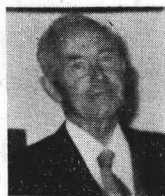


Obituary

ALFRED LEONARD

1904–1973



Alfie, as he was affectionately known to all inside and outside the Forest Service, will best be remembered for his great fund of general knowledge and his keen awareness of the world of nature around him. He loved the Irish countryside. He was botanist, biologist, ornithologist, ecologist, dendrologist, silviculturist etc. all rolled into one. As if by intuition, he was first to hear the cuckoo's call in early summer, he saw the first swallow, the rare stonecrop, the pine marten on his rare appearance, the regeneration of a shy species like *Cryptomeria*, the phenomena in the geology of his limestone crags, the slightest damage by a late frost. A great champion of the natural forest, the hardwoods and the European conifers his classic species and the Scotch foresters his idols. His keen discernment in the use of those species, is plainly evident in the great tract of tree-clad land between the great lakes and known to us as Cong Forest. "Everything in its place and a place for everything".

Essentially a family man, his interest centred mainly in his home, his family, his flowers and shrubs and, of course, his gem of a garden where, like Raftery's Killeadon, he had "sméar a's sughcraoibh ann a's meas ar gach sórt". Of a pleasant disposition—likeable—he could always come up with some colourful utterance and interweave some subtle bit of humour in his conversation at the most unexpected place. He could, when occasion demanded, be very direct and forthright in manner and have very decided views on management of his forest.

Like many of the early recruits to the new Forest Service he arrived on the forestry scene with a good knowledge and background of trees and timber, growing up as he did among the woods and gardens of Mount Hazel in his beloved Ballymacward.

One of the early group who trained under Paddy Barry and Neil Diver at Baunreagh, he spent a year at home after training. Next we meet him assisting the late Mickie Swords in Newtownbarry, Gilbert McCool in Glen of Imaal and back again as foreman to the students in Emo Park. He was in charge of Durrow Forest in the early thirties and after stints at Glenmalur, Glendalough, Ballymahon and Aughrim (twice), he arrived in Cong in 1941—the youngest Head Forester in Ireland at the time.

Always a man to probe deep into his chosen subject, we find him joining the Royal Scottish Forestry Society tour in the summer of

'33 and visiting such well-known estates as that of Sir George Campbell and in later years sending rare species to Kew Gardens for identification and frequently corresponding with the late Curator of the National Botanic Gardens about such subject matter as the seven (known to him) variations of Lawson Cypress at Cong.

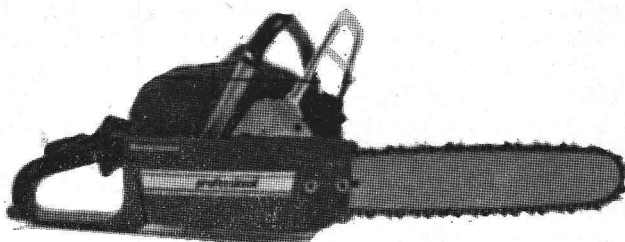
Let the splendid woods he left behind be a living testimony and witness to his memory.

To his wife and family we render our deepest sympathy.

Go ndéanfaidh Dia trócaire air".

T. DE GRUINEIL

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