

John Ernest Johnston 1923 – 2013

It was with great sadness that the forestry fraternity learned of Ernest Johnston's passing on 2 July after a brief illness, having celebrated his 90th birthday one month earlier.

Ernest was born on 2 June 1923 in Rathkeale, Co Limerick to the Rev. James Johnston, a Methodist Minister, and Mrs Eva Mary Johnston (nee Hewitt).

His father's Ministry entailed frequent transfers throughout the country. Thus, while living in Belcoo Manse, he received his primary education at the Model School, Enniskillen. His secondary education was at the Royal School, Cavan.



He read Arts and Forestry at the University of Dublin (Trinity College), graduating in 1948. While a student at Trinity he completed his practical assignments at Emo and Aughrim Forests.

His professional career in forestry began as a Forester and Farm Manager on the Lough Eske Estate in Donegal and in 1950 he took up a post as Forester at Johnstown Castle, Co Wexford.

He began his career in the State Service in 1952, in what was then the Forestry Division of the Department of Lands, when he was appointed Acquisition Inspector in Sligo, a position he held until he was promoted to Divisional Inspector in Sligo in 1967. He remained there until he was promoted Senior Inspector at Headquarters in Dublin in July 1979. As Senior Inspector he was responsible at various stages for Acquisition, Amenity, Conservation and Nurseries before finally taking over Management North and Education. He retired in 1988 at the age of 65 and returned to his beloved Sligo to spend 25 happy years of retirement.

Ernest was a thoroughgoing gentleman, outstandingly erudite, remarkably polite and always willing to provide a listening ear and in return providing invaluable advice.

He was active in the Society of Irish Foresters. He led the Donegal/Tyrone Study Tour in 1978, outlining clear silvicultural options for the many crops visited. He also led many forest walks in Sligo. He published an article entitled "Corcashel Plantation, Co. Cavan" in *Irish Forestry*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, Winter 1957, pp 122–123. This plantation was then owned by Cavan County Council. Recently, he very kindly donated his fine collection of 'Irish Forestry' journals to the Society.

He is survived by his wife Irene, son James, daughter Anne, daughter-in-law Jane and his grandson Harry, to all of whom we offer our deepest sympathies. He was predeceased by his brother, Vivian.

Bill Dallas