

## Patrick Joseph (P.J.) Morrissey 1928-2015

Much to the sorrow of his family, former colleagues and many friends, P.J. Morrissey passed away peacefully at his home in Castlepollard on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in his 88<sup>th</sup> year.

Always known as P.J., he was born on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1928 at Rathgormack, Co. Waterford to Patrick and Margaret [née Power], the third child in a family of five. He received his primary education at Rathgormack National School and his secondary education at the CBS in Carrick-on-Suir.



His forestry career began in Avondale on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1947. He completed his training there in September 1949 and was assigned, as Forester Grade 3, to Slievenamon Forest. He was later moved to Callan and Banteer Forests and in April 1951 he was transferred to Co. Donegal. His first assignment in Donegal was to Stranorlar Forest and in 1952 he was transferred to Meeniroy Forest.

P.J. was promoted to Forester Grade 2 on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1956 when he became forester-in charge at Avoca Forest. In 1959 he took charge of the combined forests of Virginia and Castlepollard.

He was promoted to Senior Forester in August 1971 and was assigned to Clogheen Forest. He returned to Castlepollard in October 1973, following the upgrading of that forest to senior forester level and here he remained until his retirement on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1993.

P.J. was a highly respected and knowledgeable forester who insisted that everything he did was to the highest standard. His interpersonal skills matched, in every way, his forestry skills. His extensive knowledge of broadleaf silviculture was acquired from decades of “hands on” experience managing, what is reputed to be the largest beech plantation in Europe at Mullaghmeen, Castlepollard.

He had an outgoing and engaging personality, was a great story teller and kept his audience spellbound. Although many may have questioned the veracity of some of his stories and adventures, they liked “the way he told them”. Above all he was wonderful company. P.J. was deeply involved in local community affairs. He was a founder member of Castlepollard Credit Union and served on its management board in various capacities over a 40-year period.

He was an active member of his local Gun Club which provided a guard of honour at his funeral. He also participated in a number of other local initiatives such as the Tidy Towns Committee and was a member of the Bridge Club and the Motor Cycle Club in nearby Fore.

His much admired garden was a source of great pride to him. The broad range of vegetables and flowers that flourished there was a testament to his horticultural skills, while his brightly coloured beehives and their contented bees added colour and diversity to his home environment. As if he was not already fully occupied, he saved his own turf - no doubt a project influenced by Rose, his Donegal born wife. Horse racing too was a pastime he enjoyed and he was a regular attender at the Kilbeggan, Mullingar and Navan race tracks.

A loyal and regular attender at our field-days, he took part in more than a dozen study tours in Ireland and abroad. His last study tour was to Croatia in 2009.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his wife Rose (néé McMenamin) from Ballybofey, Co. Donegal. They were married in August 1956 and sadly he did not live to celebrate their diamond wedding anniversary. To his children Margaret, Mary, Patrick, Catherine, John, Geoffrey, Daniel and Niall we offer our sympathy. May they take comfort from the high esteem his colleagues hold for their father and the joyous memories he left for us all.

*“Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dlíis.”*

John Conneff