

White, Alan (from the Forester Feb 2014)

Alan White 26/2/1938 - 28/11/2013

Alan White graduated from the Australian Forestry School at the end of 1961 having also completed two years at Sydney University and a year as a cadet with Papua New Guinea Forests Department. He and childhood sweetheart Sandra married in December 1961 before heading north to take up a position with the PNG Department of Forests at Kerevat (on the island of New Britain - Papua New Guinea). 1963 was a spent assisting family "down south" and he was posted to Brown River Forest Station, about 41 km from Port Moresby, on his return in 1964. During this period he took on a lot of Papuan Regional duties as well as being OIC of the station. Later (in 1968) he was posted to Rabaul for New Britain Regional duties particularly silvicultural with the establishment of plantations of teak, kamarere and balsa following logging. The PNG DoF undertook a programme of very large scale forest inventory surveys and Alan was involved in a number of these. It was during this period that I first met Alan and he and I were both involved in the major Tonolei Harbour (Bougainville) survey. We were involved in many forestry projects together after that in various PNG districts. Alan and I also got involved in car rallies with Alan initially being the driver and yours truly, the navigator. We swapped places after a few rallies and enjoyed competing together for a number of years. We were great mates and our families were close not only in PNG but also after they moved to Darwin (in 1976) and we came to Kununurra a mere 830km away in WA. Alan worked for the Conservation Commission of the NT along with several other foresters. He (and they) made me welcome in their group and geographically they were by far my closest professional neighbours. We felt like we contributed greatly to cross border professional relationships. Alan was passionate about forestry and loved the outdoor life and work. He was recognised for his services to the country of Papua New Guinea with a PNG Independence Medal in 1977. Ian Whyte recalls that Alan gave him great support as a boss and mentor, he was always friendly, always willing to talk about the job at hand without losing sight of the fact that a steering hand was needed from time to time - and that he was great to work for. Ian also commented on Alan's dedication to forestry and his loyalty to the Department and the people with whom he worked and from whom he attracted loyalty in return, and that he was a great team player. His sense of humour and common sense were recalled too as was his convivial company, particularly over Alan's life was lived to the full and was celebrated by family and many friends at a dynamic ceremony in Darwin on the 3rd of December. Another of his passions was recognised there with the choice of jazz music from Louis Armstrong and other greats as well as a Papua New Guinea version of "*I've Been Everywhere, Man!*" as part of the proceedings.

Alan is survived by Sandra and their three sons as well as their seven grandchildren. He is missed by them all as well as all his forestry mates.

Compiled by Chris Done from the memories of several of Alan's many mates.

