned with Poole's understanding of power plays in the economy. Had market forces been allowed to determine prices charged by the Forest Service, it would have been a money-spinner. Instead, he said the "dead hand" of politicians had interceded to ensure private industry log buyers paid preferential prices. The proof, he said, after the first sell-off deals were announced, was in the government's arrangement with Tasman Pulp and Paper, which bought rights to the Kaingaroa forest – a 70-year contract at a fixed price rather than one reviewed every two or three years. "Votes were much more important to politicians than money," he groused.

Fletcher Challenge paid for rights to 49,000 ha of plantations at Nelson and Earnslaw. One got 24,000 ha plus a sawmill in sales that contained no requirement for management or replanting. It had been, Poole said, the sale of the century. In 1991, when the new Forestry Corporation analysed a 1955 contract signed with Tasman Pulp and Paper, it found taxpayers had in effect been making a \$47 million annual subsidy to Tasman's owners.

When the National government sold the Forestry Corporation for \$1.6 billion in 1996, Poole said he had further proof of his assertions about pricing. From the remaining forests in its portfolio in 1995, the corporation had made \$141 million, of which \$112 million was returned to the government.

None of his representations, nor those of his two successors, made a scrap of difference. The pity of it, he said, was that the scientific evidence and commercial nous was exchanged for expediency.

Plantings fell. Sustainable native beech forests were not harvested; instead, imports of exotics, often from unsustainable resources, went through the roof.

Acknowledged as a world expert on beech resources, he considered it a travesty that they were locked up when the demand abroad was high on unlimited. The government commissioned him three times to report on the sustainability of beech stocks – their numbers are said to be greater than pines – and acted on none of them.

The Kyoto policies were "daft", he said, noting that expansion stopped when the government decided carbon credits belonged to the state rather than the industry whose efforts created them.

Poole's sustained salvos were tempered by other interests.

He was also a director of the Cawthron Institute at Nelson, a president of the Institute of Foresters and the Botanical Society, and he was a fellow of the Royal Society.

He earned a forestry degree at Auckland University College and a masters in science at Victoria. In 1926, he joined the Forest Service. He joined the Botany Division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in 1937, before spending six years as its liaison officer in London. He moved to Wellington in 1949 when he was appointed director of its Botany Division, and returned to the Forest Service as deputy director-general in 1951. He wrote extensively and cogently on botanic subjects, was made a CBE in 1971 and in 1999 an honorary doctor of science by Canterbury University.

Poole is survived by his wife Barbara, and by his son and daughter from his first marriage.

[Alick] Lindsay Poole, forester: Born near Gisborne, March 4, 1908; married (1) 1948 Linda Moore (divorced 1970) 1 daughter 1 son, (2) 1976 Barbara Murray; died Wellington, January 2, 2008, aged 99.

Reproduced with permission from an obituary originally published by Peter Kitchin in *The Dominion Post*, Thursday, 31 January 2008.

Lindsay Poole was a long-standing member of the RNZIH and an Associate of Honour since 1991.



Edward (Ted) Derrick Sweetman AHRIH

16 March 1925 – 17 January 2008



I feel privileged to have this opportunity to speak about Ted Sweetman on behalf of the Wellington Fuchsia Society

(WFS). When I started thinking about what I would say I found myself marvelling at what he accomplished on behalf of fuchsias and the people that grow them. And this was all crammed into a life full of many other accomplishments in fields as diverse as several forms of business and motor racing.

As the son of a nurseryman, Ted grew up learning how to grow things well. But a career in growing things commercially did not appeal. However, growing things well became a consuming hobby. His interest in fuchsias apparently was stimulated by visits to fuchsia shows in the USA. This interest became a passion to the extent of him referring scathingly to other flowering plants as “those other weeds”. Bonsai fuchsias were a particular affront – “poor tortured plants” they were called.

This passion for fuchsias was one he shared with Alison. Their partnership of 40 years more or less, laced with their enthusiasm, experience and knowledge, has touched the lives of numerous fuchsia growers here in New Zealand and overseas. Their circle of friends covers the entire globe. Alison was his rock – and none more so than in recent months as his health became a concern. Alison, your fuchsia friends grieve with you at this time. We find it quite difficult to imagine meetings or shows without Ted. We hope that grief will pass because we know that the memories will endure and sustain us in the future.

Let me give you a summary of the things he did for fuchsias and fuchsia folk.

- 30 years ago Ted and Alison and a small group of enthusiasts met for the first time to establish the Wellington Fuchsia Society. It has met continuously ever since. Membership has fluctuated but currently is pretty stable at around 60. Ted and Alison are life members of the Society.
- A year or so later, after an abortive attempt to have the NZ Fuchsia Society expand its horizons, he was instrumental in setting up the National Fuchsia Society of New Zealand. It still goes strong with a membership of around 300. Ted was a long serving President and Alison edited the Society’s journal for many years. Both are life members of that society.
- He was an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture and I recently re-read a paper that he wrote for the RNZIH on the New Zealand and Tahitian fuchsia species, their origins and how they differ from their cousins in Central and South America¹.
- He was a certified master judge of the American Fuchsia Society.
- He picked the best out of the American and UK judging systems to establish the New Zealand judging standards that fit New Zealand growing conditions and styles.
- He judged shows all over the country.
- He trained other judges all over the country.
- He was the Chief Judge for the Wellington Fuchsia Society.
- He gave advice on how to grow and show fuchsias all over the country.
- He wrote a book about them².

He managed the WFS annual fuchsia show for many years. It has grown to be probably the largest fuchsia show in the Southern Hemisphere.

He was a visionary who made visions happen.

But if you want to get WFS members reminiscing you just need to mention the trips that Ted organised – ranging from bus trips within New Zealand to trips overseas. These trips were organised in meticulous detail. Starting times were strictly adhered to – I suspect the real risk of being left behind was a huge incentive to be on time. Detail got down to where one could purchase an ice-cream on the home leg. These trips were the highlight of WFS annual programmes. Ted’s knowledge of where to go and what to see was unparalleled. And the trips were budgeted so that members on limited means could participate without blowing their personal budgets.

Ted was a people person. I am not sure who coined the phrase “fuchsia folk are friendly folk” but Ted often quoted it and always practised it. He and Alison are known all over the country and abroad. Those of us who followed him in presidential roles found it difficult to emulate the way he reached out to fuchsia enthusiasts. His is a very hard act to follow.

Ted, wherever you are, may your fuchsias bloom all year round and never get rust, spider mite or white fly. May your fellow growers be able to distinguish between a stem and a spray without having to be constantly reminded.

We will do our level best to carry on the tradition that you have created.

From a eulogy compiled by Peter O’Hara; oharaph@xtra.co.nz

Ted Sweetman’s eulogy was also published in the May 2008 issue of the *National Link*, the newsletter of the National Fuchsia Society of New Zealand. He was made an RNZIH Associate of Honour in 1997.

¹ Sweetman, T. (2001). A brief survey of the New Zealand and Tahitian fuchsia species. *New Zealand Garden Journal* 4(2): 2–7.

² *Fuchsia Growing in New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific* published 1991.

Dr Maxwell George Goodey

16 March 1922 – 8 March 2008



Life is full of ironies, both large and small. Just a few months ago I was asked to write a short article concerning people who had been

instrumental in introducing accessions of *Clivia* to New Zealand.

For me Max Goodey, and his fellow physician Ray Freeman, were important as they introduced seed of *Clivia* species and hybrids several decades before the current heightened interest in the genus.

Max was a passionate plantsman and was generous with both plants and knowledge. Unquestionably, *Clivia* plants from Max formed much of the basis of my breeding programme with the genus. However, when I started to marshal information about Max and Ray I realised that my knowledge concerning them was shallow and stretched little further than my own sporadic interactions with them.

Happily, both men were still alive; Max with his family in Sydney and Ray still in New Zealand. Although Max was ill, his son Rhys acted as an enthusiastic conduit and I reflected how good it was that I was not writing an obituary. I took pleasure in the knowledge that Max, although physically impaired, was still keen of mind and was pleased that someone was taking an interest in recording some of his work with plants.

Unhappily Max died suddenly of a second massive stroke on 8th March 2008.

Rhys supplied the biographic details that follow. Max was born in 1922 in Te Kuiti where his father was a printer

and type compositor, who started a local paper called the *King Country Chronicle*. I originally thought that Max himself might have come from Britain; at the very least he seemed to be an Anglophile and to my ear had more of an English accent than Kiwi. However, it was Max's father who came from Britain (Northumberland).

At sixteen, Max relocated to Wellington to work for the Lands and Survey Department and subsequently undertook a BSc degree at Victoria University. WWII interrupted this and he was called up in 1942, joined the NZ Engineers and served in the Pacific.

After the war he was offered a returned serviceman's place to study medicine and he graduated from Otago with a MB and ChB in 1951. He did his house surgeon's time at Thames, 'where he was well known for cooking and growing plants'.

In December 1954 Max married wife Margaret and they settled in Henderson, Auckland, where they built a home on an acre of land. This gave Max plenty of opportunity to grow plants, in addition to running his first medical practice. Six years later they moved into Auckland city establishing a practice in Parnell and a home in Judge's Bay. Both gardens were soon filled with an eclectic collection of plants from around the world.

In addition to his regular practice Max was Auckland University Medical Officer for twenty years and Chief Police Surgeon for twenty-four.

Max had an encyclopaedic knowledge of plants and was well respected by professional botanists and horticulturists alike. I well remember his contributions at meetings of the RNZIH in Auckland; he was stickler for botanical accuracy and correct pronunciation.

Max had a special interest in palms and wrote an article on them in the RNZIH Journal of 1973¹.

He had a worldwide network of correspondents, in addition to leading plants-people within New Zealand, from whom he sourced and exchanged many plants. A number of us were impressed/surprised to see that he potted plants in his surgery and raised seedlings on his sterilisation cabinet. Resulting plants were grown on in all manner of containers outside until they became too large when he 're-homed' them. Many went to the Auckland University gardens, the Domain and Auckland Zoo, plus many other locations further afield.

Max had a close working relationship with botanists and the herbarium at the Auckland Museum where he lodged herbarium specimens of many of his introductions when they reached flowering stage. A list of more than three hundred taxa that he introduced and for which he prepared herbarium specimens has been supplied to me. Many of these names have yet to be recorded on the official Plant Biosecurity Index now maintained by MAF.

Such a thorough approach coupled with his passion for plants is a testament to his intellect and clearly distinguishes him from the dilettante.

It is perhaps fortunate that Max lived in an era when he was able to freely import plants and make the contribution to New Zealand horticulture that he did. I for one am grateful to have known Max and to have been inspired and encouraged by him.

**Obituary compiled by Keith Hammett;
khammett@clear.net.nz**

¹ Goodey, M. (1973). Palms around Auckland. *Annual Journal (Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture)* 1: 7-11.

Margaret Loreen Hughes

13 October 1943 – 19 August 2008



The horticulture and gardening industry has been greatly saddened by the passing of well-known and highly-respected nurserywoman, Margaret Hughes of Blue Mountain

Nurseries in Tapanui at the family home on 19 August 2008, aged 64.

The closely-knit family and friends, including many from the nursery and garden centre trade, packed Tapanui's community centre for the service.

Blue Mountain staff beautifully decorated the community centre with many of the nursery's stunning plants which one of the mourners, Clare Brown said, "were really lovely for us horticulturists to see."

Images depicting the Hughes' happy family life were projected on a screen. And husband Denis used floristry skills learned as a youngster to make carnation and erica buttonholes for the family.

Apart from family, plants were the centre of Margarets' life and many plant images were projected on to the screen. These included rhododendrons Margaret had bred and was most proud of – *R. 'City of Dunedin'*, *R. 'Happy Anniversary'*, *R. 'Dear One'* and *R. 'Graeme R. Hughes'*.

Chris, speaking at the service, described Margaret as, "Mother, mentor and business partner. She was fully involved in the nursery's propagation and production strategies. One of her main contributions was all the yak hybrid rhodos she and dad imported."

Margaret's long-time friend from Christchurch Girls High School Presbyterian supply minister, Anne Thornton of Tapanui delivered the eulogy and has kindly allowed *Commercial Horticulture* to use several of her thoughts.

Anne used the words: "precious, private, pioneer and plants", to sum up Margaret's life.

Margaret was born October 13, 1943 in Rangiora, a Cantabrian by birth but a West Otago person by choice.

Margaret went to Fernside Primary School before attending Christchurch Girls High School where she and Anne were in the same class for three years and for a year shared the same dorm.

Margaret, "being the clever one" went on to the sixth form before going on to Lincoln College. "I believe she was a pioneer for her day as there were only a couple of other girls doing the Diploma in Horticulture."

After College, Margaret spent two years in Levin at the Horticultural Research Centre as a technician doing research on tomatoes, something she really enjoyed.

The story goes that Margaret had to look after the boiler so she decided to get her boilerman's ticket but was told women couldn't get this qualification as it would mean she could be a train driver and "women didn't drive trains".

In fact earlier, while at school she had applied to do Land and Survey work, filled in the forms, was accepted, went down to Wellington but was sent away because she was a woman. "Couldn't they read my name and see it was a girl's name!"

And later when she applied to work for the Gore District Council, she couldn't because she was a woman.

Denis and Margaret had met at Lincoln, became friends, and continued their long distance relationship for the two years that Margaret was in Levin.

The pair married in 1966 in the Rangiora Methodist Church then honeymooned round the North Island. It was while they were on their trip that nurseryman, Ellaby Martin, gave them a six inch conifer, *Chamaecyparis 'Boulevard'*, which ended up being thousands of conifers "greatly assisting their financial situation".

Denis and Margaret set up home in Tapanui and in 1967 their first son, Graeme, was born but sadly died aged 17 months. Chris, Janice and Liz followed in short order and though Margaret had her hands full as a mother, she was still able to find time to work with her plants which always played a special place in her life.

Today there are several hundreds of small rhodos in the paddocks in various stages of growth which Margaret had a hand in developing.

Denis and Margaret were very happily married for 42 years enjoying a wonderful home life. "Indeed, it was one of those most beautiful marriages where the words of the marriage service 'that they may be one' are well reflected. They worked as one, they loved as one and they held their family close to them as one. It has been a privilege to be part of the life of this precious, pioneer, private, plant lady", said Anne.

Reproduced with permission from an obituary originally published by Kerry Johnstone in *Commercial Horticulture*, Oct-Nov 2008, p. 22.