

## Obituaries

### Seán O Laoithe 1946 – 2017

As peacefully as he lived, so Seán O Laoithe died at his home in Charleville, Co. Cork surrounded by the family he loved so dearly. He was just one day short of his 71<sup>st</sup> birthday when cancer stole his life on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

Seán was born in the West Kerry Gaeltacht at Gallarus, near Dingle, on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1946, the eldest of three siblings, to the late Michael and Mary (née Ferriter).

He received his primary education at Scoil Náisiúnta, Leataoibh Mór and his secondary education at the Christian Brothers School in Dingle. Thus began his love of learning.

He would go on in later life to obtain a B.A. in Public Administration from UCC.

Following secondary school Seán began his forestry training at Kinnitty Castle, Co. Offaly and completed it at Shelton Abbey, Co. Wicklow in 1968.

His first assignment as Assistant Forester brought him to Kilmacthomas Forest and Nursery in Co. Waterford. This was followed by a two-year term back at Shelton Abbey as Housemaster. In 1971 he transferred to Cappoquin Forest, Co. Waterford. Between his assignment at Shelton Abbey and his transfer to Cappoquin he spent a short time at Cappamore, where he met his future wife, Christina Wilkinson; they were married in 1973. In the spring of 1975 his next assignment as Deputy Forester, took him north all the way from Waterford to Ards Forest in Co. Donegal.

This was followed by a move to Charleville and Rath Luirc Nursery in 1978 where he and Christina would rear their five children and where Seán would spend the rest of his days. He was promoted to Nursery Manager in 1991 and remained so until the nursery closed in 2001. Before availing of Coillte's early retirement scheme, Seán spent a year as Establishment Manager working out of the Mallow office.

Seán had many interests. In particular, he loved gardening and spent many contented hours working in his vegetable garden especially during his retirement years. He was unfailingly generous in supplying his friends and many visitors with fresh produce.

In later years he and Christina travelled extensively and visited the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, China and several European countries.

Seán was a voracious reader – books, magazines and newspapers, it didn't matter.



He had a keen interest in current events, politics, sports and history. He was secretary of the Charleville Historical Society. Seán was a loyal Kerry supporter and seldom missed a game. He studied the sports literature and would analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the players while taking a quiet pride in all their success.

Through the Continuing Education program at UCC Seán pursued his love of learning. In 1997 while taking a Community Development Course, he was part of a small project group which was instrumental in initiating a Rural Bus Scheme between Granagh area and Charleville. Their model received widespread recognition and was later adopted in other parts of the country.

A quiet man, Seán treasured the county of his birth, Kerry, and the unique Gaelic culture into which he was privileged to have been born. He was a fluent Gaelic speaker and I don't believe there was a book written in Irish that he had not read.

His faith was an integral part of Seán's identity no matter what life threw his way. For the last 39 years he was a parishioner at Charleville's Holy Cross Parish where he served as both Reader and Eucharistic Minister. He was also an active member of the local Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Gráinne, less than six months earlier and within three months of his death his only brother, Michael (Mick), also a forester, passed away.

I was fortunate to be numbered among Seán's friends and I was very proud to call him my friend.

We offer our deepest sympathy to his wife Christina, his daughter Sinéad, his sons Breandán (who followed him into a career in forestry with Coillte) Cian and Gearóid, his sister Maureen, eight grandchildren, his daughter-in-law, Mairéad, sons-in-law Paul Fletcher and John Fitzsimons.

*Slán abhaile, a chara dílis!*

Tom Murphy