

## Dr W.H. Jack CB 1929–2017

Bill Jack passed away peacefully on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2017 at his home in Belfast where he had been cared for by his devoted wife, Daisy and his children, two of whom are doctors. The funeral service, attended by a large number of friends and former colleagues, was held in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, a church to which Bill was much attached and where he had served as an Elder. At the service, his eldest son, Charles, gave a moving tribute to his father which was much appreciated by all who knew him.



Bill was born in the small town of Kells in Co. Antrim and was an only child. His father was the managing director of a tweed mill and his mother was from Newbliss in County Monaghan. He attended Ballymena Academy and then went to Edinburgh University to complete a degree in Forestry.

He then returned home and obtained a post with the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture. His first post was to the small forest of Fathom in South Armagh. He said he learned a lot about personnel management but I think he did not find the job very challenging. He soon resigned and joined the British Colonial Service and was posted to the Gold Coast, now known as Ghana. This was certainly a completely new experience and there were problems with the exploitation of the natural forest resource. He developed a keen interest in the native timbers and completed his PhD thesis on the subject. On his first visit home, he drove his old Landrover all the way overland through Africa and Europe. During one of his other periods of leave, his cousin's wife introduced him to her twin sister, Daisy. She was from Ballybay in County Monaghan and was training to be a nurse in Belfast. It seems it was love at first sight and they were married for 64 years. Bill returned to Africa with his new wife, but after a few more years there the country achieved its independence in 1957.

The young couple then returned home and Bill re-joined the Forest Service. He was involved first of all with the production of Management Plans for forests. He was then appointed as Research Officer, a job he really enjoyed. He retained a long-term interest in one of his experiments – a re-spacing trial in Sitka spruce at Baronscourt Forest in Co. Tyrone. Even in his retirement he assisted the Forestry Commission's Research Branch who carried out Timber Testing on the logs from this experiment. In 1965 Bill was awarded a Kellogg Fellowship to the USA. He spent 6 months at Syracuse in New York State and a further 6 months travelling to other study centres.

Bill's talents had now been noticed within the Department of Agriculture and he was promoted to a Principal Officer post in charge of the Milk and Eggs Division which often involved negotiations in Brussels and elsewhere in Europe. Further promotions followed and he finally reached the significant position of Permanent Secretary. As was required at the time, he retired aged 60 in 1989. To celebrate his retirement, Daisy and he embarked on a world-wide tour.

Much to his surprise he was then appointed to the exalted post of Controller and Auditor to the Government of Northern Ireland. This post required the endorsement of the Prime Minister and his office was responsible for ensuring that taxpayers' money was not misspent. When he retired from this post, he was awarded the CB (Companion of the Bath) by the Queen for his outstanding public service.

At the age of 65 he still did not finally retire. He again felt the call of Africa and joined NICO (Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas.) He travelled to Tanzania to help with their development of computer systems. He did eventually retire aged 70! He devoted the remainder of his life to his wife Daisy, to his four children, Charles, Patrick, William and Cathy, to their spouses and to his seven grandchildren whom he adored.

He was a keen member of our Society and served as Honorary Auditor for many years. He was our President from 1972-3 and was made an Honorary Member in 1995. He has been the longest serving Honorary member in the history of the Society.

Bill Jack will be remembered not only for his outstanding public service but also for his warmth, kindness, humanity and modesty. He was held in high esteem by all who knew him and worked with him. We offer our deepest sympathy to Daisy and to his children and grandchildren.

Bill Wright