

## Pat Farrington 1961-2013

There was genuine shock throughout the forestry community when news circulated on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> September that Pat Farrington had fallen gravely ill. This was followed by stunned sadness on Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> September when news of his death, at the early age of fifty two years, was announced. However, through organ donation, his passing ensured that five young people's lives were enhanced; this has provided great solace to Pat's family.



Pat Farrington was born in Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare on 12 May 1961 to Seán and Letty (nee Dwyer). He attended Ballymore Primary School and received his secondary education at CBS, Naas. He began his forestry training at Kinnitty Castle Forestry College in 1980 and went on to complete his studies at Avondale in 1983.

Pat's early career in forestry was impeded by the absence of positions in the Forest and Wildlife Service due to a Public Service recruitment embargo which meant that only one in every three positions could be filled. Pat's determination to develop a career in forestry in Ireland was already evident at this early stage. He had secured a "Green Card" to work in the United States but declined this when offered a temporary position in nearby Blessington Forest where he worked with Forester in Charge, Jim Crowley. When Coillte was set up in January, 1989 his career took off. Initially, he worked in the Inventory Section in the Bray Region and eventually progressed to become the Regional Environmental Officer. In the meantime, he embarked on an academic career which led to a Master's degree in forestry followed by a qualification in landscape design. These qualifications facilitated his appointment as Forest Landscape Architect with the Forest Service in 2002.

In the Forest Service Pat worked on forest landscape issues, including the redesign of forest plans within sensitive landscapes, he was also the District Forestry Inspector for the Wicklow District. In this role, Pat was instrumental in bringing forest owners together to establish the Wicklow Private Woodland Owners Group, and his strong commitment to the initiative was deeply appreciated by all those involved. He successfully engaged with foresters and forest owners by talking through problems and finding practical solutions to the numerous problems that can arise in landscape sensitive areas. Although of a quiet disposition, Pat was very determined and he achieved much during his short life.

At national level, Pat played a key role representing the Forest Service and forestry sector perspectives on the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Landscape Strategy steering committee.

At a European and international level, Pat was a member of the Irish delegation to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Under this remit, he made an important contribution to international negotiations surrounding the REDD+ process (Reducing

Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), successfully coordinating the EU input at the UNFCCC Bonn session in June 2013 during the Irish Presidency of the EU. This paved the way for the widely acclaimed international agreement on REDD+ concluded in Warsaw at the end of 2013. Pat also made a very significant contribution under the Irish Presidency during the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing in January in Vienna and again at the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in April in Istanbul. He was a hugely respected negotiator and brought his characteristic patience, pragmatism and capacity to propose innovative solutions to what, at times, appeared to be intractable problems. This can-do attitude and positive disposition won him many friends on both the European and international stages.

Pat joined the Society of Irish Foresters immediately after qualifying as a forester in 1983. He soon became an active and committed participant in its educational activities. His enthusiastic involvement culminated in his election as President of the Society of Irish Foresters in April 2009. During his term as President, Pat introduced many initiatives including the Augustine Henry Medal which is presented each year to the highest achieving student on both the UCD and WIT forestry courses. This innovation has since been extended to include medals for honorary members and former presidents. Pat always had a particular interest in encouraging and facilitating greater participation of students and young graduates in the activities of the Society. He recognised that this constant renewal and infusion of new members was the life-blood of a vibrant Society.

Pat was reared in the heart of Ireland's horse breeding country and was a keen horseman and successful breeder. He was also very committed to the Credit Union movement and served as Chairman of Blessington Credit Union. He was involved with Ballymore Eustace GAA Club and Naas Rugby Club. Pat established his own forest and was very proud of this achievement. He also encouraged his parents into tree planting, and they went on to become very enthusiastic tree growers.

To his wife Patrizia, daughter Emilia, son Daniel, parents Seán and Letty, sister Annmarie and brothers Fintan, Niall and Dermot, we offer our sincere sympathy on their sad loss.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam álainn uasal!*

John Mc Loughlin