

Obituaries

Dermot Mangan 1914 - 2006

Dermot Mangan, born in Dublin in June, 1914, was the youngest of a family of six. His parents were an important influence on his life and from them he inherited a lifelong interest in literature, politics and culture. His father Henry, who was employed by Dublin Corporation, wrote under the pseudonym 'Henry Conell' and published a number of books including *The Sieges of Derry and Limerick* in 1901 and a compilation of the works of Alice Milligan, poet and well-known figure of the Gaelic revival movement. Both his parents knew Eamon De Valera, the future President of Ireland and his wife Sinead. In fact, Dermot's uncle, Peter De Loughry, was the locksmith who made the key used by De Valera to effect his dramatic escape from Lincoln Jail.



Dermot sat the State forestry entrance examination in 1934. He was subsequently called for an interview, chaired by Dr M. L. Anderson, who was then Acting Director of Forestry in the Department of Lands. He obviously impressed Anderson and duly entered Emo Forestry Training School in 1934.

The training regime at Emo was harsh but he recalled it with humour. He spoke with affection about his fellow students Tadgh Begley, Billy Breslin, Myles Cosgrave, P.V. Delaney, Jimmy Donoghue, Oscar Grant, Peadar Healy, Seamus McMenamin, Michael O'Connell, Bill Shanahan, Pat Turley and Paddy Verling.

In 1937, shortly after qualifying from Emo, Dermot won a Department of Lands' scholarship to study Forestry in UCD. He graduated with a Batchelor of Agricultural Science (Forestry) in 1941 and subsequently served in a number of forests around the country including Clonmel, Co Tipperary; Adare, Co Limerick and Blessington, Co Wicklow.

He was extremely interested in developments taking place in rural Ireland at the time and saw many opportunities for Irish forests to supply the burgeoning rural electrification scheme. At this time, the Electricity Supply Board was purchasing large numbers of transmission poles and needed somebody with the necessary technical expertise to act as its Timber and Forestry Advisor. Dermot fitted the bill and, in 1946, he began a career with the ESB which lasted until his retirement in 1979.

He was a very enthusiastic forester and his visits to forests throughout Ireland, now as the ESB's transmission pole inspector, were always interesting, positive and encouraging. He was a diligent promoter of Irish timber and encouraged his fellow inspectors and the many foresters he encountered to maximise the use of native

timber, now available from the maturing forests of Douglas fir, Scots pine, European and Japanese larch.

Dermot took no pleasure in rejecting an occasional pole if it failed to reach the strict size and form specifications of the ESB. But these were the exceptions rather than the rule and he enjoyed an excellent working and social relationship with Forest Service foresters, many of whom were former colleagues. They recall him as a diligent worker who served the ESB with great pride and loyalty. At the end of a day's work he was excellent company and a marvellous raconteur.

Dermot never forgot his forestry roots and was a lifelong member of the Society of Irish Foresters. He served on its Council in a number of roles, including President in 1958/1959, and was awarded honorary membership in 1996. He was a great supporter of the Society's Annual Study Tour and held the record for unbroken attendance of the first 37 tours - from the inaugural event in 1943 to his final tour in his retirement year in 1979.

His wife, Catherine, predeceased him and he is survived by his sons Fergal and Barry and daughters Tina, Niamh and Daire.

Donal Magner