

Maurice Henry Swan

The sudden death of Maurice Swan on the 4th February, 1980 came as a shock to all his friends and colleagues.

Maurice was born in Worcestershire, England, but he grew up in Co. Kildare. After a short incursion into teacher training at St Patrick's, Drumcondra, he entered University College, Dublin, where he graduated with an honours degree in 1940. At that time jobs in forestry were hard to come by and Maurice started his career as a working forester with the Castlecomer Estate Co. In 1942 he entered the then Forestry Division, Department of Lands, as forester and was successively attached to Dundrum, Ossory and Killakee forests. He was appointed Assistant Junior Inspector in 1945 and served on management at Limerick, Enniscorthy, Portlaoise and Galway before being appointed as land acquisition inspector at H.Q. in 1950.

His keen intellect and enquiring mind made him an automatic choice for research work when the fledgling Research Section was trying to gain its wings in 1957. Apart from another short period on land acquisition he was to spend the rest of his life associated with research as Senior Inspector and Asst. Chief Inspector. In his capacity as co-ordinator of forest research he was a firm advocate of a broadly based programme involving the Universities. The success of his work in this sphere is a lasting tribute to his dedication, tact and power of persuasion.

He was a founder member of the Society of Irish Foresters and served as council member, Editor and President. Until a few years ago he was to be seen at day outings and study tours although an inherent shyness kept his voice from being heard very often in the course of discussion. Yet nobody loved a good discussion or argument more, and in the company of his friends and colleagues he took a special delight in using his sharp intellect and incisiveness of expression to advantage. There are very few who honestly can claim to have won in a debate with Maurice.

Meticulous almost to a fault in everything he did, he set and demanded high standards. He had that gift, so essential in research, of understanding and reducing complex problems to their essential components. His attainments were many, but perhaps he will be best remembered for his enthusiasm, his dedication to his work and his kindness and consideration for others. He married Bridie thirty-one years ago and was very much the family man. To Bridie and to their children, Rosaleen, Margaret, Patricia and Brian we offer our deepest sympathy.

P.M. Joyce