

## Dr. William Garth Dyson in memoriam



In January, 1982, *Silvae Genetica* lost one of its longest serving overseas editors. DR. W. G. DYSON died of cancer while serving on a UK Government assistance mission to Costa Rica. Known as Garth to his family and Bill to his friends he was among the most widely known British tropical foresters and probably the first to practise systematic tree breeding in developing countries. He was born in 1926 and educated in Britain, graduating from Oxford with a degree in botany. He was awarded a Colonial Forestry Scholarship and appointed to the Kenya Forest Department in 1949. He returned to Oxford to take a degree in forestry and then continued in Kenya as a Divisional Forest Officer in Nyeri, Fort Hall and Nairobi Divisions until 1960.

DR. DYSON transferred to the research section of the Kenya Forest Department as Silviculturist and in 1963 took up the post of tree breeder with the East African Agriculture and Forestry Research Organization; although based still in Kenya, the programme was for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in collaboration with the three national Forest Depart-

ments and he travelled widely in Africa as well as attending several international conferences. He was a member of the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources and for five months in 1965 he acted as an FAO consultant in Costa Rica teaching a course on tropical nurseries, management and plantation silviculture.

While working in Kenya DR. DYSON enrolled as an external student at the University of Nairobi and in 1970 was awarded a doctorate for his thesis on "Studies on the identity and hybridization of cypress grown for timber in Kenya".

With the dissolution of the East African Community in 1977 and the difficulties of travel to two of the member countries, DR. DYSON and his wife, who was herself born in Kenya, left Kenya with great regret. They returned to Costa Rica where DR. DYSON worked as geneticist/silviculturist and taught post-graduate courses at the Centro Agronomico Tropical de Investigacion y Enseñanza. Just before his death his lifetime of service was recognized by the award of the Order of the British Empire.

In addition to his professional activities, which contributed significantly to the development of tropical forestry, BILL DYSON was an excellent naturalist with an expert knowledge of the birds of Africa, Europe and Latin America. He was a keen gardener, having created one of the most attractive gardens at EAAFRO, a keen fly fisherman, particularly in the Kenya highlands, and an expert cabinet maker, working with a variety of African timbers virtually to furnish his entire house.

His death has impoverished the forestry profession, the genetic specialization and the population of readers of this journal. We extend our sympathy to his widow and three children.

JEFF BURLEY