



Benmore Reunion 2009

By Frank Thom

In August 2009 nine Benmore Forestry School old boys paid a nostalgic return visit to renew old friendships, some for the first time in 47 years. During their stay at the Whistlefield Bunkhouse, as well as reminiscing, dining and drinking well, they had the opportunity to see the old house again at the invitation of the Principal.

He entertained us to afternoon tea in what used to be Percy Gough's office, where the photo was taken, and was interested to hear stories of events and escapades from almost 50 years ago. The only thing that had not changed was the almost incessant rain. On leaving everybody vowed not to leave it so long to the next time.



In the photo (left to right) are: Frank Thom(1960-62), John Livingstone(60-62), Ken Johnstone(60-62), Ian Tillotson(60-62), John Gault(59-61), Ken Ellis(63-65), Trevor Wilson(57-59), Brian Monaghan (60- 62) and John Boyd (60-62).

Faskally Reunion 2010

By George Bruce

I would like to organize a reunion of the 1960 intake at Faskally, but appreciate that numbers may be getting thinner! So I should like to involve the 1959 and 1961 intake also. It would be between the end of February and the end of March 2010, and before the tourist season in Pitlochry. The only local contact at the moment is Bob Alpe, but I do know that there are one or two others in the Pitlochry area.

I can be contacted on 01946 815826 or email george@thebruce.co.uk For every body's information, the Moulin is a no go area now!

Italian Pows and Internees During WW2

By Isobel Wilson

I am researching this subject for the Anglo-Italian Family History Society and I am hoping that it can be augmented by readers' memories. After General Wavell's campaign in Libya, large numbers of Italian prisoners were brought over from Africa in 1942 to be employed on the land. Initially about 3000 were allocated for timber production but this rose to 4000.

Camps at Setley Plain near Brockenhurst and Blair Atholl and Craigellachie in Scotland were built specifically for forestry demands. These three accommodated 1500 while about 2500 others were dispersed in smaller numbers among camps established for agriculture.

Does anyone remember A. Perione POW at Studley sawmill near Calne Wilts. owned by the Beint family? On an old scrap of sheeting he painted a delightful rural scene

of the mill which is now in Chippenham museum. A clipper on show at Chavenage House near Tetbury was made from scraps of wood from the estate. It had sheep's teeth for oars on the lifeboats, seed bag sacking for sails and shoe eyelets for portholes. 15 ex POWs returned there in 1981 and had an emotional moment when seeing "their" ship again.

To date I haven't received memories from any POWs employed in forestry, please can anyone help? Eg. names of men and camps, wooden artefacts, photos, work and leisure activities (in particular, concerts given by a Quaker couple touring Scottish camps in 1944), marriage to local women etc. I'd love to hear from all who could help, everything welcomed.

Please contact me in writing only at:
24 Sherwood Avenue, Parkstone, Poole
BH14 8DL

Last of The Summer Wine

By George Bruce

The Yorkshire branch met on 1st April at the Royal Armouries, Leeds, where the gents and some of the ladies enjoyed the Armouries and it's events while other ladies went on a shopping spree in Leeds. The photo shows Pete Green, Chris Griffith and Geoff Barry leaning against a lock gate on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal wondering, "Does our bus pass cover boats!"



merry christmas
to all our readers



Wartime Stories – and after

By Dorothy “Doe” Edmondson

Following winter evenings when homework was interrupted by air-raids and daytime lessons often spent in the school air-raid shelter, I took my School Certificate in the summer of 1942 and left school still looking for a job. In those days career guidance was non-existent and one had to find suitable employment for oneself.

The FC had moved from central London to what they hoped would be the safety of the South West. The offices of HQ and Asst. Commissioner (England and Wales) were set up in Bristol in a large imposing building, Camp House, near the Clifton Suspension Bridge. A former pupil of my school was already working there. He rang the school to enquire if any recent leavers needed work. I was interviewed and started work on 10th August 1942 in the lowest grade of Temporary Clerk (Grade III). I worked a 44 hour week, including Saturday morning, for which I received nineteen shillings plus four shillings ‘War Bonus’ and 2s 11d for 5 hours overtime. I thought I was well off, even though I only had 3 shillings per week for personal ‘pocket money’.

Most of the staff had gone to HGTPD to concentrate on providing timber for the war effort. Just a few remained to provide basic services. HQ occupied the ground floor rooms and the Asst. Commissioner (E&W) the remainder of the huge house. Ella Johnson, a young auburn haired girl, had the distinction of being the first female CO to be employed by the Commission. Rumour had it that when she started in 1936 in HQ Registry there was a constant stream of young male COs urgently requiring files! She was a bright girl but would leave work to pile up for ages and then work 12 hour days to clear it. She was not an early riser and would pedal furiously around the Downs on her bike, usually arriving after the red line had been drawn on the attendance book and ultimately had increments withheld for unpunctuality.

The office was spartan, with bare boards and the remnants of Savile Row furniture. We were allowed meagre coal fires which were not allowed to be made up after 3pm and did little to heat the large high rooms. Another fuel saving measure was to substitute all the electric light bulbs for those of a lower wattage. When the Asst. Commissioner (E&W) had difficulty in reading his letters he was not amused! To save paper, letters and minutes were extracted from old files and the reverse side used for typing. Carbon paper was used

until it was threadbare and blue powder was mixed with cold water to provide ink. There was even a little metal tube into which stubs of pencils were fitted to enable them to be used to the last.

We were allowed very small amounts of tea and milk which the Head Messenger allocated with great precision. Now and again we had doughnuts from Gearys in the Mall if someone had been passing in the lunch hour, saw a queue and joined it. Sometimes one of our number brought in jam tarts having stopped to queue at the Berkley Cafe on his way to work. Sometimes this same gentleman was not at his desk on a Wednesday afternoon. Rumour had it he was playing his trombone at the matinee at the Bristol Hippodrome!

The day I started at Camp House, I was given an introductory chat about the history, aims and work of the FC and then sent off to the Labour Exchange in Bristol to register. I started work in the Establishment Branch, replacing a young man who was about to join the Navy. I spent my first afternoon issuing petrol coupons to field staff so that the Commission’s essential vehicles could be kept moving. I held the key of the safe in which the coupons were stored, together with the permits for rubber boots and coupons for protective clothing for field staff.

I was given a wide variety of jobs which I enjoyed, and throughout my service in the FC I retained a liking for Estabs – later Personnel. I made up the weekly pay sheets for all the temporary staff, including the Head Cleaner, a cheery West Indian lady whose application form showed her place of birth to be “on a ship”, and one of the paid fire-watchers who always turned up early on Fridays asking if he could have his wages so that he could purchase his “groceries” (of the liquid variety). There were split-duty payments to calculate and pay increases due to birthdays, increment promotions and war bonus increases. I also prepared increment certificates for the entire non-industrial FC staff which meant I had access to everyone’s personal file. They were kept in an unlocked cupboard located in the former kitchen of the house. I also dealt with a constant stream of “Forestry as a Career” enquiries from those looking for an outside job after the war. I kept lists of all the Commission staff and they became extremely dog-eared. There never seemed time, typists or paper available to prepare new ones.

Every letter which went out was signed by the Secretary of the Commission, “I am Sir/Madam your obedient servant, A G Herbert”. I kept a daily record of the electricity meter readings which involved a climb every morning and evening on to a pile of rickety wooden boxes to read it. How I avoided an accident on duty I’ll never know. A pleasanter task was weighing out and distributing the National Milk Cocoa to staff under 18 years of age. They were allowed to purchase 1lb every 16 days and there were always elderly teenagers who’d help them drink any surplus. Auntie Flo, the middle aged lady in HQ Registry also helped to feed the ever-hungry youngsters by making dripping toast by the Registry gas fire. I was also given the job of relief telephonist to cover lunch hours and sick leave. The HCO managed to fathom out how to operate the board when the telephonist was sick one day. He wrote out some instructions, gave them to me and sat me down in front of the board! Fortunately it wasn’t difficult except when one was sending or receiving a telegram and several other lines needed attention!

During daytime air raids we went to the cellars, taking work with us. I remember the Cashier sitting with bags of money and making up the weekly pay packets. When we were paid we checked the cash then handed back the envelope for re-use the next week. The paid firewatchers were on duty at night but the office staff covered the daylight hours at weekends. One very sad incident occurred a couple of weeks after I joined the FC. A bomb fell on a stationary bus in the centre of Bristol about 9am and one of our typing staff was killed. The typists had a rota system whereby one of them stayed late each night to deal with last minute post and then came in later the following morning. Ironically the girl who was killed had at the request of another typist exchanged duties, otherwise she would have been safely in the office when the bomb fell.

John Overly was a member of the Home Guard and every Wednesday afternoon his company marched down the Promenade to its parade. One would hear the tramp of their marching feet in heavy boots from some distance away and as soon as they came within earshot John would jump up from his desk, ram his forage cap on his head, grab greatcoat, haversack and gas-mask and run the length of the bare upstairs corridor, clattering down the marble staircase, shoot through the front hall, down the drive and fall in at the rear of the passing column. It wasn’t wise to be in his pathway at 4pm on Wednesday!

Maggie Kuenzler organised parcels to be sent to those former staff serving in the forces and also edited a Newsletter called “The Log”, an early predecessor to the Slasher. One Christmas we had a competition to make toys for deprived

children, The unlikely winner was the Land Agent who made a most realistic toy camel from carpet under felt. I enlarged a pattern for a small rabbit on squared paper and the result was a huge animal nearly 3 foot high, made from an old white flannelette sheet and promptly christened "Doe's Doe". On Saturday afternoons in the winter we fielded a hockey team which played against other teams on The Downs. Two of the typists brought their brothers along to join the fray. They certainly added weight to the games which tended to be rough and ready rather than skilful.

In spite of all the wartime difficulties I enjoyed my time at HQ. In the spring of 1946 we returned to 25 Savile Row, London. We formed a chain from the Registry through the hall and down the drive to the removal vans and passed the bundles of files from hand to hand. We were allowed to go up to London for a couple of days to help with the unpacking and I was very surprised and disappointed to discover how basic this London office was with such a prestigious address!

Some temporary staff stayed in London for a while but others of us took the Civil Service Reconstruction Exams and transferred first to the office of the Asst. Commissioner (E&W) for a year and then to the South West (England) office which moved to Bristol from Exeter in the spring of 1947. That year we had endured one of the harshest winters of the century. Fuel was in extremely short supply and nine of us tried to bring a small knob of coal each day to make a tiny fire in the large grate. Someone brought in an old electric fire which we balanced on the top of a pile of files so that the flex would reach the electric light fitting - all very unsafe and illegal but we were desperate for a bit of warmth! We wore our coats in the office and struggled to and fro through deep snow and ice. Some of the lads managed to make a toboggan using a few odd FC tools and bits of wood hoarded in the basement. There was a suitable slope on the Downs opposite the office so that provided opportunity for some useful warming exercise during the lunch hour.

With very great regret in May 1950 the SW(Eng) office staff were moved from the pleasant surroundings of Clifton to an area on the south east side of Bristol which over the years became a trading estate. We were housed in single storey buildings which in another national emergency could quickly convert to a hospital. The same hard wearing brown lino was still on the floor thirty years later! Here I remained and saw many changes from the tiny HQ office where I started work. In 1986 the office moved to Keynsham and after two years I made a sudden decision and left within a week!

I am still working at present - where? In an office in the pleasant area of Clifton just a short distance from the FC offices where I worked more than half a century ago.

Forestry Memories

By Norman Davidson

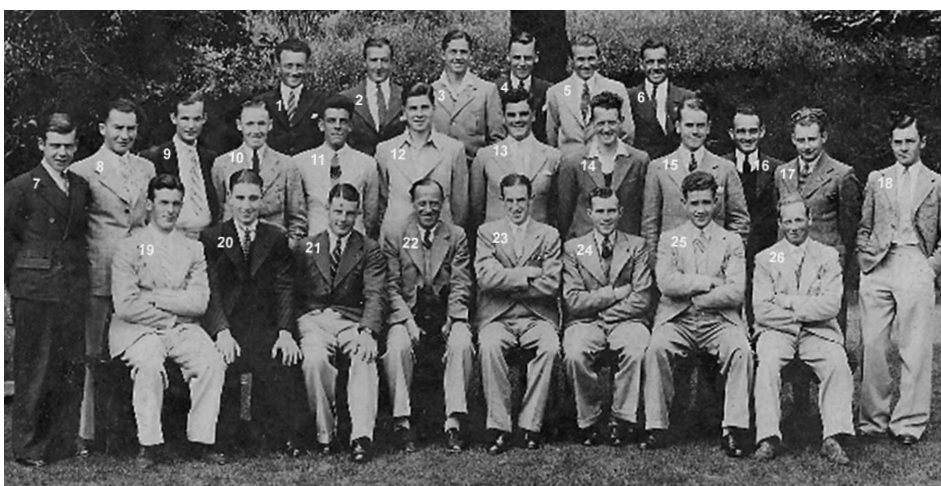
An interest that has occupied some of my time for a year or two is the placement of old photographs of forestry people, forest operations and other records of past times on to the University of the Highlands and Islands/FC website www.forestry-memories.org.uk

I am a small part of a Scotland wide national archive project which includes recording the voices of people telling their stories of forest life and careers, writing down the social and community story and producing booklets focusing on locality forest histories such as Argyll, The Great Glen and Glenmore. My aim, with the help of past employees, families and others involved in the industry, is to help add a little illumination to the largely unrecorded local story of forestry in Scotland over the last century.

Don MacLeman, the son of the Alex MacLeman who was my first Chief Forester in 1967, passed on some of his father's

Forestry School photographs, two of which show the student class at Benmore Forestry School around 1935 or perhaps as late as 1937. Unfortunately even with the help of some local colleagues I have been unable to find out many of the names. Of the two photographs, one is a formal line up and the other appears to be a celebratory picnic. I have numbered the people in the formal photograph and used the same numbers on the picnic image where I was reasonably certain the same person was identified but where I was uncertain I resorted to letters. Number 19 (Formal image) is Alex MacLeman, number 17 in both photographs is George Small and number 25 (Formal image) and H (Picnic image) is thought to be Jackie Frater.

Can any readers help with identification or indeed if anyone has any old photographs that show forestry people from the past and particularly people at work in Scotland I would be very interested. I can be contacted at: Dunvegan, Settrington Street, Huntly AB54 8AY. Tel 01466 793 302.



Letters to the Editor



Faskally – A balanced view

I read with interest the article in the last issue by Gordon Rae, "Faskally – A balanced view" and your appeal for stories from other locations. However, you omitted to mention Glentress, where a great many post war foresters were trained before it closed and moved to Faskally in 1953. I hope that you did not think that because we were older, that we had lost our marbles. I was one of the 51-53 class, there are still around half of that class still on the go.

I would like to comment on one point from Gordon Rae's article, the personal assessment mark. This mark was more transparent at Glentress, everyone seemed to start with full marks. The ten commandments were supplemented by others pertaining to behaviour at the school and ran something like this Thou shalt not be late for the vehicle taking you to your place of work, or arrive late at the lecture room.

Your bed will be made before leaving the premises and the room tidy before the daily inspection. There shall be no drinks on the premises. Those that go out for a drink must return in an orderly manner and not be singing in the huts at an unearthly hour.

An example of how the system worked was someone appearing late in the lecture room would be told to leave half a page in the jotter for notes missed. They then would be told to wait at the end to write up the notes and be given a talking to. At that private sitting they would have to give a reason for their late arrival. Whatever the excuse they were told it would effect their personal assessment for that term. The mark for personal assessment was displayed on the notice board with exam results, often at the same time. Those who thought they had been good boys would rush to the notice board to check their marks. Those who had been warned would loiter in the dining room until the others had gone. Then after seeing the result, they would commiserate with each other.

The thing that was harder to know was how to improve ones P.A. Some thought that special skills such as being able to start the aged Liner firewood saw bench on a cold frosty morning would gain bonus points. On another occasion there was a problem with the septic tank. Those who went down into the tank and handed it up by the bucketful must surely get full marks. There was also the occasion of the visit of

the Queen of Tonga en route for the Coronation. Students painted the boulders at the entrance white. It was not clear whether the ones who received good marks were those that left no white spots on the tarmac or those that left no stone unturned. Some students hoped to score with the creation of a model nursery with live plants, which was exhibited at one of the last travelling Highland Shows in Kelso in 1952. Pints of blood donated to the Blood Transfusion Service must have been worth a mark or two. There were so many possibilities!

Glentress was a course that made men out of youths, particularly those that had not been in the armed forces. Many went on to be competent foresters in many different Countries, some went to private estates and around half spent their entire career with the FC and are grateful for the pension they now receive.

Regards, John Keenleyside

Thanks...

I just wanted to thank all concerned for the continued arrival of both publications. I left the FC in 1988 when I went into training for the priesthood in the Church of England. I enjoy that sense of 'continuing family' with the FC despite the passage of years (as I still do with Aberdeen University Forestry Dept and its alumni).

Recent indications of restructured FDs in Scotland, reminded me of discussions on whether 3 or 4-tier management structures in the late 1970's/early 1980's would be the best way forward. There was also the idea, perhaps not-taken-too-seriously, of a prophetic concept of 25 mini-Conservancies. This always seemed to have a lot of merit, if we could be brave enough to lose the 11 conservancies. It idea appears to have finally made it.

Work for me nowadays still involves lots of maps, but in a deeply urban context, with pastoral re-structuring of parishes, teams, deaneries and archdeaconries; plus ca change!

Kind regards to everyone, Mark Haworth (Rev'd), Team Rector, Salford All Saints Team Ministry (Diocese of Manchester). Email: father.mark@virgin.net

For those who need a memory-jog, I was: DOII Lothians, Berwickshire & Peeblesshire 1973-75; DOII South Lakes 1975-78; WSO (Eastern Region) 1978-83; FDM Marches 1983-88.

Goodbye Victoria

The short article entitled "Goodbye Victoria" in the August edition of "FCA Today" brought back memories and more recent experiences of Victoria House, Aberystwyth. In the winter of 1964-65 whilst carrying out a survey of the then Taliesin forest, a team consisting of Jim Jones, Jim Williams, John Whyatt and I occupied an office in this building. It was on the first floor looking out to sea. On stormy days, with waves breaking over the promenade, sand and small stones were flung against the windows. On such occasions the back entrance was used.

My more recent memory whilst walking the newly established Ceredigion (Cardigan) Coastal Path was a conversation I had with another walker. He expressed surprise that the FC had an office in a seaside town. I did point out that as the National Office for Wales it was centrally situated and near large forested areas.

A day or so later on a damp Monday morning I was walking along Victoria Terrace on my way to climb Constitution Hill. Passing the FC office, I didn't know that it was about to move until I reached home and saw "FCA Today". It must have been occupied as a FC office longer than any other. It has certainly survived the many changes in structure which have occurred in recent times. At least it stays in Aberystwyth.

Yours, Mike Whitlock

From the Editor



In this issue there are a considerable number of obituaries. Because the deceased have had eventful careers, they are lengthy, but even so, they have been edited. I am reluctant to hold over obituaries as we have so few issues each year that they could become dated. So please accept this one with far more obituaries than usual.

Now a plea for stories. Recent issues have recounted tales of the past. They have been very entertaining and generated a wide response with many a wry smile, but how about present day activities. You are all so "Get up and Go" that you must have stories of active retirement. What about those secret hobbies you had while working which have now become a passion. Let's have them! Tell friends and colleagues what you are doing, this is what FCA Today is all about. It's your publication. Get on the e-mail to me – Now!

OBITUARIES

ELIZABETH BROADLY, an EO who used to work in the New Forest in the 1980s in Estate Management, died in November. After retirement she and her husband had moved to the south of France where he continues to live.

PETER DAVIS'S son Clive has told me of his father's death last September aged 88. Peter served in the RAF in the War in the UK and the Far East and was demobilised in February 1946. During the War his parents had moved to the Forest of Dean. On his return, the prospect of working in forestry was appealing and he soon enrolled at the Dean FTS.

His first role as forester was at Clipstone Forest. Following spells at Cotgrave and Packington he was appointed forester at Haywood where he met his future wife Maureen. In 1960 Peter and his family moved to Delamere in Cheshire, where his responsibilities included the nursery. In 1966 he was transferred to Work Study at Dolgellau, North Wales.

In 1971, at the age of 51 he decided to change career and for the next three years attend Crewe Teachers Training College, graduating in 1974. He then took up the post of Rural Science teacher at Sir James Smiths School, Camelford, Cornwall. On moving to Cornwall he was able to fulfil a lifetime's ambition by purchasing a small livestock and poultry farm just outside Camelford. The farm became an increasingly important part of his life, so in 1981 he retired from teaching. With the help of Maureen and his son Clive, the poultry enterprise grew to be the largest in the county, supplying butchers and caterers in Cornwall and Devon. He also retained his interest in forestry, planting many trees on the farm. He finally retired in 1997 moving to Exmouth in 2000, where he lived until his death in 2008. He is survived by his wife Maureen, son and daughter and six grandchildren.

THOMAS A.J. HOOPER, a forest worker who retired to Pembrokeshire, passed away in July.

George Stewart recalls **R.D'O.P."DICK" JACKSON** who died in August aged 88. After war experience as a captain in the RE, he went to Edinburgh University. He joined the FC in 1951 and gave long and devoted service to East Scotland. He started in the Perth District before having 4 years in Acquisitions. After that it was the Buchan district for 10 years before returning to Perth. When the district was amalgamated with its neighbour, he ran H&M in this area. Finally he set up the Tayside FD before retiring in 1984. He continued to live in Perth close to the hills which he loved.

What colleagues may not know was that he was a railway scholar. He had a vast knowledge of rail transport in NE Scotland and had written histories of railways in Deeside, Speyside Alford and Buchan. He was an early member of the Great North of Scotland Railway Association later becoming Chairman then President and contributed a wide range of publications in its journals.

EARNEST "DICK" RICHARDS died in June 2009 aged 90. He joined the FC in 1938 after graduating from Aberdeen and after a brief spell as a surveyor in Wales he joined the Royal Engineers in 1939. He saw active service in North Africa, Sicily and Western Europe where he achieved the rank of major and was awarded the Military Cross at El Alamein.

In 1946, Dick rejoined the FC as a DO in Inverness, which marked the beginning of a forestry career extending over 60 years. He remained with the FC until 1978, during which time British timber production increased rapidly. This presented problems and opportunities and the way in which he tackled these challenges was one of the major highlights of his career.

In 1951, he joined Research Division as Utilisation Development Officer, then in 1960 he took charge of the newly formed Harvesting and Marketing Division at FC Headquarters. Dick and his team had a major influence in developing the marketing of British grown timber through better harvesting and sales methods and the establishment of new wood processing industries. This was a period of increasing private investment in wood processing and he was involved in planning many of the projects.

He was also a founder and a chairman for more than 10 years of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Working Techniques and Training of Forest Workers. This did much to improve working practices in harvesting and transport of timber. Dick was a very effective leader in this work due to his qualities of clear thinking and attention to detail as well as his diplomatic skills in steering an international collaboration to success. In 1957 this committee visited the USSR and he found this visit behind the Iron Curtain fascinating. Two years later, Russian delegates visited his home flanked by their security guards!

In 1970 he became Conservator for East Scotland. Finally in 1974 he was promoted to Director in Land Use Planning at FC Headquarters during a period of intense debate about conservation and the place of forestry in the countryside. He retired in 1978.

With his experience and skill as a communicator he was in constant demand and had a very active retirement as a consultant with FAO and other international bodies. He also wrote six books on timber production, the last at 84 "A History of British Forestry in the 20th Century".

He was a remarkable man, his enthusiasm was contagious and it was a pleasure to work with him. His wife Audrey died in 1994 and he remarried Margaret in 2000 so acquiring a second family. All are very proud of him. (Contributed by George Holmes and Dick's daughter, Pamela)

Alan Mackay recalled **KEN ROSCOE** who died recently after many years in a nursing home in Inverness.

Ken came from Stockport but his career in the FC began in Aberystwyth in 1953 then he moved to York a few years later. He always was an able and enthusiastic cricketer and

while in York played for Heworth CC. When he was transferred to Inverness on promotion he had one regret, he would not be able to play cricket any more. However, there were two teams in Inverness in the North of Scotland league. He duly joined the Northern Counties team and remained one of their outstanding players until he was transferred to Estate Management Division in Edinburgh in 1973. However, on promotion to Principal he returned to Inverness as A & FO in 1980 and retired in 1991.

Alastair Rowan says that the recent death of **BOB STEWART** will have saddened his friends and colleagues. He will be remembered as an outstanding A&FO in the Dumfries office, where his warm and cheerful manner was a special feature of his style of management. You could always count on Bob's readiness to help in any way he could.

JOHN TAYLOR'S daughter, Carol, writes to tell of his death in July, aged 79. Originally from Eastbourne, John moved to Scotland in the early 1950s to pursue a career in forestry. His postings took him from Dunoon to Glentworth, then Hawick, Newton Stewart and finally to Bannan where he lived at Monksmill, Castle Douglas for the last 33 years.

Retiring from the FC in 1995, he blended together the two passions of his life, the countryside of rural Dumfries & Galloway and cycling. He devised the popular "Discovery Rides" comprising cycle routes exploring areas of history and heritage, encouraging even the most lethargic to "get on their bikes". John's enthusiasm was infectious as he meandered across tracks and through woods, describing in meticulous detail the history and horticulture passing by, all documented in a fortnightly newspaper column.

He was also a seminal member of CTC (Cyclists Touring Club) Scotland over 55 years and a passionate founder of the "K M Rally" (KM being Kirkpatrick MacMillan, the inventor of the pedal bicycle). For 21 years, he was the driving force behind the small committee which organised this popular event, culminating in the "The Original Bicycle Festival". On a national level, John represented cycling interests as a member of the National Access Forum. He set up an advisory group shaping future national transport strategies, while safeguarding the interests of cyclists and other non-motorised travelling groups such as the Ramblers Association, the Scottish Canoe Association and The British Horse Society.

He won national awards for raising substantial sums for the World Cancer Research Fund and Age Concern. Aged 70, he completed a "John O'Groats to Lands End" solo bicycle trip over 1000 miles.

Astonishingly, at age 75, he completed the Scottish equivalent of the "End to End", comprising another solo charity cycle of more than 1000 miles weaving along the Scottish coastline, averaging an impressive 55 miles per day over 20 days.

John continued with all his community, cycling, tourism and fund raising projects

OBITUARIES

despite some serious challenges in his later years. Since the 1980s, he suffered from a long term serious hearing impairment then 2 years ago it was discovered that he had advanced and inoperable prostate cancer.

Never one to complain, John remained positive and active throughout his illness. On the morning of the day that he entered hospital for the very last time, he took 3 old bikes to a charity shop along with a donation to help fix them up. Then he and his wife Florrie went on to Heathhall Garden Centre where John bought some new plants and had lunch

John held a lifelong conviction that cycling contributed towards a healthy community while offering relief to climate change, congestion and pollution, and he spent a lifetime attempting to convey this message to anyone who would listen

George Stewart has gathered information from many sources about **JOHN ZEHETMAYR** who died in July aged 87. He was an outstanding forester who had a very considerable influence on the practice of forestry in Britain. He was a leader in research into upland afforestation, he transformed basic forest operations through his leadership in work study and as Senior Forestry Commission Officer in Wales he guided forestry in the Principality for 15 years.

John was educated at St. Pauls, Kensington, and then at Keble College, Oxford, where he took a degree in botany before joining the Navy in 1942. He served for four years as a radar officer in Fighter Direction ships and was awarded a Mention in Dispatches. After a further degree in forestry at Oxford he joined the Forestry Commission in 1948 and was appointed Assistant Silviculturalist at the Research Branch in Edinburgh.

The Commission was then embarking on the large scale planting programmes which were to continue for many years, and John's task was to improve techniques for tree establishment and growth on upland soils of low nutrient content and often considerable exposure. Working under the guidance of JAB Macdonald, he laid down many field experiments as well as summarising a myriad of experiments spanning three decades, exploring choice of tree species and provenance, cultivation methods and fertilizer treatments. His work culminated in two FC Bulletins Experiments in Tree Planting on Peat (1954) and Afforestation of Upland Heaths (1960). These were seminal publications, which remain standard works on upland planting to this day. One of the achievements of which he was particularly proud was the design of pilot plots established on poor sites from the Pennines to Orkney and Shetland.

In 1956 he was chosen to set up the Work Study Branch, the first in Europe for forestry. The base was established at the Forest of Ae,

Dumfriesshire, where it remains. Work study was pioneering work and it affected almost every forester and forest worker using tools and equipment. John developed techniques and directly supervised courses for some 500 foresters and senior staff. Virtually none of the difficulties associated with this relatively new science in the industrial workplace ever manifested itself in the forest. That both skilled workers and front-line managers accepted the radical changes made to traditional manual methods was in no small part due to John's confidence in what was being done and to his good humoured approach.

He returned to general forestry in 1964 when appointed Conservator West Scotland. Once again he embraced a new challenge with enthusiasm and energy. The Conservancy at that time supplied half of the pulpwood required by the Fort William Mill and had a 4000ha. annual planting programme.

Two years later he was appointed Conservator South Wales and Senior FC Officer Wales. This was an important position taking him outside the ordinary practice of forestry and he responded fully. His conservation interests ensured ready liaison with the Countryside Council for Wales, the National Park Committees and the Water Authorities where forests surrounded reservoirs. Under John, forestry in S. Wales prospered and he was highly regarded, helped by his great pride in his Welsh forebears. One member of his staff put it that "his intellectually tempered enthusiasm made working for him very rewarding". He retired in 1981.

No account of his life would be complete without recording some of his lifelong interests which he pursued with special vigour after he retired. He had many traditional hobbies, stamp collecting, Royal Navy ships and toy soldiers. He said he owed his career in forestry to a schoolboy interest in butterflies. He observed, recorded and filmed butterflies at Lavernock Point Nature Reserve in Glamorgan for 39 years and was widely regarded as an authority on the subject. He was Warden of the Reserve from 1976 and in 2007 was nominated Wales Volunteer of the Year. On the day he died he had the satisfaction of hearing that Lavernock had received the Vale of Glamorgan Biodiversity Award of the Year. He was Vice-President of Glamorgan Wildlife Trust from 1992-97, a member of the Brecon Beacons National Park Committee for 9 years and on the Prince of Wales Committee for 19 years.

From 1986 to 1991 he was Chairman of the British Forestry Safety Council and for his work in forestry and conservation was appointed OBE in 1991. His interest in the Navy continued after the war and he served in the Royal Naval Reserve for many years, sailing in minesweepers from the Firth of Forth. He retired as Lieut. Commander.

He was not interested in sport but during a conference in Geneva he took a skiing lesson and immediately a new enthusiasm was born, and thereafter he skied in the Alps at least once, sometimes three times, a year. He also skied regularly at the Fairwater plastic slope in Cardiff and was a volunteer Training Instructor there for 12 years. He became President of Cardiff Ski Club. At 85 he was filmed skiing for ITV News and presented as an octogenarian more active than many half his age.

His family was very important to him and they were included in most of his activities. His wife predeceased him and he is survived by their three children, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

John was not only someone of great attainment, he was a man of outstanding character. He had the liveliest and sharpest of minds that could be imagined and there was little that did not command his attention. His memory was prodigious and there were few subjects that could be mentioned which he would not enrich from experience and anecdote. His energy was boundless and his enthusiasm and sheer zest for life could not be rivalled. Forestry has lost a man of distinction and complete integrity and we all have lost a friend who set us an example of living life to the full, physically and mentally. John was a character whom we shall never forget.

An obituary for Roger Lines and George Taylor will appear in the next issue.

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