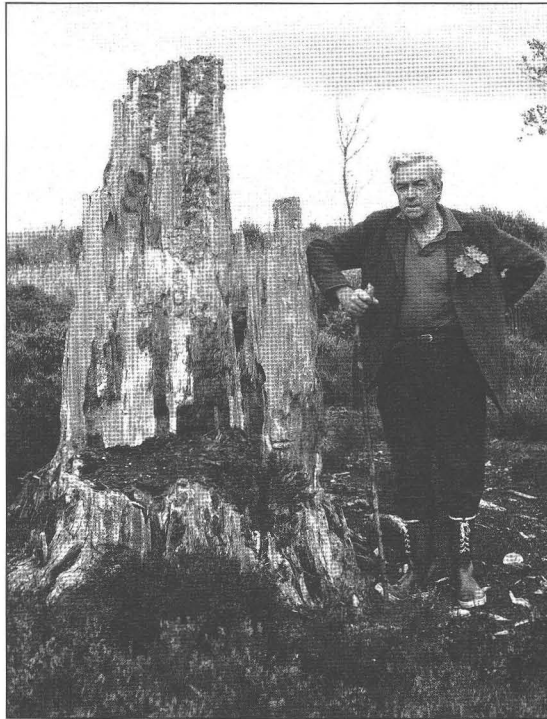


An Appreciation O.V. Mooney



Owen Mooney died on 22nd February 1999, aged 86 years. Three words in the death notice – “Forester” after his name and “Nature’s gentleman” at the foot – summed up the man very accurately. On hearing of the event, one’s first reaction may well have been to think that in the Other Place, or wherever else there may be, there would be much hand-shaking, laughter, banter and then some serious forestry talk.

Owen Vincent (Vic) Mooney was born on 30th June 1912 of a Dublin medical family whose provenance he happily acknowledged to Co. Kildare. Educated at boarding schools in Athlone and Clongowes Wood, he pursued forestry studies at Trinity College Dublin and Oxford University, and qualified from University College Dublin in 1935. His undergraduate training included study periods in France, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden. In taking up forestry, he was following a path pioneered by an elder brother, Dr. Herbert F. Mooney, who had a career in the Indian Forest Service from 1911 to 1947.

He joined the Forest Service (then Forestry Division) of the Department of Lands in 1936, with the infamously titled rank of Temporary Assistant Junior Forestry Inspector, an unestablished post, and served on District management work in Limerick, Mallow, Gort and Clonmel, and as Divisional Inspector in Bray. Following a period as Timber Utilisation Inspector for the Service, he was assigned to lead the newly formed Forest Research Branch in 1957. He retired in 1977 as Assistant Chief Inspector in charge of Forest and Wildlife Research, and Land Acquisition.

As manager, he steered his team with a light rein, motivating people by means of a judicious mixture of advice, encouragement and trust, rather than by heavy-handed direction, a management style which invariably elicited a positive response.

O.V.'s devotion to concentrated desk-work was phenomenal, but one could also recognise his intense satisfaction on getting out into the forest, and his deep interest in and knowledge of everything to be found there.

His contributions to *Irish Forestry* included (*inter alia*) authoritative articles on deer in the forest (1952), lodgepole pine (1957) and eucalypts in Ireland (1960).

In retirement, he was active as a founder member of the Schizophrenia Association of Ireland.

O.V. Mooney was elected an Honorary Member of the Society of Irish Foresters in 1984, together with Thomas Clear, H.M. FitzPatrick and Sean MacBride. What a company!

Our sympathies are extended to his widow Emma and to his family Brendan, Owen, Ruth, Rosemary and Mary.

Niall OCarroll