

## Eddie O'Connor 1948-2013

News of the death of Eddie O'Connor, who died suddenly at his home in Riverstick, Co. Cork on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2013, came as a great shock to all those who knew him and especially to his family and his wide circle of friends.

Eddie was born into the family of Daniel and Mary O'Connor (nee O'Donoghue) on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1948, a farming family of four boys and three girls, in Coolegrane, Brosna, Co. Kerry. He received his primary education at Brosna National School and his secondary education at St. Ita's College, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick.



He began his career in forestry at Kinnitty Castle Forestry School on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1965 and graduated from Shelton Abbey Forestry College in 1968 with 27 other foresters. His first appointment was to Kilworth Forest, Co. Cork in 1968 before he was appointed to the Inventory of Private Woodlands team in 1970 where he worked in counties Cavan, Leitrim, Longford, Monaghan and Sligo. This team undertook an inventory of the private woodlands of Ireland which was published in 1973. While working on this project Eddie quickly became an expert in the identification of the many rare and exotic tree species he encountered. His next appointment was to Ennis, Co. Clare followed by Ballinglen Forest, Co. Wicklow in 1973. His final transfer was to Bandon Forest in 1978 and here he set up home in Riverstick with his wife, Brid.

When Coillte was established in January, 1989 Eddie was appointed Cost Controller in the Cork Region and in 1993 he became Region Accountant. In 1999, Eddie was awarded a M.Sc. (Agriculture) in UCD and his thesis "The economic impact evaluation of catastrophic storm damage in Irish Forestry" assessed the damage caused by the storms which hit the south of Ireland in December 1997. Two papers from his thesis were published subsequently in *Forestry*, the journal of the Institute of Chartered Foresters. Eddie was appointed manager of Coillte's Project Management Unit in 2005. This was the management vehicle which coordinated the work of part time contract staff that had availed of early retirement from Coillte. Eddie completed his career with Coillte in June 2012.

A quiet man, Eddie was a great listener who always went about his work in a diligent and professional manner while gaining the respect of all he had dealings with. Eddie's personality was ideally suited to the role of Cost Controller and Region Accountant as he had a ready grasp of detail, a vital ingredient in monitoring and managing income and expenditure.

Eddie had a great passion for sport and was a proud Kerry supporter. He played

football with his native Knocknagoshel and won a county championship with them in 1969. Eddie played football for Shelton Abbey in the Wicklow senior championship. He also played rugby with Ennis Rugby Club while working in Ennis and with Arklow Rugby Club while working in Ballinglen Forest.

Eddie was an accomplished athlete and won many local and national titles. His first title came when he won the team event in the Wicklow cross country championship in 1967. When he was transferred to Bandon Forest, he joined Riverstick Athletic Club where he excelled at the long jump, the high jump, the triple jump and the javelin at local and national events. Eddie won a silver medal in the long jump and bronze medals in the high jump and triple jump in the 1995 National Veterans Track and Field Championships which were held in Belfast. At the 1996 National Veteran Championships held in Cork Institute of Technology, Eddie won gold in the long jump, silver in the high jump and silver in the triple jump. In 1997 the National Veterans Championships took place in Tullamore, Co. Offaly and Eddie again won gold in the long jump and silver in the triple jump and gold in the javelin event. His team mates in Riverstick Athletic Club remember him as a uniquely talented, natural athlete.

Eddie was interred in Ruan cemetery, Co. Clare. To his wife Brid and sons Eamon and Brian, brothers John, Donal and Denis, sisters Mary, Joan and Breda, we extend our sincere sympathy.

*Ar dheis De go raibh a anam*

Tim Crowley