

Foresters' Annual Report. F.Y. 64.
Speymouth Forest.

A General Review.

The winter was mild and open for most of the time and this caused a considerable amount of late weeding to be done - £612 worth to be precise, followed by an earlier start than usual.

Following on last year's report on Red Deer damage, these animals have now been seen from a deer control tower, tearing the top few feet off Douglas Fir and eating it. Needless to say the punishment was immediate and final.

Weeding has again been a serious problem which I appear to be consistently underestimating. Growth was abnormal in the spring, particularly in grasses.

F.Y. 63's summer planting was B.U. and due to the need to turf the cost was high. F.Y. 64's summer planting shows a very poor growth but the plants have so far survived.

Summary of Land Use (Acres)

Description	Plantations	Plantable Land	Agrie. etc.	U.P.	Other	Total.
Thinning Stage.	1495	656	74	191	164	2,580
Below Thinning Stage.	8627					8,627
Mature Conifers.	38					38
Mature Hardwoods.	127					127
	10,287	656	74	191	164	11,372.

B. This Year's Work.

(1) Finance.

Estimates. F.Y. 64.

<u>Susp Acc.</u> <u>Aultmore</u>	<u>Susp Acc.</u> <u>Scootmore</u>	<u>Labour</u> <u>Speymouth</u>	<u>Overall Estimate.</u>
£4,550	£2,140	£17,690	£24,380.

Expenditure- F.Y. 64.

<u>Susp Acc.</u> <u>Aultmore</u>	<u>Susp Acc.</u> <u>Scootmore</u>	<u>Labour</u> <u>Speymouth</u>	<u>Susp Acc.</u> <u>Unestimated.</u>	<u>Overall</u> <u>Expenditure.</u>
£3,988	£1,353	£17,690	£950	£24,782.

Expenditure.

Besting Up.

Overspent by £318. The weeding being done between October and November brought to light a number of areas which were requiring B.U. although they had not appeared to do so when the estimate was made. Delaying B.U. would have meant further delays in weeding and greater costs eventually. Extra plants were provided.

£50 was spent under this head in staking C.P. which had blown over in time ploughing.

In addition to above all spruce areas B.U. were turfed.

Drains New.

Overspent by £391. due to unforeseen problems arising in the newly planted Poundlers area and the draining of a loch and its surrounds in the Deer Park which was badly underestimated.

Weeding.

Overspent by £1,170. £612 of this was spent in the first two months of the forest year dealing with outstanding weeding from F.Y. 63. As for last year we are still weeding in F.Y. 65 but this will be to a lesser degree than in F.Y. 64.

Weeding(contd)

In an effort to catch up with the rapid growth of grass I employed 6 schoolboys during the summer vacation.

Maintenance of Drains.

Overspent by £95. Due to (1)Deepening of drains to cope with additional draining (2)Cleaning out the Blackburn to prevent flooding of planted area (3)Extra clearing of drains made necessary by fellings outside our boundary and subsequent blocking of drains (4)Clearing of drain at Aultmore Foresters housing site.

Amenity.

No estimate. Overspent by £98. Quarry gardens and Winding Walks.

Marking and Measuring.

Overspent by £815. This was due to a change in sale dates which caused us to have to mark two annual sales in one year. In addition I marked the Two Fochabers belts and the scrub areas for sale to Milton the Contractor.

Extraction.

Overspent by £117. This was due to the clearance of dead trees from the Deer Park and other firewood.

Stores.

Largely the making and painting of Fire Indicator signs by order of the Con. Office. The charges for the Deer Control Courses went into this head by orders from Con. Office

FINANCE.

Prep Ground. Underspent by £66. due to direct selling of scrub to Contractors.

Ploughing. Underspent by £53. An unexpected saving.

Brashing. Underspent by £100. This was being saved for bad weather which never came and by spring I was aware this money would be needed elsewhere.

High Pruning. Underspent by £484. The same reasons as for Brashing apply here.

Fence Repairs. Underspent by £284. This was a deliberate attempt to save money for other purposes. Some of the farmers are now yelling about fences.

Protection Other. Underspent by £598. The old story. If you must fill a gap use the trappers. One trapper was employed on marking and measuring of thinnings and another trapper is the Estate Painter.

Seed Collection and Extraction.

Underspent by £347. The seed just wasn't there.

THE YEAR'S WORK.

2. Organisation Staff

Labour and Training.

Labour employed at present.

Forest Workers	Salmon Fishers	Juve niles	Gangers	Trappers	Mobile Tractor Drivers	Forest Clerkess	D/Office Clerkess	D/Office Cleaner
18	22	1	4	5	1	1	1	1
								<u>Total 54.</u>

Reference above table:- The Salmon Fishers are employed by F.C. for 5 months only during the winter period. The Juvenile is a drag-over for the vacation schoolboys and is under notice to leave. The mobile tractor driver has now gone. The District Office Clerkess is half-time and is merely paid through Speymouth and does no forest work. The District Office cleaner does only 1 hour per day and 2 hours on a Saturday and she again is only paid by Speymouth. The District Office Clerkess and Cleaner should not really be shown as Speymouth staff.

Training/-

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Training. Eight men attended a tools maintenance course in December 1963. A very useful course. The following men were tested by the Tools Instructor for power saw operating certificates - W.Knox - April 1964. Ian Rose and G.Milne in July 1964. All three men were awarded certificates

3. Developments in Technique. NIL.

4. Acquisitions and Disposals.

Legal formalities have been completed in the following transactions.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Acquired</u>	<u>Disposed.</u>
Steelesbrae Farm	Nil	44 acres
Backpark Farm	Nil	30 "
Total		74 acres.

5. Seed Collection and Extraction.

The amount of Conifer seed available for collection this year is likely to be only a few bushels. In a poor seed year such as this the quality of seed is also likely to be poor but no evidence of this is yet available

<u>Seed Collection.</u>	<u>Seed Stand No.</u>	<u>(4122)9</u>	<u>(4122)13</u>	<u>Total.</u>
	<u>Bushels.</u>	12	2	14
<u>Seed Extraction.</u>	<u>Origin.</u>	<u>F.C.</u>	<u>Private.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
	<u>Bushels</u>	750	58½	808½
	<u>Seed(lbs)</u>	281½	26½	308 lbs.

Cost of Extraction - 5/6 per bushel.

The Cone Kiln is worked on a 24 hour day with three men working a shift each. The shifts are deliberately overlapped so that any job which requires more than one man can be done during the overlap period. This continuous working ensures that there is always one man on duty in case of fire.

6. Plantations.

(1) Establishment. The forest consists of the following acreages:-

<u>Mature Conifers</u>	<u>Mature H/woods</u>	<u>Thinning Stage</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Not yet Established</u>
38	127	1495	6,600	2,027

Total plantations 10,287.

Between 4th. November 1963 and 28th February 1964 154 acres were planted and 117,000 plants used in B.U.

<u>Classification (acres)</u>	<u>Afforestation</u>	<u>Re-afforestation</u>	<u>Total</u>
	50	104	154 acres
	<u>Morayshire</u>	<u>Banffshire</u>	<u>Total</u>
	135	19	154 acres

<u>Plants used in Planting</u>	<u>S.P.</u>	<u>C.P.</u>	<u>L.P.</u>	<u>N.S.</u>	<u>S.S.</u>	<u>H.L.</u>	<u>D.F.</u>	<u>SYC</u>	<u>Total</u>
	53.6	79.4	58.7	1	24	1	3	18.2	238.9 m.

(11) Maintenance

<u>Plants used in B.U.</u>	<u>S.P.</u>	<u>L.P.</u>	<u>N.S.</u>	<u>S.S.</u>	<u>D.F.</u>	<u>SYC</u>	<u>Total</u>
	57.7	24	10	23	1	1.6	117.3 m.

(111) Improvement

10 acres enrichment was carried out using the following plants.

	<u>S.P.</u>	<u>C.P.</u>	<u>L.P.</u>	<u>S.S.</u>	<u>H.L.</u>	<u>D.F.</u>	<u>SYC</u>	<u>Abies</u>	<u>Bornealis</u>	<u>Total</u>
	1.7	2.6	0.2	1.9	1	2	0.7	0.2		10.3 m

(1V) Protection, Fire/-

(1V) Protection Fire.

Fires during F.Y. 64 (1)

<u>Compt.No.</u>	<u>P.yr.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Area burnt</u>	<u>date of fire.</u>
198	52	s.p.	0.4	1/6/64.

The above fire originated on the edge of a lay-by where a man was burning unwanted litter. The man subsequently paid compensation.

Protection Other. Vermin destroyed F.Y. 64/5

<u>Rabbits</u>	<u>Hares</u>	<u>Roe Deer</u>	<u>Red Deer</u>	<u>Foxes</u>	<u>Fox Cubs.</u>
742	260	25	2	5	6

Of the rabbits killed 33 were suffering from myxomatosis.

In the Weelheads area a Wildcat measuring 32" long was shot while entangled in a rabbit snare. The cat had the remains of an old snare round a front paw and part of the paw was rotted away. Aberdeen University heard of this and asked for the cat to be sent to them.

Early in the year the body of a Pine Marten was found lying in the Deer Park woods. I notified the University and again they asked for the animal to be sent to them.

(7) Production.

(1) Preparation and Extraction.

For the purpose of this Report no F.C. fellings were carried out during the forest year.

Standing Sales.

Volumes felled by Contractors during the year and balance remaining to be felled in Hoppers feet.

<u>Negotiated</u>	<u>Carried forward</u>	<u>Total for</u>	<u>Felled during</u>	<u>Carried forward</u>
<u>in F.Y. 64.</u>	<u>from F.Y. 63.</u>	<u>F.Y. 64.</u>	<u>F.Y. 64.</u>	<u>to F.Y. 65.</u>
120,605	77,041	197,646	134,580	63,066

(11) Sales of Produce Markets and prices.

Sales have almost always in the past been Standing Sales and these have invariably been satisfactory. For F.Y. 65 it is proposed the thinnings should be felled by F.C. and sold at stump. This will probably lead to the F.C.F.C. receiving less than the cost of felling from the Merchant and I will be doing well indeed if I end up with the standing value.

If we are to use F.C. labour for felling and/or converting timber we should endeavour to make this a continuous operation in order to avoid the need for the men to re-adjust themselves from say weeding to timber work. Such re-adjustments must have an adverse effect on costs.

(V111) Roads and Bridges.

No formation or gravelling of roads took place on F.Y. 64. All forest roads were graded by the powered grader with the exception of those in use for current thinning operations. Rolling of the graded roads took place until the roller was transferred to more urgent work. Where rolling followed grading the result was markedly successful.

The mileage of roads requiring to be gravelled at this date are 12.74 miles.

(1X) Mechanical Equipment.

The mechanical equipment held on charge is as follows:-

Thames Lorries (Diesel)	2
Workobus	1
5 cwt. van	1
Land Rover L.W.B.	1
Fordson Tractor	1
Motor cycle	1
Allen Auto scythe	1
Jo-Bu Brush Cutters	2
	1
JO-Bu Power saw	

The Thames lorries/-

The Thames lorries are underpowered with their 4 cylinder engines. They should have 6 cylinders.

The Workobus is excellent for its purpose.

The L.V.B. Land Rover has had the Allman pump fitted in a most unimaginative manner. As it is now fitted the left head lamp is badly obscured whereas the use of a few metal bends and the lamp need not have been obscured at all.

Secondly I am informed that I must use only tap water to fill the emergency tank on the Land Rover because the Engineers were unable to fit a strainer on the pump intake. I have suggested that a strainer should be fitted on the tank intake and this has now to be done locally because no one had thought of it. All this after six weeks at Blackhall.

The Jo-Bu Brush saws are in steady use and are excellent tools..

The Jo-Bu power saw is past its best and should be replaced. It certainly won't cut the P.Y.65 thinnings.

The Mobile Mechanic does a splendid job and regularly appears not to be overworked while the number of jobs he does would suggest that he was.

(X1) Working Plans.

The Working Plans have been completed and are, I understand, in Director's hands at present.

(14) Sociological Aspects.

Relations between forestry and farming are good. Certain Farmers who are Crown Lands tenants and whose farms adjoin F.C. land can expect to have their fences fully maintained by the F.C. since we are 100% responsible. A small number of these Farmers have approached me and suggested that if the materials are provided they will gladly do the work in their slack time. This would require no more than normal supervision on the supplies of material and it might be in the interests of the F.C. to extend the idea.

Status of F.C. Staff in Rural Community.

F.C. Staff are just ordinary folks fitting into the pattern of village life, no better and no worse than their contemporaries in Baxter's Factory or Murray's Bakery. They might be healthier, though from their outdoor activities.

(15) Forest Influences.

There have been no significant developments along these lines.

(16) Amenity and Access to the Countryside.

Generally speaking we debar the use of cars on F.C. roads. A number of the roads now termed as F.C. have been in regular use by the public since the days of horse transport, e.g. the road to the monument on Whiteash Hill, where the fire now stands, was made by the Duke of Gordon a long time ago and subsequently gravelled by the F.C. I feel sure that any serious attempt by the F.C. to completely debar people from taking cars to the monument would start a claim that it was a right of way which might be upheld.

The Quarry Gardens are open to the Public to walk around but I fear that the use of the word Gardens is a mis-nomer.

The Winding Walks are also open to the Public and discussions are going on between the Fochabers Amenities Association and the local District Officer regarding just how much should be done to improve them.

Head Forester.