



AGM 2013

Don't forget to put your name down for our AGM to be held at York on the 14th and 15th May. It will start at 2.00pm in the Lady Anne Middleton's Hotel on the 14th. The next day we shall visit woodlands and the nursery at Castle Howard.



AGM venue: Lady Anne Middleton's Hotel in York

Dorothy Munn is the Yorkshire secretary, you should confirm your attendance with her.

Her e-mail is richard.munn@uwclub.net

Further details may be obtained from local group secretaries.



An evening view of York Minster

From the Editor



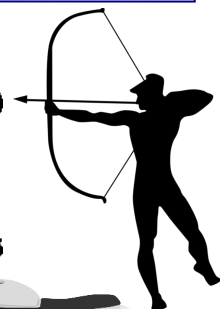
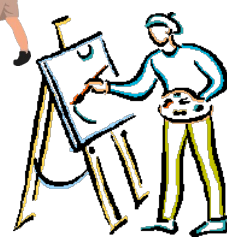
Not an issue goes by without my appeal for more copy. Many thanks to those very few who had a go over winter.

I have just enough copy for this issue but little more. Just where is the interest in keeping our newsletter alive?

I suppose all limited distribution newsletters have editors who live on a knife edge. When and from where will the next copy come?

How about writing up some of your more unusual activities? You're sure of a response. "Surely he or she can't be into that sort of thing. He or she was such a ***** character". (Fill in the gap for each contributor).

Richard Toleman



Do you have an interesting or unusual hobby? Tell us about it.

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For the latest FCA news, check the Message Board on the FCA website at
www.fca-today.com



Website Message Board

If you have any news, announcements or forthcoming events, post or e-mail the details to the editor. Contact details are on the back page of this magazine.

www.fca-today.com

Sounds of the South

Phil Ratcliffe on Dunoon Community Radio 97.4 fm

In the Summer issue I asked readers for copy and Phil Ratcliffe really worked away at it. I received three pieces from him, two of which went out in the Winter issue. This is his third. He is a presenter on Dunoon Community Radio. The transcript below is a taster of what he gets up to.

Hello again. This is Dr. Phil welcoming you to another 'Sounds of the South' on Dunoon Community Radio on 97.4 FM and world-wide on the web; Tuesday night, 20th November from 8:00 – 9:00 UK time.

This week, I'll be playing the usual variety of 'Sounds of the South, but tonight, as well as continuing to showcase some of the great musicians, many of whom have become friends, that I have encountered on my travels across the United States, I'll be taking you through some of the early developments of jazz with chat and music. There'll also be a sprinkling of country, some great blues and just a hint of what some folks might call rock 'n' roll.

I'm starting the show with a classic from the great Jelly Roll Morton and His Red Hot Peppers and during the proceedings, I will be describing some of the travels of the young Louis Armstrong, as band leaders in far-off cities persuaded the juvenile virtuoso to join their bands. Not wanting to leave New Orleans, Louis was finally tempted to Chicago by Joe Oliver to join his Creole Jazz Band, one of the most influential of the early bands. Later he was tempted to New York by Fletcher Henderson where, in a very brief stay, he had a massive influence on the direction jazz was to go in, before he returned to Chicago to lay down the classic Hot Five recordings.

There'll be some very early slide guitar blues, possibly influenced by the popularity of Hawaiian music around the 1890s, some great piano blues from Leroy Carr and Scrapper

Blackwell, and the Memphis Minnie classic, 'Me and My Chauffeur Blues,' played by Erin Harpe, the daughter of my buddy Neil Harpe.

I've got a great selection of Down Home music with 'Buy It From The Poultry man,' from the Cedar Creek Sheik, and a wonderful virtuoso ragtime piece from Ari Eisinger, the modern day master of ragtime guitar, and an old Bukka White number, 'Jitterbug Swing,' from my good friends from Memphis, Tennessee, Andy and Larkin Cohen.

For classic country music, I'll be playing a very early Carter Family side, a fantastic number from Jimmie Rogers with the Louisville Jug Band, and a contribution from Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys. I'll finish off with a tune that some folks might call rock 'n' roll.

If you can join me.

Dunoon Community Radio 97.4 fm and world-wide following the link from www.dunooncommunityradio.org or via <http://dunoon-relay.celticmusicradio.net:8000/dunoon.mp3>

So, why not join Phil on his website, you may even be able to have a request or send messages about the "Old Days in the FC".



Phil Ratcliffe

Book Review

The Australian University E Press has just published "Conquering the Highlands. A history of the afforestation of the Scottish uplands" by Jan Oosthoek.

The book is freely downloadable from the ANU E Press website as an e-book at <http://epress.anu.edu.au/titles/world-forest-history-series/conquering-the-highlands>

*For the flyer, go to the History page on the website
www.nwdg.org.uk/history_group_4.html*

Conquering the Highlands

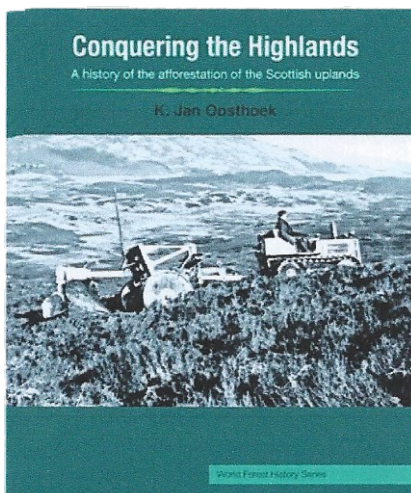
A history of the afforestation of the Scottish uplands

by Jan Oosthoek

ISBN 9781922144782 (Print version) £16.60

ISBN 9781922144799 (Online)

Published by Australian National University E Press (ANU E Press), February 2013



Deforestation of Scotland began millennia ago and by the early 20th century woodland cover was down to about 6 per cent of the total land area. A century later woodland cover had tripled. Most of the newly established forestry plantations were created on elevated land with wet peaty soils and high wind exposure, not exactly the condition in which forests naturally thrive. Jan Oosthoek tells in this book the story of how 20th century foresters devised ways to successfully reforest the poor Scottish uplands, land that was regarded as unplantable, to fulfil the mandate they had received from the Government and wider society to create a timber reserve. He raises the question whether the adopted forestry practice was the only viable means to create forests in the Scottish Highlands by examining debates within the forestry community about the appearance of the forests and their longterm ecological prospects.

Finally, the book argues that the long held ecological convictions among foresters and pressure from environmentalists came together in the late 20th century to create more environmentally sensitive forestry.

Available as a free e-book from the [ANU E Press](http://epress.anu.edu.au) website. Print-on-demand copies can also be purchased from ANU E Press.

Book Review

A review of Roger Cartwright's book Wind on the Hills is on page 7. But first, some background details of the author.

Roger Cartwright – Profile

Roger Cartwright was one of very few foresters in England to train and qualify as a landscape architect and on completion of the landscape design course in 1965 he found that there were plenty of job opportunities for people with this combination of qualifications.

He had started work with the Forestry Commission in 1953 as a forest worker at Quantock Forest in Somerset and after National Service in the Army he went on to Faskally Forester Training School, at Pitlochry from 1956 – 1958. On completing his training he obtained a job as a forest assistant in the Central African colony of Nyasaland where the Forest Department had a wide role, ranging from the protection of natural resources - native woodland, savannah grasslands to production of timber and the establishment of new forests.

Wind on the Hills is the story of this formative period in his life.

After returning from Nyasaland (Malawi) in 1961 he worked as an assistant manager with Tilhill Forestry (Hereford) Ltd under Bill Dorrington. This combined with his previous forestry experience convinced him of the need to learn about landscape design and at the end of 1962 he became a student at the School of Architecture and Landscape, Cheltenham. He graduated in 1965 and initially inspired by ideas for creating a better form of urban living, he worked for a short time on the early development of Cumbernauld New Town in Scotland and became an Associate of the Landscape Institute in 1967.

He then moved to Lancashire to work on landscape and recreation policies for the Forest of Bowland AONB. He also became involved in landscape design for the restoration of derelict land and the provision of countryside recreation - his most satisfying job being the design for Beacon Fell Country Park in the Forest of Bowland.

He was seconded to work on the planning team for the Morecambe Bay Barrage for his last year with Lancashire County Council and took many of the ideas from this to Northumberland where the value of landscape design was appreciated and he was also responsible for tree and forestry advice for the whole County Council.

Large-scale conifer afforestation, particularly in the National Park was a contentious issue and the County Council managed to prevent the planting of many areas of visually prominent open country, heather moor and mosses in the Northumberland National Park. For more acceptable planting they worked with the Forestry Commission and private companies to improve the landscape design and this included the large new forests at: Uswayford, Roddam, Threestoneburn, Wellhope and Coe Craggs at Thrunton Wood. This ad hoc landscape consultation was eventually incorporated into more formal and wider forestry strategy agreements with the Forestry Commission. He also worked on other large-scale developments such as quarries, opencast coal mining, new roads and reservoirs.

The most significant of these was the planning, landscape design and potential recreation development for the future Kielder Water and this included drawing plans to mitigate drawdown of the reservoir and working with the Forestry Commission on a Management Plan to change the emphasis from conifer production to environment and amenity in the surrounding Kielder Forest.

He moved to Cumbria in 1974 to do similar work and liaised with a succession of Forestry Commission officers on Structure Plan policies for trees and woodlands and innumerable forestry consultations and was involved in the

Continued on next page ➡

Book Review

Roger Cartwright – Profile *continued*

Continued from previous page

landscape design for the last two major afforestation schemes in the county - at Dent Fell, near Cleator Moor and Ashstead Fell near Shap.

He was a member of the FC Regional Advisory Committee for North West England and the Environmental Advisory Panel for the Lakes District of the Forestry Commission.

A continued interest in deer and wildlife management has kept him involved in practical forestry and conservation work on the ground and he has written a number of short articles for countryside and wildlife magazines and in 1980 he produced a small booklet on the deer

of the Arnside Silverdale area but *The Wind on the Hills* is his first book.

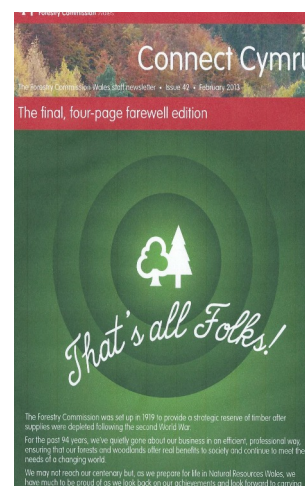
He feels that after his training in landscape design he could have done a much better job of establishing new forests in Nyasaland and woodland management for private estates and similarly he has been a more effective and practical landscape architect as a result of his early forestry experience.

He took the opportunity of early retirement from local government to return to forestry management, working as a sole practitioner with a holistic approach to land management and has been doing this successfully for the last twenty years.

*See the review of *The Wind on the Hills* on the following page* ➡

The final edition of the Forestry Commission Wales newsletter **Connect Cymru** is available on the FCA-Today website.

www.fca-today.com



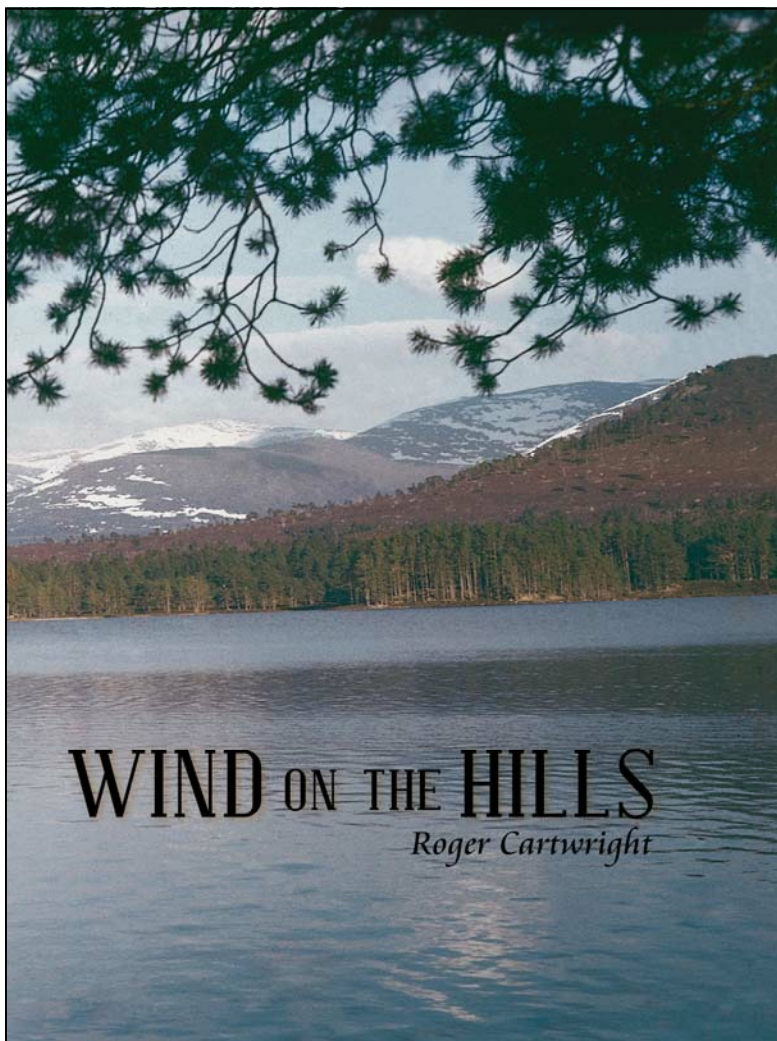
Bark! Internal news and views of the Forestry Commission

Check out the new FC blog at <http://news.forestry.gov.uk>

WIND ON THE HILLS

This engaging book is the personal story of Roger Cartwright who trained as a Forester in the UK and Africa.

It begins with his early life in the 1950s and his experience of the old rural ways of life in the Hampshire village where he lived in the shadow of War. This early experience of the natural world led to his decision to train as a Forester and he spent time in the Quantock Hills of Somerset. However, National Service intervened and Roger spent 2 years in Germany where he seized opportunities for swimming, skiing and horse riding. He finally completed his forestry training with the Forestry Commission in Perthshire and Gloucestershire.



The second part of the book is about living his dream of becoming a Forester in Nyasaland (now Malawi) and gives graphic descriptions of a fascinating life as a Forester, hunter and naturalist in this beautiful, and then, little known mountainous country. Roger describes what it was like living and working alongside the African people during the political unrest and turbulence of the 'State of Emergency'. Interspersed throughout are tales of travel to Rhodesia, Kenya and Tanganyika where he climbed Kilimanjaro.

This book will appeal to people interested in the countryside, wildlife, forestry and green issues and personal stories of colonial history in Africa at the end of Empire.

ISBN: 978-1-904244-86-8

No of pages: 454

Hardback with black and white and colour photographs

Price: £25.00

Available from: All booksellers or Book Source - Tel: 0845 370 0067

Foresters' Uniforms

by Eric Rogers of Thetford

I recently found a copy of the form sent out by the FC when foresters were to be issued with the new itchy green suits with the red collar. These took the place of the "RAC man" uniforms!

My Forester and I had a good laugh when filling it in and I remember that the result was not too good either.

Eric couldn't find any photos of himself looking suave in his official garb so I had to revert to the Forest Memories fashion model, Charlie Greenlees, who appeared in the Summer 2012 issue. Ed

The FC Uniform Self Measurement form is on the following page. Do any of the illustrations fit your shape?



Charlie Greenlees models the foresters' uniform in this photo reproduced from the website

www.forestry-memories.org.uk

*View or download earlier issues of FCA Today
from the FCA website at: -
www.fca-today.com*

Form B.36 (Revised '58)

FORESTRY COMMISSION UNIFORM SELF-MEASUREMENT FORM

SURNAME _____ GRADE _____ CONSERVANCY ADDRESS _____
(To which maker will send uniform)

FORE NAME(S) _____ FOREST _____

ADDRESS _____

FORESTRY COMMISSION,
BLOCK "D"
BROOKLANDS AVE.,
CAMBRIDGE.

Garment(s) Required in Addition to Jacket

Put a cross in the box below against trousers or plus fours. If an extra garment is required an additional cross should be placed in the appropriate box.
(Costs: Jacket and one pair of trousers/plus fours will be charged to the applicant at one third of the cost to the Commission. A second pair of trousers/plus fours will be charged to the applicant at the full cost to the Commission.)

TROUSERS

☐ ☐

PLUS-FOURS

☐ ☐

MEASUREMENTS (In inches)

(Height (in shoes) _____")



Top of collar (A) into waistline (B) to full length of jacket (C)

A-B _____"
A-C _____"



Centre back seam (D) to shoulder sleeve seam (E) to 1" past wrist bone (F) - hand close to chest.

D-E _____"
D-F _____"



Round chest over shirt (G) - tape close under arms and over prominent part of chest.

G _____"



Waist over trousers (H)

H _____"



Seat over trousers (I) - tape to be taken over most prominent part.

I _____"



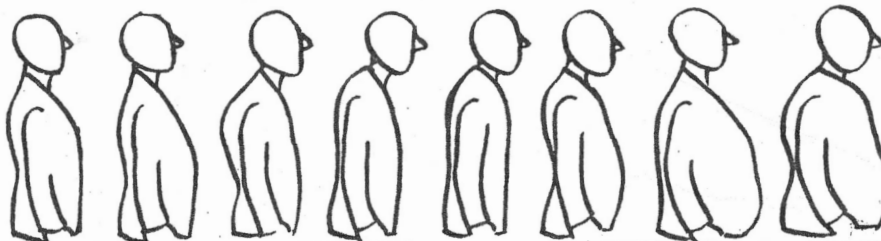
Side seam top of trousers (J) to full length required (K). Inside leg crutch (L) to full length required (M).

J-K _____"
L-M _____"

Circumference of trousers bottom _____" What size shoes/boots do you wear? _____"
FOR PLUS FOURS ONLY. Measurement round leg immediately below knee _____"

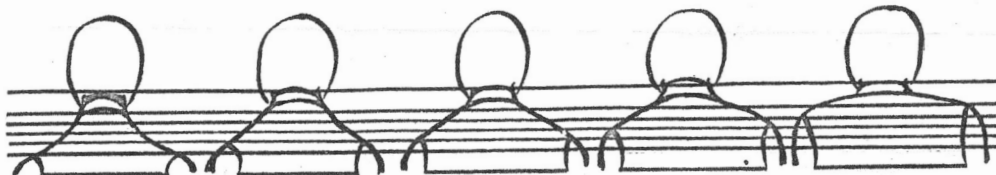
Description of Chest and Back

Mark with an 'x' the head of the figure most like that of the man



Description of Shoulder and Neck

Mark with an 'x' the head of the figure showing shape of man's shoulders - if shoulders are uneven, mark a right and left shoulder.



Notes for applicants

- Applicants should exercise great care to ensure that all measurements are correctly taken, and that other information required is given. The submission of a form will be treated as a firm order for a uniform.
- The self-measurement form should be completed and forwarded to your Conservator/Chief Research Officer/Chief Education Officer, without delay.

Forest Facebook

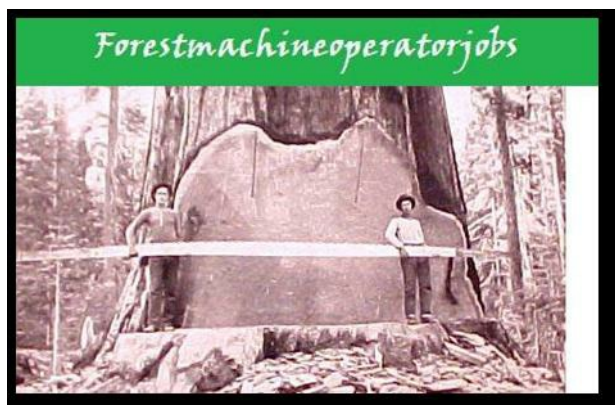
by Peter Ford

"You'll not be on Facebook" said the dapper, young salesman on one of the stands we visited at the Scottish House Building and Renovation Show in Glasgow, at the end of last year. His expression changed when I told him I was! "Just because I'm retired doesn't mean I don't keep up with those technological advances, young man!" Keeping in touch with family, friends, former colleagues, etc. is quite easy on Facebook even for me!

Anyway, thanks to one of my sons, I bring to your attention a Facebook page you may not be aware of: Forest Machine Operator Jobs. Just type forestmachineoperatorjobs into your Facebook search box and away you go.



Despite the title, there are loads of pictures, mostly from around Europe, of a wide variety of forest machinery and practices from the past and present. Here are just a few of the many pictures posted by the site's supporters recently.



"Days gone by"



Best described as "Whoops"

Continued on next page ➡

Forest Facebook *continued*

Continued from previous page



"Being prepared for the worst!"



"Big logs, tight corner!"



"Extreme felling!"



"Stomach churners"

There's a regular supply of new forestry related pictures that many of you will find of interest. Enjoy, if that is your "cup of tea".

Do you have any pictures for our website gallery?

Post or e-mail them to the editor. Contact details are on the back page.

If pictures are sent by post, please indicate if you require them returned.

www.fca-today.com

Kielder in the 1950s

By R.E. Crowther

In 1950 I was a newly appointed forest officer with the Forestry Commission at Kielder Forest. At that time the large scale planting was in progress and the striated patterns of ploughing and the emerging young trees were changing the landscape. Existing woods, mainly birch and alder clung to river and stream sides. A small number of conifer woods, mainly Norway spruce and Scots pine and originally planted for shelter, were more widely distributed.

The road up the North Tyne Valley was narrow and winding and although it continued over the border into Scotland the approaches to a humpback bridge at Saughtree made it impassable for vehicles larger than cars. The roadside verges were very soft and the onset of winter was marked by the emergence of black peaty sloughs where cars had left the tarmac to pass one another. One quickly learned to keep on the hard road surface. Fence and telegraph posts were favoured perches for small-eared owls as the vole population had increased with the removal of grazing.



Kielder Forest railway station around 1920

The railway operated up the valley with three passenger trains a day in each direction, connecting to Bellingham and Hexham in one direction and to Hawick in the other. There was also a goods service. Because of the risk of fires started by sparks from the steam engines, a system of rail and roadside grazing strips had been introduced. Fencing, cultivation, fertilising, and re-seeding were carried out on them and tenancies were let to favour cattle to keep the vegetation well grazed. This proved effective as small rail side fires could

be dealt with before they entered the plantations. They were in the thicket stage and were extremely vulnerable with the accumulation of molinia and heather. A system of army surplus field telephones linked foresters' houses, offices and fire lookouts and were invaluable for management, fire duty and social purposes. However with the advent of more GPO phones the system was superseded.

A portable phone was available but as tapping into the lines involved climbing telegraph poles, its use was daunting!



Mains electricity had not yet been extended up the valley, so the pressure paraffin Tilley lamp was the best means of lighting although the paraffin wick lamps gave adequate light and were quieter. Cooking was usually by coal fired range, open fires of wood or coal provided heating.

The FC's objective at that time was dominated by the requirement to provide a reserve of growing timber. Both world wars had led to an acute shortage of timber that was especially serious because pit props were vital for coal production.

The decline in sheep farming in the North Tyne valley, combined with the incidence of death duties on large landed estates had enabled the FC to make large land acquisitions.

The Duke of Northumberland had owned much of Kielder including the castle. This was a policy that was repeated in other upland areas in England, Scotland and Wales. One of the factors said to contribute to the decline of sheep farming was the sheep brain disease 'Looping ill' or Scrapie, the cause and the cure for which were then unknown.

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Kielder in the 1950s *continued*

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Kielder castle

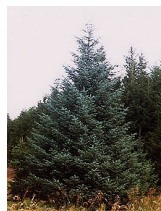
The first plantings in 1926 were made directly on the ground surface and were not successful. It was soon found that planting on up-turned turfs, that provided an area of local drainage and some suppression of the grass and heather, was very effective.



Turf rutter

Initially the turfs were prepared by hand using the traditional hill draining tools. Turfs were cut with a rutter to form a drain, then cut into two and pulled left and right with a hack to the planting position. Early planting programmes depended entirely on hand preparation, but as suitable tractors and ploughs became available, the process became mechanised. Initially turfs were cut and spread from the plough ridges by hand, but later ploughs produced turf ribbons at 5 foot planting spacing. A semi circular spade was used for planting that produced a conical plug out of the peat turf. The plant roots were inserted into the hole, the plug replaced and firmed with the foot.

Sitka spruce proved itself well adapted to upland conditions while Norway spruce was also used and proved frost resistant. On the limited freely draining ground, usually indicated by bracken, Japanese larch was planted. On heathery ground Lodgepole pine was more tolerant than the spruces and mixtures of the two featured.



In the 1950s, the earliest plantings were approaching the thinning stage and a start was made producing pit props. At the same time many of the outlying woods were cleared. These were mainly windthrown and in some cases Norway spruce lying on the ground had produced sizeable stems from the branches as they developed into an upright tree habit. The Manse Wood at Kielder, about 45 years old at that time, was one of the few examples of older plantations. It was already suffering from wind throw which extended with each severe gale. I saw this happening during the great storm of January 1952.



Timber harvesting in Kielder

The planting was a labour intensive process and the looming thinning programmes looked equally labour demanding.

The FC had built some houses before 1939 at Kielder and had provided some small holdings. However these would not be enough, and a programme of house building was started in the new forest villages at Kielder, Byrness and Stonehaughshields. The first phase was ready for occupation in the early 1950s and was opened by Lord Robinson, Chairman of the FC. Up to this time much of the work was carried out by displaced persons. These were men who had fled from Eastern Europe as the Russians advanced in 1945. They were of several nationalities, some Latvians but mainly Poles. They had a wide range of skills and some with professional qualifica-

Continued on next page ➡➡➡

Kielder in the 1950s *continued*

Continued from previous page

tions. They were housed in Kielder Camp, a series of corrugated iron huts established in the 1930s as a rehabilitation centre for the unemployed. As well as the planting, many were engaged on the forest road building programme that was opening up the forest.

As the new houses became ready the camp was closed, and the occupants dispersed to other jobs in various parts of the country. A few who had secured permanent status as employees stayed on. Victor Blankenburgs was one of these. He was employed as a surveyor and his collection of photographs

recording changes in the North Tyne is now in the Newcastle Museum.

(It can be accessed on the following website: www.communities.northumberland.gov.uk Ed.)

Today Kielder Water occupies the lower part of the valley. Whickhope Lodge, where I lodged for two and a half years, is submerged as is the site of Kielder camp. The railway closed long ago and part of its trackbed lies under the water. Other parts have become forest roads and walks. Electricity has come and a new road follows a less tortuous route along the reservoir shore.



Kielder reservoir under construction in 1972

Forestry Commission Scotland on Facebook

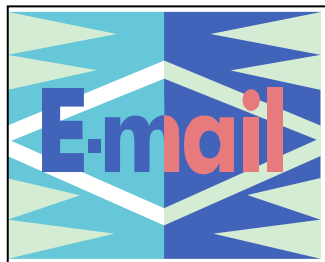
The Official FCS page 'Enjoyscotlandsforests' is now active! Whether you are planning a day out, want to know what's on in your area, or you want the latest news on wildlife, mountain biking, walking, cycling, camping, stargazing or any of the other great activities taking place

in forest locations across Scotland, visit the Forestry Commission Scotland's new Facebook page:

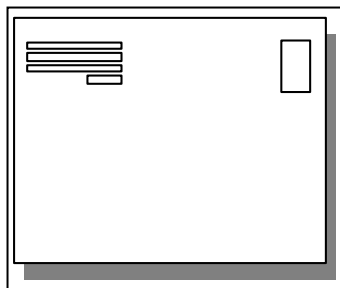
<http://www.facebook.com/enjoyscotlandsforests>

Register for news releases on the Forestry Commission website and choose the topics that interest you. Go to <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/newssubs.nsf/subscription?openform>
All news releases are also on the main Forestry Commission website in the 'News' section.

Send your letters to the editor for publication in FCA Today



by e-mail to: editor@fca-today.com



by post to: Richard Toleman,
Manuel Stables, Linlithgow, EH49 6JF.

Visit the FCA Today website at: -
www.fca-today.com

Life After Work

by Don Amer

An appeal from Richard Toleman for articles relating to post retirement activities undertaken by retirees has prompted me into action. I have always found the "Slasher" and its on-line successor "FCA-Today" an interesting read. But perhaps there lies the answer to the lack of stories and comment being sent in to Richard, for inclusion in the online version. I am of the opinion that the "Slasher" would have reached a higher number of ex-FC employees than its online equivalent now does, simply because not all retirees have access to a computer. They can, of course, still submit their stories and comments by post, but by not having access to a computer, they won't have the satisfaction of seeing their contribution in print.



My post retirement activities have been very varied. I retired in 1989 after a very active life in all aspects of forestry, but for the final twenty years I worked in the Radio and Electronic Branch with my office at Inver near Dunkeld.

Having moved from Stanley, seven miles north of Perth, in anticipation of early retirement in two years time, to Blairgowrie I wanted a hobby which had a hands-on approach and which, had the possibility of being financially rewarding.

It wasn't long before I discovered that there were a lot of amateur artist groups and individuals living in the Blairgowrie area. Therein was an answer to my search for a hobby. I would take up picture framing.



What I had forgotten was that I had already sent Richard my story of setting up a picture framing business. It had already appeared in the newsletter in 1999. So much for memory recall! I retained the business for seven years and was able to sell it as a thriving enterprise.

It was a very interesting period during which we met some very talented people, and acquired some original pieces of artwork. It was also the beginning of membership of the Association of Blairgowrie Craftworkers (ABC), a new group of talented local craft workers formed to encourage members to progress their hobby to a more professional standard. I joined as a picture framer but having sold off all my picture framing equipment, later changed my craft to wood turning. Nan and I were members for about twenty years, fourteen of which I served as Chairman.

It was whilst I was Chairman of the ABC, that I was asked if I would serve on the Blairgowrie Town Hall Management Committee, to represent the ABC which was a frequent user of the Town Hall, as the organiser of several Craft Fairs. That was in 2006! I have been a Committee Member ever since, taking on the posi-



Blairgowrie Town Hall

tion of Vice Convener as well as being Property Convener, mainly as no one else wanted to do it and that it is always difficult to persuade people to serve on such committees.

Continued on next page »

Life After Work *continued*

Continued from previous page

Whereas the Town Hall is owned by Perth and Kinross Council who are responsible for the maintenance of the fabric of the building, the Blairgowrie Town Hall Association (BTHA) Management Committee are responsible for the hiring of the hall to drama groups, dancing groups, keep fit classes, craft fairs, wedding receptions, birthday parties and many other groups.

The money raised by hiring out the hall to these various organisations, is ploughed back into improving the facilities such as internal decoration, upgrading the dressing rooms and installing new kitchen facilities, to name just a few.



Blairgowrie Town Hall auditorium



Two years ago, having got bored with doing nothing, I purchased a "Hobbys" matchstick kit to make a mantel clock which required cutting and gluing together 2000 matchsticks. It was quite a challenge but I did complete it, and it now sits on a mantel shelf and keeps good time.

So what next? I did find time to write a small book about my 42 Years working for the Forestry Commission, starting from when I left school aged 16 to retiring in 1989, including a period of National Service in the RAF. The book charted a journey from Forestry School at Gwydyr, then into the Mensuration Branch – part of Forest Research – forest duties at Culbin, Kielder, Glentworth and finally joining the Radio and Electronic Branch, then in its infancy, and then twenty years on, retiring in 1989. So now, apart from the Town Hall work, I don't have any hobbies, but having reached the age of 83 years, I now spend my time on computer work, reading, listening to Classic FM and watching TV - but then, there is always my son's Hornby electric train set, circa early 60's vintage, to play with!



This picture shows Don Amer in the Radio Branch office in 1988. There are more details on the Forestry Memories website at: -

<http://www.forestry-memories.org.uk/picture/number456.asp>



OBITUARIES

I have been told by a friend of the death at Croydon of **ANNE FROST** aged 94. I was given no details of her time in the FC other than that she worked in London. This may have been Savile Row, but that was many years ago. She was an avid reader of *Slasher* and our newsletter and when we went online, it was printed for her.

Roger Busby remembers **SIMON HEWITT** who joined the FC in October 1976 as Area Land Agent based in Lyndhurst in the New Forest. In March 1980 he transferred to East England, based at Santon Downham, as Area Land Agent as well as Clerk of Works for North East England.

Three years later Simon was promoted to Principal Land Agent in the Estate Management Division in Edinburgh. In November 1985 he transferred to West England as Conservancy Land Agent based in Bristol. His first task was to lead the office relocation from Brislington to offices at Cadbury's chocolate factory at Keynsham; an unlikely Forestry office location, but a very successful one! Simon was to spend the next 8 1/2 years in Keynsham having become Regional Land Agent for Forest Enterprise W(E). During this period Simon and his wife Marion became involved in taking groups of disabled people to France.

Mark Thornycroft recalls that Simon brought with him a new drive to work the commercial potential from non-forestry developments on the estate, and

created amongst staff a more balanced view by allowing development and increased activity on the estate, with the financial benefits that arose. One of his proudest moments was to be accused in a complaint by a lessor to the Minister of taking too commercial an attitude in his business dealings! Rod Leslie added: "What a nice, balanced person Simon was to work with".

In March 1994 Simon was promoted to Regional Land Agent for Forest Enterprise Wales and moved to Aberystwyth. John Morgan commented that, on moving to Aberystwyth, the Welshness of the area did not seem to discomfort Simon and his family in any way. They played their part in local activities and Simon's young son became a fluent Welsh speaker.

September 1996 saw Simon changing disciplines to become Chief Conservator for the Forestry Authority in Wales. Following on from devolution, Simon became Country Director and Forestry Commissioner for Wales in April 2003. Simon was deservedly proud to be the first land agent to become a territorial Director in the Forestry Commission. He retired on 31st May 2005.

Simon died on 10 October 2012 after suffering from prostate cancer. He is survived by his wife, Marion, daughters Lynsey and Sarah, and his son Jon.

FRED SAVAGE is no more. Bart Venner told me of his death aged

86. He was well known to many and a great supporter of the Dean group where he delighted in helping with Burns Suppers, adding to the atmosphere with pipes and storytelling. I have been given very few details of his career but initially he was involved in Forest Management in North and West Scotland. Later he moved to the Dean where he became head of Private Woodlands.

Val Marsh has told me of the death of **MICHAEL AYMES** aged 71, who worked in the MES Workshops at Santon Downham.

Michael was born in Brandon and attended the Forest School Primary and then Mildenhall High School. He left school at 15 and joined the workshops under manager Wally Rosher as petrol pump boy. He then progressed to working as a mechanic and finally was the chain saw specialist. If he could not mend a saw then it was classed as unrepairable.

His interests away from work were working with a local shoot, he was a member of Weeting gun club, and also as keen fisherman in his younger days. His other hobby was cars. He always liked to arrive at work with the latest model with which he was smitten and could speak very knowledgeably about his new acquisition. He travelled to see Formula 1 and the Le Man motor races.

Michael was a true countryman at heart and was happy just to live and work in the countryside. He almost completed 50 years service when he retired in 2006.

Letters to the Editor

Richard,

I was interested to read the FCA newsletter, issue 46 summer 2012, discovered during a Google search.

I was searching for information about my grandfather, George Bodley Ryle, who died in 1978 when I was 12. I was surprised and delighted to see him standing at the front of a photo of the foresters' meeting at Hamsterley in the late 1950's or early 1960's. As you will be aware, he was a long standing member of the FC – right now I'm wearing the Rolex watch he was given upon his retirement in 1965 – the inscription on the back reads 'GBR from FC 1924-1965'.

He retired to the village of Bank in the New Forest and as I recall was a New Forest Verderer (although I'm not really sure what that entailed). He made a great impression on me as a boy, with his great knowledge of the countryside and outdoor life. I have many fond memories of treks in the New Forest and mid-Wales, bird watching and collecting beetles, which were great passions of his. Having seen the photo of the Foresters' uniform in the newsletter, I remember him wearing similar clothes, especially boots and the tie!

His wife passed on many years ago also (late 1980's I think). I live in NZ now and I'm pretty sure he visited New Zealand in connection with FC work, but I'm not sure when – certainly before I was born. Forestry and log export is of course one of NZ's major industries. My mother cannot remember many details of his early life. She grew up in Aberystwyth in

Wales, when he was based there. His four children are all still alive, in their 70's and 80's.

I would love to find out more about him, particularly his work and his time in NZ. It would be great if you have any more information.

Best wishes,

Rob

Dr Rob Cunliffe

Tauranga Hospital

Private Bag 12024

Tauranga

New Zealand.

Who can help Rob with more information about GBR's forestry life and work? I have already received one offer from Arnold Grayson. Rob said he can be contacted by e-mail at Robert.Cunliffe@bopdnhb.govt.nz Ed.



The inscription on GBR's presentation watch
"G.B.R From F.C 1924 to 1965"

GBR is in the middle of the front row in the picture below



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David Parnall (*Treasurer*)

Charles Dickens (*Group & FC Liaison Officer*)

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FCA Today Magazine

The next issue of the FCA Today magazine will be available (depending on whether we receive any articles from you) on the www.fca-today.com website on **5th August 2013**.

Articles for inclusion in the next issue of the magazine should be sent to the editor before 1st July 2013.

The new fixed publication dates of the FCA Today magazine are: -

Spring edition: 5th April

Summer edition: 5th August

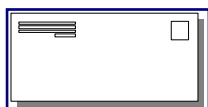
Winter edition: 5th December

Visit the FCA Today website on these dates to download the latest edition of the magazine

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