

An Appreciation Michael Donnelly 1940-1997



On an unseasonably cool July day, we – family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances – with heavy heart and leaden step made our way from Gloire na Geata cemetery towards Dingle town. We had laid to rest the mortal remains of Michael Donnelly in a place he longed to be – his native Kerry overlooking the broad sweep of Dingle Bay.

Born in Dingle in 1940, the only son of the late Timothy and Mary, Michael was educated at the local primary and CBS secondary schools and later, at the Agricultural College, Pallaskenry. He graduated from Shelton Abbey Forestry College in 1962 and joined the then Forestry Division (Department of Lands) as an assistant forester. Then followed tours of duty at Collooney, Hollywood, Ballynahinch and Lough Talt Forests. He was appointed Forester-in-Charge at Ballyfarnon Forest in 1972. In the mid 1980s, he transferred to the chargeship of Killorglin Forest. With the inception of Coillte he took responsibility for New Business, including tree surgery, Co. Kerry, in which post he was extremely active and effective.

Michael was a dedicated public servant, a practical and innovative forester and an able silviculturist with good management skills and business acumen. He had a fine eye for the aesthetic, was a keen observer of nature and had a store of local knowledge and lore. He was above all, good company – a raconteur with a roguish sense of humour.

Alongside his professional life, he was an ardent angler – salmonoid and sea – and was interested in photography. He took a lively interest in the affairs of the Society of Irish Foresters, always ready and willing to lend a hand in the organisation and leading of forest walks and field days. Unknown to many, he was an occasional contributor on nature

and wildlife to *Kerry's Eye*.

Having known Michael since his student days, I was privileged to know him in his last illness. I cannot forget his immense dignity and courage, consideration towards his loving family and carers, and a spiritual resignation as he bowed to the inevitable.

We mourn his untimely passing and offer our sincere condolences to his wife Monica, children Charlene and David, mother and sisters on their grievous loss.

“Suaimhneas síoraí ar a anam”

J.A. Mannion