

Denis O'Sullivan 1948-2014

The death of Denis O'Sullivan at Marymount Hospice in Cork on 17th November 2014, although expected, came as a shock to the forestry community around the country. A man so full of life and "Kerry" joie de vivre - it was hard to believe that he had passed away.

Denis was born the eldest of nine children to Jeremiah and Eileen (née Brennan) on 1st June 1948 at Ohermong Cross, near Cahersiveen on the Ring of Kerry.

He received his early education at Knockeens National School, a hotbed of Renard GAA - a club of which he was later to become Chairman. Denis received the remainder of his primary education and all of his secondary education at Cahersiveen CBS.

He began his forestry career at Kinnitty Castle Forestry College in September 1966 and on qualifying in 1969 he was appointed as an assistant forester in Cong Sawmill, Co. Mayo.

Like others of his generation Denis endured many transfers during a short period of time. In 1970 he moved to Lough Atorick, Co. Clare; 1971 saw him in Cappamore, Co. Limerick; in 1973 he was transferred to Slievenamon Forest, Co. Tipperary; in 1975 to Brosna, Co. Kerry and in 1978 he was transferred to Ballyhooley, Co. Cork before moving to the Limerick Region and finally back to South Kerry.

When he returned to Cahersiveen, Denis threw himself wholeheartedly into community development. His efforts culminated in the development of a fine marina and the restoration of the disused RIC barracks as a tourism resource. He realised that emigration had drained the locality of its young people for generations and he was willing to take practical steps to reverse the trend.

Denis also built up a sizable forest estate of his own and a thriving forestry consultancy business. He was a lifelong member and an enthusiastic supporter of the Society of Irish Foresters. He was also a leading member of Association of Irish Forestry Consultants. Denis believed in the importance of continuously upgrading and improving his knowledge of forestry through attending courses, field days and seminars around Ireland. He travelled widely with fellow Society members on study tours to most European countries, America, Canada and South Africa in order to see best international forestry practice and to bring home new ideas to implement here. It is fair to say that his rambunctious nature made for some memorable tours but his absence was also immediately apparent to participants.

Denis was an excellent forester and he loved his work. He excelled in establishing



and managing plantations. Indeed many of the young plantations around Kerry are the result of his dedication and hard work. Denis was a pioneer in private forestry. Prior to the early 1980s there were practically no privately owned forests and Denis was one of these rare foresters whose energy, knowledge and enthusiasm could convince farmers and other land owners that forestry was a good investment for them.

Denis had a huge presence wherever he was. He loved to question and challenge authority and was not afraid to express his own opinion on any topic in his own unique style, but afterwards he would laugh about it. Denis was a character in his own way and he was great for the banter and enjoyed it equally as much when he was on the receiving end of it.

Denis had a way of meeting people, of connecting with people and in gaining their trust and loyalty. He worked with many farmers, contractors, forestry officials and others in planting land, constructing forest roads and thinning their plantations. He was an achiever, he got things done. He was the person you went to if you wanted a job done – whether it concerned his own profession as a forester, the GAA or his work in the community in Cahersiveen.

He was predeceased by his brother Michael in 1990. To his wife Mary and children Donogh, Dermot, Norma, Rory, Thelma and Bronagh, his brothers Diarmuid, Patrick, John T., sisters Mary, Nora, Bridget and Eileen we offer our deepest sympathy.

“Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.”

Seán Galvin