

Are You Being Represented?

AGM 2005

By Warwick Payne

This year's AGM at Crieff appeared as if it was going to be a quiet affair with monologues on Group Reports and the usual chatter. However, this was not to be and stimulating issues arose.

The first contentious point was criticism of the FC who claimed that it was not allowed to supply the 'FCA Today' editor with notifications of ex-FC employees deaths due to the Data Protection Act. It was felt that deaths were reported in newspapers and even the contents of a person's will, after a period of time, could become public knowledge. Therefore the FC should have no problems in providing this information to the FCA. It seemed only natural that having worked for a number of years with colleagues, their lifetimes should be acknowledged through information about their deaths. There was a unanimous decision to approach the Commission again to request that this information should be made available.

During the Group reports it became obvious that dwindling active membership was severely handicapping some events. To enable a group to remain viable it had to be based near to a large office to provide a source of potential members as they retired. Despite this FC personnel had dropped so dramatically that the normal take-up of membership (25-30% of retirees) was practically nil. Consequently the suggestion of Associate Membership was raised. This would allow non-FC personnel to join groups and participate fully in the activities. Some constraints may be necessary, but this would only be recognising what was already happening. Some groups would not need 'Associate Members', whereas for others they would provide fresh blood

for their membership and help provide a reason for the group's existence. This would need careful debate and was expected to be raised again at the next AGM. Let your representative know your views and do not reject the idea because your Group may not need more members now. It may have been the solution to enable the New Forest Group to have continued. Without new members certain smaller groups would no longer remain viable.

The third major point raised was the election of the Management committee. We were in desperate need of a Secretary and Treasurer and I suspected that some slid down in their seats to become less noticeable, as nobody volunteered and nobody was proposed. Without a full committee the FCA could not function efficiently and provide a service to members. The work involved would be approximately 2-3 days a year, mainly general preparation for the AGM and a few other small jobs. The detailed work for the AGM is carried out by the local

Welcome to Retirement!

Peter Dewey	Berkhamsted
Keith Mills	Hawick
Edward Morrison	Avoch
L J MacIntosh	Fort William
Thomas Brown	Crieff
James Dollan	Lochgilphead
David Armstrong	Bellingham
Douglas Hughes	Machynlleth
Douglas Archibald	Banchory
Ian MacGillivray	Inverness
Robert Gillies	Lochgilphead
John Grieve	Oban
William Walker	Glenprosen
Mike Lofthouse	Dumfries
Alan Walker	New Galloway
Mike Shuttleworth	Hexham
Richard Davis	Ipswich
William Barber	Brandon
Christine Clark	Bournemouth
Robert Murray	Southampton
Carol Morgan	Southampton
Jennifer Noel	Farnham
Roy Burch	Rugeley
Terence Bexton	Rugeley
Derek Evans	Lydney
Leslie Stirling	Ruthin
Evelyn Edwards	Dolgellau
George Williams	Rhayader
James Voice	Neath
Mairie Simm	Edinburgh
Simon Hewitt	Aberystwyth
Douglas Green	Edinburgh
Roger Herbert	Edinburgh

organiser. It was possible that a time limit would be put on the job, perhaps 3 years, but this had yet to be decided. Suggestions and/or volunteers welcomed.

South/Mid Wales would be the venue for the 2006 AGM and possibly South West England for 2007. Both venues have yet to be confirmed.

Timber Jills

At least that's what Bill Sutherland called them when working with the Women's Timber Corps near Dumfries in the early years of the War. This one of Betty Kirkland's photos taken at Culford Timber Camp, East Anglia in 1940.



Rail Memories... Keep Going

Bill Wittering, now retired to Royston, also has a Thetford rail memory. He recalled, while working at Thetford, that the original Santon Downham narrow gauge railway ran from High Lodge to a siding on the main line, where logs could be transferred. It was built by Canadian loggers felling trees as part of the war effort. They lived in a large wooden hut which later became the beat office under Peter Kirby. The Santon Downham transfer siding eventually became the site of the infamous creosote plant and some of the narrow gauge track was retained to service the depot. In 1965 the route of the track from High Lodge to Santon Downham could still be clearly seen.

The creosote plant was run by a small expatriate staff of Poles, who never caught colds as they were pickled in creosote!

It would be interesting if staff at Thetford could identify the narrow gauge railway track bed and make a visitor feature of it. Can it still be seen? Do photos exist? This is all part of Thetford's extensive forest history, from the labour camps after the First World War to present day wide public access.

Whitelee: An Oral History of a 20th Century Scottish Forest – Update

We are delighted with the response from FCA Today readers to our article in the March issue, which described this project. We are tapping into the memories of interested people who had, and have, a part in the start and development of Whitelee Forest.

Thank you for your letters, phone calls and willingness to dig back and provide us with facts concerning (for instance) how parcels of sheep-grazed moor were acquired in the first place, how easy it was to become lost in the vast mists while surveying, that adds made working with dogs impossible during preliminary pest control, the difficulties of working on huge areas of deep, soft peat and the political background to forestry in the 1960s and 1970s.

Thank you to those retired FC staff who have braved the recording machine and talked at length about Whitelee Forest and to people who are busy writing their memories for the project. We welcome further responses. We are: Ruth Tittensor, Faenol, 6 East Donington Street, Darvel, Ayrshire KA17 0JR, 01506 320543, e-mail ruth@johnwalters.com and Chris Smout, 01330 310330, e-mail tcs@st-andrews.ac.uk

We will describe more project results in a future issue of FCA Today.

Diverse Dunkeld – The AGM Tour

Following the AGM and dinner at the Crieff Hydro we had a most enjoyable excursion to Dunkeld, The Hermitage and Craigvinean. At Dunkeld, the National Trust for Scotland provided a guide for our walk through this most interesting small town, set in the Tay valley amongst woodland and parkland laid out by the Dukes of Atholl. The landscape looks very natural but is entirely contrived and, happily, has been carefully preserved. The National Trust for Scotland is a careful custodian of the centre of Dunkeld and has been faithfully restoring the character of its buildings for some time. We were shown examples of recent work.

After an excellent buffet lunch at the Birnam Institute our coach took us to The Hermitage, woodland planted in the 18th and 19th centuries by the Dukes of Atholl as part of their landscape development surrounding Dunkeld. Originally designed as a pleasure "park" with careful laid out paths, viewpoints and various "follies" the woodland is now a delightful area with a magnificent "cathedral" of enormous Douglas Fir.

The Forestry Commission's Craigvinean immediately adjoins The Hermitage and is managed as a complementary feature of this beautiful part of the Tay Valley. Charlie Taylor, District Forest Manager, guided us on a fascinating walk through the area explaining management objectives and the many constraints from the multiplicity of demands from a wide range of uses of the area.

This excellent day was crowned by a cloudless sky and warm sun. What could be better!

A Cabin in the Forest

...a mystery solved!

Ann McVeigh nee Henderson, the writer of the story in the December 2004 issue, has contacted me from Glasgow. She had written the original story, in French, for her French Club. All the young women in "The Cabin" still keep in touch. Margaret (Mac) emigrated to Australia with her husband and had all sorts of adventures running a farm. Of the others, one became a nurse and lives in Edinburgh, another a mental health visitor, the fourth, Paddy, married a Canadian and lives in Edmonton and Ann, also a nurse, is the fifth. So the story, which began in McBrayne's bus depot, continues with all writing to each other and sometimes visiting families in Scotland, Canada and Australia. Such stories are part of forestry legend, and have now been recorded for posterity.

Wartime Stories

I still have a few stories remaining, this is Derrick Smith's, now retired to Bexhill. He joined the FC in 1938 in Census and Working Plans Branch. He saw war service in the RAF and returned to the FC in 1946 where he arranged Commissioners' tours and took minutes for their meetings under Lord Robinson and Lord Radnor. He transferred to HM Customs & Excise in 1954.

I wonder how many there are of us left who can remember those pre-war years at Savile Row. When war loomed, floor wardens were appointed. We practised how we might operate in case of air raids. My main recollection is of wedging open office doors to facilitate access - a practice later reversed to prevent fire spreading.

Then, when war came, we loaded our vital documents and cabinets on to the lorries and departed to our destination in Bristol - Camp House for the Forest Management Department and the restaurant in the department store for the Home Timber Production Department - where we were greeted by a small army of rats, rather upset at the change of use of the premises.

Many of us were accommodated in "billets" in private houses, largely in Cranbrook Road, where for 75p per week we were provided with bed, breakfast and evening meal.

As time went by most of the younger members of staff (and some older) left to join HM Forces and the married and older ones found more permanent accommodation.

For many of the younger staff this was the first time away from home and an interesting experience. We had to make our own amusements - on a low wage. With the help of a friendly vicar we loaned his parish hall where once a week we held a social evening dancing, games such as "musical chairs" in which even the dreaded "chief clerks" took part. We even managed to write and produce a revue using the small stage in the hall, where staff sang, danced, recited, and acted little sketches about amusing moments in our new surroundings.

There were many happy moments to remember during those days which eventually became more difficult when the bombing (the "Blitz") started. We formed a small dance band playing at various venues in the city - mostly other Government departments. This involved carrying our instruments - especially the drum kit - from one venue to the next and trying to avoid the air raids. However it all came to an end when, one by one, we all joined different Services.

Tools for Self-Reliance (Tfsr)

In previous issues I explained the objectives of TFSR and how you could help. Martin Fletcher, who has a spot on this issue, works in its Southampton base. I have discovered there is a Welsh branch and the piece below should encourage Welsh retirees and current employees to support it.

TFSR Cymru is based in Crickhowell, South Wales, and is one of five in Wales or on the borders, the others being Clun, Hereford, Llanelli and Ystradgynlais.

TFSR Cymru are a bunch of over 50 volunteers, men and women aged 14 to 80. We meet at one of several sessions a week in our fully-equipped workshop where we repair and renovate hand tools in their thousands. The tools are donated by individuals, or collected by a wide variety of other organisations from across Wales – rotary clubs, schools, WI groups, church groups.

Could you work without tools? In the past 21 years we have sent more than 300 tool kits to craftsmen and women in rural

communities of Africa. Tools mean work – and the chance to shape their future – just as important to a young person in Tanzania or Ghana today as it is in Britain.

Our 'More Tools for Tanzania' Project

We have become quite successful at collecting hand tools from across Wales; they now arrive at our workshop in Crickhowell faster than we can refurbish them. In Tanzania there is no shortage of labour; so we plan to ship a container full of carefully selected but un-refurbished tools to our partners in Mwanza. We have undertaken to provide all the equipment needed to clean and sharpen these tools, and to fund all the costs of setting up, training the workers and running the workshop for three years – estimated at £50,000. We have drawn up the project after consulting with our partners in Mwanza, the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO). Tools will be distributed to groups paying around £25 per kit, with priority given to disabled, women's and the more remote rural groups.

We believe this is a step in the right direction for the self-reliance of artisans in Tanzania. Several blacksmiths groups are

already making some of the tools, which are added to our kits before distribution in Lake Zone. The new workshop will also enable broken tools to be repaired and new tools to be finished in Mwanza – the centre of Lake Zone on the shores of Lake Victoria. The project will enable a far greater number of tool kits to reach isolated artisan groups in rural Tanzania than we could manage to send from our Crickhowell workshop.

What help do we need?

Volunteers are always required at all the Welsh bases. Whatever your skills, there is always something to do and somebody to show you what is needed.

Money is needed to ship the tools overseas and to purchase a few new items for inclusion in the tool sets.

Tools are essential, particularly planes, vices, chisels, screwdrivers, grinders, pillar drills and anvils.

Contacts

E-mail: contact@tfsrcymru.org.uk

Tel: Rod Carter 01873 812 280

Call in at: TFSR Cymru, Upper House Farm, Standard Street, Crickhowell NP8 1BZ.

Information: www.tfsrcymru.org.uk

Getting to the Point

by Bill Sutherland

Behold a man well into his dotage who was suddenly transformed from being a dyed-in-the-wool sceptic of all forms of modern quack quack therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors etc, into a rampant disciple of the Chinese art of acupuncture, by a Chinese who can't speak English or Scottish! Here's what happened.

Firstly my antique sister convinced me that the only way to overcome osteo-arthritis was through diet. She had cured herself so I followed suit. A year ago I had reached the stage when my fingers were so swollen that I couldn't hold my garden trowel – for me the next worst thing to not being able to lift a glass of whisky! And by Jove it worked. My arthritis had vanished after 3-4 months dieting.

The initial diet allowed a little white wine and brandy so I wrote explaining my preference for red wine and whisky and they replied that this was okay – the cure was written long ago and they now accept that my preferred alternatives were acceptable in moderation – as if I would do anything other!

But next I found that my legs were giving out. I walked slowly, only with a stick and not very far. Then one knee began to

give way so that once, while walking a dog, I fell flat on my face in the mud!

A visiting friend learned of my predicament and rang my doorbell. "Someone wants to meet you." "What now? I haven't finished my evening meal." "Yes, now. He's waiting for you. It won't take long."

Two minutes later I realised that I had been tricked into a consultation with an acupuncturist.

Both he and his young lady assistant had broad Chinese grins. But she spoke perfect English and I answered her questions about my symptoms which she translated into gobbledygook to the grinning Chinese 'doctor'.

He prodded me very gently then, through his assistant, explained that my weak knee was due to a pulled muscle for which acupuncture was not the answer. It would come right of its own accord in 2-3 weeks. I was getting up to finish my meal when I heard "but he can help your problem with walking and, before I could say 'Jack Robinson' I was lying flat on my back in a small quiet room without trousers or shirt but covered in a blanket.

I couldn't see what was going on but could count the number of needles he had thrown at me – no pain! Then he adjusted a heater over my legs and said "sleep". So I was wrong. He spoke one word of English. Then the lights were dimmed and there was soft Chinese music. He returned 20 minutes later and asked "Hot?". (So he actually knew 2 words.) I said okay.

He returned I think twice then removed the heater and pummelled and manipulated me. Then he slapped me all over and left. It all took 40 minutes and felt good. She explained that one treatment wasn't enough and I paid £120 for a course of 5 treatments. After 3 treatments I was walking normally, without a stick. I went to Austria and walked to the top of the hill and back – 4 miles without a stick!

On my fourth visit I said the cure was complete but mentioned I had a painful stiffness in my neck while swimming. So he added a few more needles and now I don't have a pain in my body. And they say miracles don't happen any more!

My antique sister accompanied me on my last visit and he cured her leg problem in 2 visits.

So that is why I am a rampant disciple of the Chinese form of acupuncture.

I asked the assistant if the 'doctor' was always equally successful. All she would say was that I had been a good patient. Whoopee!

Arnold's Anagrams – Answers

You'll still have to do a little work on these as I have only given the names, not the anagrams. You'll find the following hidden –

Peter Hutchison, Hugh Miller, David Seal, Eddie Arthurs, George Stewart, John Keenleyside, George Holmes, Bob Farmer, Tom Nisbet, Geoff Hatfield.

Mount Hua, China

by Martin Fletcher

Since retirement I have been registered with British Executive Service Overseas, soon to be amalgamated with VSO. My first assignment last November was to the Sacred Mount Hua in Shaanxi Province. My client Huashan Tourism Development Corporation required help to solve several forestry problems they were encountering, as well as developing a strategy for their Pine Protection Forest at 6,700 feet.

The beautiful Mount Hua range is 150 square km and it has about one million visitors per annum. The principle conifers are Chinese pine (*Pinus tabulaeformis*) and Armand's Pine (*Pinus armandii*) there is also some *Picea wilsonii* and *P. brachytyla* and a very few *Pinus bungeana*. On the lower slopes Chinese juniper (*Juniperus chinensis*) flourishes. The rock formations are white granite and rise very steeply above the Yellow River and plains below. The mountain range is 500 miles west of Shanghai and 700 miles south of Beijing, near the ancient city of Xian in Shaanxi Province.

The lack of pine regeneration, lightning damage and landslides are worrying Huashan Tourism, who have the concession to run the facilities. These problems occur on the 60 ha Main Peak area, where I spent four days (plus three very chilly nights) at between 5,000 and 6,500 feet. Here the granite rock falls away 2,000 ft on all sides, but for a ridge, one and a half metres wide

which has steps cut into the granite for access.

Accommodation was provided for the rest of my three week stay in one of the companies 'four star' hotels in Huashan. Here I am the only European in a rural Chinese town of 10,000 people. Being of their height I could walk about fairly incognito observing their way of life. Traffic of bikes, small three wheelers, pick-ups, buses and lorries was incessant with the latter blowing their horns. Many people are involved in cooking food and selling it at roadside, several markets flourish every day. Porters with shoulder loads of 16-20 kg, start the 6 km 5,000 ft climb, past the hotel, with provisions for the cafes and rest houses every morning, as all the goods are carried up. Tourists go up most of the way to the mountain peaks by coach and cable car.

Huashan housing is partly single story homes or flats, of which I have been inside two and these are spacious and pleasant. It was essential to master the use of chopsticks, to survive 70 consecutive Chinese meals whilst in Huashan!

With a company car and driver, I was fortunate enough to visit Xian and the Terracotta Warriors museum both nearby, and also visit the Forbidden City and Summer Palace in Beijing.

The whole trip has been a tremendous experience with my time given free and flights and expenses all paid. My next assignment is Shangai in early April.

OOPS!...A lesson in dealing with an enquiry

I had this reminiscence from Ken Broad, now retired to Kilve in Somerset.

A woman called at the forest office one day and asked if she might dig up a small rowan tree. I said that unfortunately I was unable to give such permission.

She said that she believed the trees were not planted ones but were growing naturally so no money had been spent on them. I said that it was not a matter of their relative value, I was not in a position to grant permission for the removal of trees, planted or natural.

She said that there were hundreds of trees growing in this particular spot on the hill and we surely would not miss just the one. I explained that it wasn't a case of their scarcity or abundance, members of the public were simply not permitted to dig up trees.

But if the trees were to grow to maturity, she reasoned, then they would need to be thinned out because they were growing so densely. Removing one would therefore save us work. I explained that the rowan trees were not intended to form a timber crop so we were not planning to thin them out.

But if they are not to be thinned out, she persisted, they still cannot all survive to maturity. By removing one she would be saving a tree that would otherwise perish.

This was getting tiresome. "Look," I said trying to be helpful, "there are rules and regulations that I have to abide by - but you are

not in that position are you?"

"Aaah", she said knowingly, "if someone dug up a tree and said nothing to anyone... ..". She was beginning to cotton on at last.

"I'm sure that is what some people would do", I replied.

This seemed to satisfy her and she moved towards the door.

Now why I didn't leave it at that I'll never know. But I didn't. "If you must have a tree then do have something worth growing." I suggested.

She turned slowly, "What do you mean?" she queried.

"Well", I said, "as well as rowan there are beech, ash and oak seedlings galore on the hill"

"But what's wrong with a rowan?" she asked.

"Well, as a tree it's no great shakes is it?" I said, "I mean it's short lived, generally turns out to be short and spindly, the foliage is sparse, the crown thin and the timber useless - you can't even give the stuff away. Can't imagine why anyone would want a rowan."

"I want a rowan", she seethed, "to commemorate the birth of my first grandson."

"So?" I queried.

"So!" she thundered, "they are naming him Rowan!"

Had the door been of the revolving type it would still be spinning.

99 and Good for More

by Bill Sutherland

I was invited to John Jackson's 99th birthday party at the Coylet Hotel, Lochack in January. During my 40 years with the FC in Scotland, I knew many foresters of great character, none more so than John. He is still winning bridge prizes, can name any tree or shrub in the Benmore (Younger) Botanic Garden and continues to be an outspoken critic of the FC in Cowal. He was the man who taught me fly fishing in the River Echaig - now for the big One Hundred.

One Tree – The Finale

The One Tree travelling exhibition finished over 2 years ago, and there is an exciting conclusion to the project, of which the FC was one of the many sponsors.

The original aims were:

- To raise public awareness of the value of trees.
- To promote arts and crafts.
- To show the beauty and versatility of wood.
- To raise funds for tree planting projects.

The following show that the first three were fully achieved:

- 105,000 visitors to the 5 exhibition venues.
- Sales of exhibition items amounted to £60,000.
- 4,000 descriptive books were sold.
- There were a wide range of reviews of the books and exhibition, with over 200 articles and broadcasts in UK and Europe.
- In the USA, CBS aired a short programme on national TV which resulted in a duplicate project in Washington State.
- Similar projects were mounted in Tasmania, Nicaragua and Ireland.

After the accounts were completed there was a profit of £24,300. It was decided that this should be donated to the Mersey Forest Project. In conjunction with the Woodland Trust, the Project has used this to purchase an area of farmland for afforestation, and an adjacent semi-natural ancient woodland in Cheshire. This is a few miles from Tatton Park where the original tree was felled. The first trees have been planted and there will be great satisfaction in watching the newly named One Tree Wood grow as a legacy of the project. The FC is also funding this planting. More on the website www.merseyforest.org.uk

OBITUARIES

Jim Dewar has told me of the death of **LIONEL HOLMES**. He joined the Forestry Commission in 1936 at Aberfoyle. Following his marriage to Pauline, he moved to Strathgry Forest where he worked until his retirement in 1985, he was just 6 months short of 50 years service with the FC.

During his time at Strathgry he saw many foresters and trainee foresters come and go. He was always interested to follow their progress and to learn in which district they were working.

His career ranged from work in the nursery, through to supervising harvesting operations. As he had many years of service he was in the rare and enviable position of seeing areas he planted reaching the thinning stage and beyond. He marked many thousands of tons of timber for thinning and was never far from his trusted marking axe. Lionel could always be trusted to undertake his work diligently and with full commitment.

He was a keen gardener and took great pleasure in maintaining not only his own but several other gardens in Strathgry, Balquhiddie and Lochearnhead.

Following his death colleagues and friends spoke fondly of him and provided me with a fitting epitaph – 'Lionel was a true gentleman'.

I have gathered information on **MARY LOWRY** who died in March. She was born in County Down in 1918 and began her Civil Service career in Stormont. After a period in the WAAFs in the war she returned to Ireland where she married Raymond in 1946. Initially they worked in Belfast. Raymond's work took them around Britain but finally they settled in Edinburgh. At the age of 55 she returned to work with the CAA, subsequently taking a job in the then newly opened FC HQ at Corstorphine. Keith Ball takes up the story –

"During her time in E&T Edinburgh, Mary was always on hand to give assistance and advice both to those who were attending courses and those who, like myself, had need to organise specialist courses, in this instance for the FC Cartographic staff under my jurisdiction.

She was especially helpful for the technical seminars, both at Edinburgh and in the Conservancies. Her research and advice for our OND, HND carto students and the placements at various colleges, did much to alleviate my time and efforts and proved more successful than probably I would have achieved independently. Further, she helped to arrange the conducting, the invigilating and the collecting of completed papers for the internal examinations required for my staff.

These duties, which she carried out so kindly and cheerfully, were her characteristic way of dealing with colleague who needed such help. I, and we, will always be grateful for Mary being there for us.

As a colleague in our retirement group, she and Raymond were firstly, to Cris and me, so very welcoming and kind, thereafter always jolly, cheery and forever with that Irish twinkle in her eye. We will remember Mary with much fondness and affection."

John Ogilvie has written an appreciation of **RICHARD CHARD**.

He was born in Ashford, Kent and was the youngest of three brothers, the eldest being Jack who also served with the FC, the middle brother being Peter who lost his life after being wounded

at Arnhem in WWII. One of Richard's early exploits, with Peter as companion, was to cycle as a Boy Scout challenge wearing Scout uniform from Kent to Dumfries to visit brother Jack who had a post with the FC, a round trip of some 800 miles.

As soon as he was eligible in 1939 he applied for entry to the Fleet Air Arm but this was deferred till after completing the university degree course in Forestry at Edinburgh. He joined up in 1943 and after training in Trinidad he served in the Fleet Air Arm until December 1946 as a Sub-Lieutenant (Observer), flying in Swordfishes.

In 1947 Richard joined the Forestry Commission in Dorset and then at Chester in 1949 where he met Pamela and they married in April 1950. Pamela, who belonged to Norwich, had been in the Women's Timber Corps during the war and then in the Woodland Census team.

In 1953 Richard was posted to Kendal in the Lake District and from there the family moved to Thetford in 1956. Invited to settle in Cambridge, Richard declined, preferring to live at Thetford itself as he believed a District Officer should live in the forest area. The next 10 years were seminal ones as apart from the day-to-day management of the forest, he was heavily involved in the development of softwood sawlog grading rules which were subsequently published and adopted nationally.

In 1966 the family moved to the New Forest for an all too brief stay in Brockenhurst because in December Richard was posted to Dumfries on promotion to Assistant Conservator, initially under John James and latterly under John Davies. He occupied the H&M and then the Silvicultural post overseeing on the one hand the introduction of the sawlog grading rules and on the other the application of aerial fertilising to the spruce forests of southern Scotland.

He retired in 1983 and transferred his energy to golf, the forestry societies, painting and a gem of a garden at the family home of Whitemoor in Lochmaben which overlooks the golf course. He played regularly with the Lochmaben GC Vintage Group, as well as with the family who shared his interest. However, perhaps his greatest contribution to the landscape of the area was the planning, establishment and maintenance of 11 new woodlands on the golf course extension with all the native tree species being represented. He spent many happy hours tending these trees and was often to be seen among them brashing saw in hand. In recognition of his outstanding services to Lochmaben Golf Club he was made an Honorary Member.

Richard died in February. He will be best remembered for his quiet and determined personality, his welcoming smile when meeting someone, his practical forestry acumen and his wide knowledge of trees and what makes them tick.

John Keenleyside tells of **PETER MACKENZIE** who was born in Strathconon and spent his whole life there. After leaving the village school, he went to work on the estate farm. When the FC set up Strathconon Forest in the 1940s, Peter joined and worked there for 43 years. His activities stretched as far west as Ullapool when Strathconon became part of the Torrachilly Forest.

He became one of its most popular men, known for his good nature, honesty and diligent work. He retired in 1989. For 15 years he served in the Fire Brigade centred in Dingwall and he was also engaged with the Civil Defence.

Peter was a regular and faithful member of the FCA and travelled to many meetings in Inverness to share some time with his former colleagues. He was a man of the Strath, with wide knowledge of the whole area. He played a useful role in all activities from church to sport and fishing and will be sadly missed for all the good work he did for the FC and the whole community.

John Waite recalls **TECWYN ROBERTS** who died in January.

He entered the Commission through the FWTS in 1948, having served with the Royal Welch Fusiliers in Germany. He was posted to Brechfa Forest where he undertook his initial training under the direction of L T Edwards. He entered the Forester Training School in 1951 and after gaining his certificate was posted to Mid Wales where he spent many years with his wife Iris and son Tim. During this period he was promoted to Head Forester. Later he moved to North Wales serving under Ted Waddelove at Clocaenog Forest until he took charge of Cynwyd Forest in 1975.

In the early 1980s Cynwyd was joined to Clocaenog and Tecwyn became responsible for private woodlands in the district until his retirement in 1987.

Tecwyn played a major part in the establishment, maintenance and harvesting plantations, and his contribution has helped to enhance the visual aspect of forestry in North Wales.

A few years after his retirement he became the Hon Secretary of the FCA, a job he managed with dedication and great professionalism until his untimely death. He will be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues, which was well demonstrated by the large attendance at his funeral.

Nick Banister remembers **IAN SKINNER** who died last March. He graduated from Edinburgh in 1948 and went straight into the 1st Census of Scottish Woodlands. He travelled the length of Scotland for two years until he was appointed as District Forest Officer to assist Dallas Mithen, living and working with Dallas and Peggy until the Forestry Commission eventually rented proper office accommodation in Guildford. This was Ian's first experience of English silviculture on Chalk Downland and Wealden Clay and of forests that he might have, in an unguarded moment, referred to as mere woods!

To redress the balance, in 1953 he moved to Coed y Brenin, assisting

Mike Harker to begin with and then running his own District in Cardiganshire. This change to montane forestry was a breath of fresh air.

In 1954 he married Jean and they set up their first home in Bow Street, just north of

Aberystwyth, operating from Director Wales Office. As newly weds they made many friends, including Frank Webb, Derek Bayliss and Peris Morgan. This was at the time when Frank Best was Conservator, (referred to as Father Frank by the younger DFOs).

Halcyon days of sympathetic personnel management and inspired forest and wildlife

OBITUARIES

management, huge planting programmes with incipient windblow. Jean recalls the other side of the coin when Ian would call into the office at the end of the day, to find in his in tray a brace of pheasants or perhaps they were Mallard or grouse, left there by Father Frank! Arthur Cadman had a house that turned out to have been built on the flood plain of the River Ystwyth. Somehow it was always Ian or Peris who were called upon to help mop up or to move furniture upstairs when the inevitable happened.

In 1961 he moved to South Wales to manage the Eastern Valleys including Tintern, in these twelve years he enjoyed the outstanding support of John Zehetmayer and Peter Ledgard. In addition they had a full social and church life in between forest fires in the spring.

In September 1973 he moved to South East England as Assistant Conservator H&M. This was a culture shock with a vengeance, yes there were conifers to market, much indeed of sawlog size but the quantity, quality and variety of broad leaf timber was a challenge that he accepted, rather enjoying a market of 150 and more individual sawmills. This was a time when S E (E) and the New Forest claimed to have the highest H&M revenue in England.

He was promoted to Conservator in 1984 following the death of Charles Begley and will be remembered for his somewhat paternal management. The whole of the Queens House staff knew that his door was always open and that he was always ready to listen. He also became the Advisor on the New Broadleaf Policy for E(E) with offices in Cambridge as well as Lyndhurst.

He retired in 1986 and later moved to Dover, latterly suffering from Parkinson's Disease which he tackled with great courage and tremendous determination. His was a very close-knit family, albeit much scattered, with a son in California, one daughter in Aboyne and the eldest in Dover. He was a staunch Methodist and with Jean played a considerable role in their church life. They never forgot their Scottish roots and travelled north often and widely in their motorhome. They also went abroad a lot, not merely round the world but extensively in USA achieving a considerable skill with light weight luggage, thus avoiding the tedium of the carousel. He had a great interest in ancient history and prehistoric remains. Their last trips north by motorhome, assisted by Caledonian MacBrayne, were to Lewis and Harris and also a circuit of Ireland.

Bryce Reynard and John Keenleyside have put together memories of **FRANK SUTHERLAND** who was born and brought up in the last house in John o' Groats in Caithness. From such a treeless corner of the country, he went on to spend a life amongst the trees.

He was a stalwart in everything that he did and stood for. As a student at Glentress 1950-52 he was hard working, dependable, took his studies seriously and completed the course in 1952. He returned to North Scotland Conservancy and spent his whole career in the north, most of the time in some of the more isolated locations in the FC empire.

Frank's later years in the FC were as Chief

Forester in Mull when it employed a workforce of about fifty and half a dozen foresters. Before that posting there were spells in Lael, Farigaig, Strontian and Strathmashie where he was involved in establishment of forests. Frank carried out all his duties in a calm, efficient manner.

Although forestry was his job he was a tower of strength in whichever community he found himself. As a Church of Scotland elder and Session Clerk, he had a great influence on all with whom he had contact. He lived his morals! The Royal Observer Corps was another of Frank's passions which stemmed from his teenage years towards the end of the Second World War when he served in Gibraltar.

When retirement came, Frank headed back to Caithness and the area he came from at John o' Groats. He did a variety of things in retirement. This included refurbishment of his property, the establishment of a garden in a very exposed location, which was a considerable challenge. He also set up a museum to show the past activities in crofting, fishing and culture of the far north, and opened a gift shop to cater for the bus-loads of tourists who come to this location.

Frank lost his first wife Ina after 43 years of happy marriage. For the last 7 years Jeanne, a close family friend, shared a very happy marriage with Frank.

He was a great supporter of the FCA and drove the long distance to Inverness to attend the meetings and share some time and experiences with his former work colleagues. Frank will be remembered by all who knew him for his honesty, reliability and dedication to duty.

It was fitting that his coffin was carried by four Foresters who had served under him in the past.

Jenny, **HARRY DICKINSON's** widow, has recounted their lives together. They met in 1964 in Hertfordshire when he was supervising FC tree planting on the motorway. Prior to that he had graduated from Bangor and held posts in Scotland. On completion of his motorway secondment, he was transferred to Thetford, but after 2 years he accepted a job with Lincolnshire CC where he remained until he retired in 2000. During his time as Chief Forestry Officer in the county, he was responsible for planting a vast number of trees in woods, copses and along roadsides. Countless tree-lined views would not have looked the same without Harry's plans. One of his great interests was all things mechanical. He built his own Autocross special in which he won the National Autocross Championship for specials in 1970. He was still winning races into the 1990s. His one regret was that he had many good friends in the FC with whom he had lost touch.

RON WATKINSON's wife has asked for his death to be noted. Ron went to Bramshill Forest from the Dean School, and then to Bucklebury where he took charge from 1956-71. He was posted to the New after his promotion to Chief Forester in 1971. He retired in 1984 and enjoyed many years in Ringwood.

LES TAYLOR's wife also asked for his death in October 2004 to be recorded. He trained in

Gwydyr and the Dean Forestry Schools and then worked widely in Wales, being posted to Abercarn, Glasfynedd, Slebech, Crychan, Dean, Cenarth and Maenclogoch. He cared for and enjoyed his classic cars and in particular his Sunbeam motorbike.

David Chadwick has said that **WALLY HAMMOND's** many friends were saddened to hear of his sudden death from a heart attack in March. We have lost a good friend with an open and generous spirit.

After qualifying as a Forester, Wally started his FC career as an Assistant Forester at Chopwell Wood in 1957. There he met Maisie. She was a clerk in the Forest Office but they soon set out on their joint path through life. Following a spell at Wynyard, Wally and Maisie moved to Stonehaugh, Wark Forest, and became part of that band who cut their teeth in the Borders. In the mid sixties Wally moved to Kielder as Fire Warden and he and Maisie lived in a house in Butterbaugh. At that time Kielder Village was a bustling community and Wally and Maisie played a full part in the village's life, both socially and professionally. It wasn't all work. In those more relaxed days it was not unknown for leave to be hastily taken if a good run of sea trout was reported on the Liddel. Those of us who were privileged to be part of the scene will long remember with affection Wally's dry humour and the quiet pleasure of a day in his company.

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