



From the Editor

Here I go again. Many thanks to those of you who sent in copy for this issue. I have held over two or three items for the Winter one so that I don't get too stressed out nearer that deadline date. I know I'll be short of copy, nothing changes. Meanwhile you'll be visiting interesting places during the Summer, let's hear about the more unusual ones. I am planning a visit to my old student haunts in North Wales, the home of endless narrow gauge railways and quarries. Now there's a chance for you railway anoraks to sound off, especially the North Wales group.



Don't forget your contribution while you pound the hills, snorkel the depths, skydive the heights or just lie back and go with the flow. Get writing and put me at my ease.

Richard Toleman

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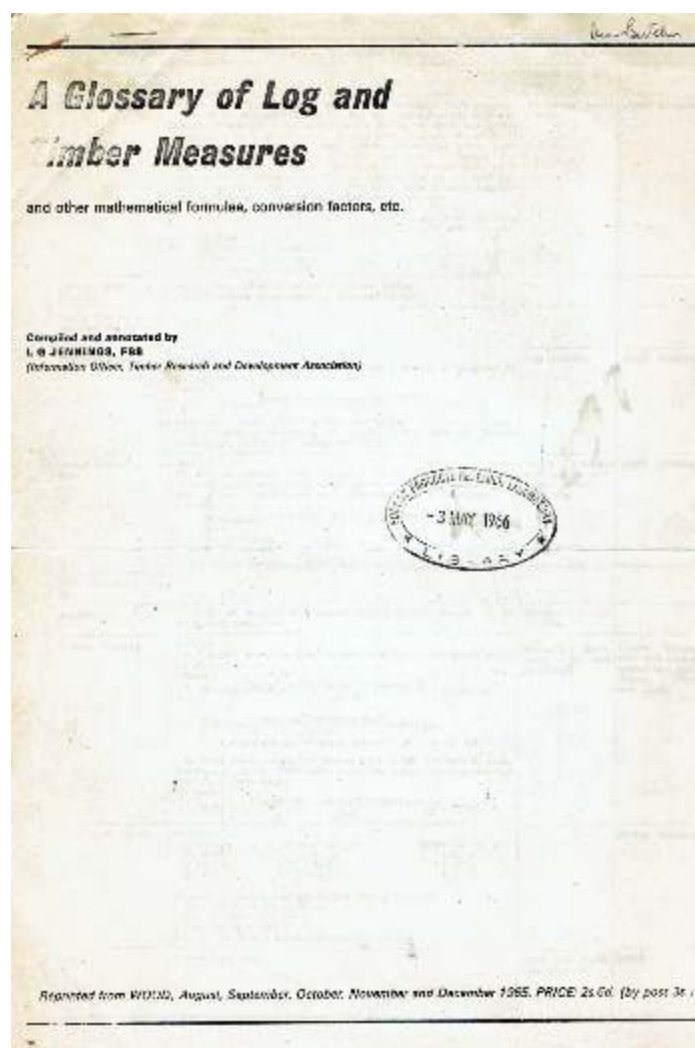
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Paperwork

*by Tony Butcher
now in New Zealand
ex Ampthill, Santon and Wigsley*

I have this darned cold that just won't go away. What can I do? I know, I'll sort the library! Now I say "Library" but it is really the book shelves that we have acquired, plus extras for expansion. They are double banked, books behind books and occasionally we have a 'weed' and many go to charity sales. But there is a rule that my forestry books are just not touched. What could be a better occupation than looking at some of my old acquisitions? Ah memories.

This was hiding on one end of a shelf as if it did not wish to be found.



I am sure many of you will immediately recognise this as a handout from FPRL. At the time this was put on my desk, I was assistant forester on Santon Beat, Thetford. It has been many places since then and somehow made its way to the bottom of the world where I now live.

Like so many documents, it is now out of date, but I am sure that some measurements have not changed.

Callipers are mentioned in these pages, but are lasers used now? I don't doubt that for one moment and probably the logs have chips now (the silicon ones) that record the size, weight and position on this earth!

First I must acknowledge that it was a reprint from the magazine, 'Wood' way back in 1965, and thumbing through the pages opened my eyes to the varieties of measurement in this world. This was of course printed and distributed only three years before we changed to metric, cubic ft to cubic metres and acres to hectares.

How many of you remember the books on that subject and the time taken to find a log that was exactly 1 m³ then haul it to the office where all the staff and gangs of men assembled to wonder how timber had suddenly grown in size.

I believe there were complaints from some merchants that they were to be cheated and made to pay for the slab

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Paperwork *continued*

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wood after dumping Hoppus. If you have any recollections I am sure our editor would be delighted to hear them.

Back to the FPRL book and I see a North American rule on lumber. I would imagine that is one that has not changed as they are still in feet and inches, but reading on down the page, there seems to have been many methods of measurement in North America, the Brereton rule, British Columbia rule, Doyle measure, Hyslop rule, the International rule, the Minnesota standard, the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia standard, Roy's log rule, Scribner rule plus the Scribner/Doyle then the Scribner decimal rule, and so it goes on.

I wonder now if there is some standardisation. I see rules for log and land measurement in Japan but nothing for China. China now takes most of the timber from New Zealand so I must find out how it is measured. At all the main docks around the country, stacks of logs can be seen waiting for the ship to arrive.

All logs now have their bark removed before being transported of course, so bark allowance does not come into the equation. Many of the older boys here still talk in cords, especially when speaking of firewood.

Google has come up with a document from 2012 and it would seem the American log rules have not changed a great deal.

A guide for farmers here in NZ shows tape measures in inches but calculations in centimetres! Confused?

Being a weather man, I know that rainfall here is measured in inches, millimetres and 'points' depending on who I am talking to, so I have to do a quick conversion. Google has also come up with some of the latest measurements for the Chinese. These seem complicated because how you do it, depends on the size of the log.

The NZ Journal of Forestry four years ago tell us that 11.7M cu m of logs were exported to China in 2010 and almost all the logs were individually measured using the Japanese standard. There is now a Chinese national standard that varies depending on the small end diameter and the length.



There are 8 different measuring standards and knowing the Chinese desire for exactness, it has to be done precisely and it mentions; "*ln** is the natural logarithm where *exp* is the antilog of natural logarithm". This completely lost me.

So now you know. For the Chinese it has to be exactly as they say or no payment.

E. & O.E. (or in my case M.A.F.O.)
MaKe aLLoWanCeS FoR the oLdieS

More on Paperwork

*by Tony Butcher
New Zealand*

Just a little more on booklets and leaflets.

Three years after we had the document on measurement of timber (read my previous article), the UK went metric and we all had sessions on what the new regime would be and we had to get it right as there was no turning back or hopping back and forth between imperial and metric.

Forestry Commission Booklet No. 30 was given to us and we had to insert all the marker tabs ourselves and get them in the right place.

I remember a large ash being felled and a cubic metre of timber being carefully cut out and dragged to the office for all to see just what it looked like. I was at Ampthill at the time where commercial timber was not widely felled but have a feeling that the session may have been held in the Chilterns (M.A.F.O.). This has been on my bookshelf in an easy-to-reach place ever since and has been referred to many times, especially since I moved to New Zealand!

This part of the world is supposed to be behind the UK by between 20 and 40 years, depending on the topic or subject, but they are catching up, if a bit reluctantly by some.



Being a 'Tree Man' through and through, I drive around looking at trees instead of the road ahead, but haven't hit

anyone yet (not enough cars on the road). Anyway, one of the first things I noticed was the high pruning techniques. I seem to remember being told in Lynford Hall FTS that it was to remove 1/3 and keep 2/3. Here it is remove 2/3s to leave 1/3 and in some cases I have seen pines with just 25% left on the top of the tree.

High pruning here is big business because it is imperative to go for fairly knot free timber. Radiata pine here grows at a remarkable rate and at the turn of the century, the rotation was 35 years. Whether it is due to global warming I cannot say, but within 15 years that has been reduced to 29 years. Actual thinning is rarely carried out. High pruning is carried out using step ladders and loppers or chainsaws. Bear in mind that much of the plantation here is on steep slopes.

As an aside here I feel inclined to mention that my hero of teenage years was Richard St Barbe Baker, the Man of the Trees, and it was he who decided that *Pinus radiata* was to be the commercial tree of New Zealand.

I fear for the widespread nature of monoculture should the wrong beetle arrive, so find relief in seeing eucalyptus plantations along with the occasional Corsican pine. The cutting of natives is limited now because of over felling in the past when the Europeans first discovered New Zealand. More on this later.

A Trip to the Smoky Mountains National Park

by Eric Rogers



Eric with his wife and daughter at Park entrance.

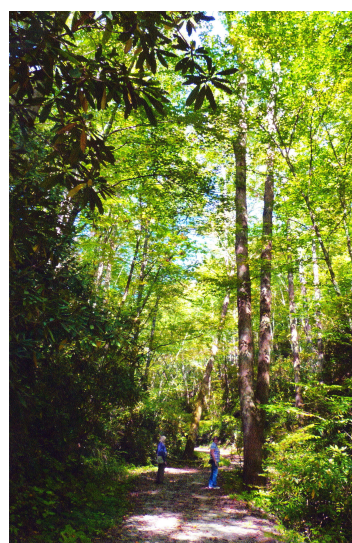
I have been fortunate to have a recent trip to the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee, SE USA. The park is about 800 square miles, mainly forest and with 52 peaks, the highest at 6643 ft.

The Ice Age glaciers did not reach the park resulting in huge diversity in the forest. Annual rainfall ranges from 15 to 85 inches giving dry and humid areas. Only about 20% forest was cleared by the native tribes and European settlers for agriculture.

When European traders and settlers pushed south into the Smokies, they found an area had been settled increasingly by civilised indians for thousands of years. The Cherokee were last and traded with the English and French, mainly in deer skins. Around 1800, the US Government decided they should be "civilised" and under pressure from the European settlers, they were rounded up and moved out. Many died on the forced march. The treatment of the Cherokee by the settlers who were stealing their land, was disgraceful. However, the Cherokee nation survived and currently have reserves near the Park and elsewhere.

The Smokies have over 100 tree species and many more shrubs. Conifers and broadleaves grow together and about 25% of the forest is unlogged old growth. In the high forest the canopy is about 130 ft. with clear stems at a diameter of 2-3 ft. while the forest floor is covered with natural regeneration. The main species are cherry, ash, tulip tree, chestnut, lime, maple, oak, birch, pine, spruce, balsam fir and hemlock.

Such a resource attracted the timber trade which became big business from about 1880 to 1940. Many timber companies and sawmills opened and towns sprang up in the valleys that now cater for tourism. Early extraction was by horse and mule. This was followed by steam operated skidders with a mile of overhead cable bringing logs to the railways where logging trains, powered by geared locomotives, delivered them to sawmills.



Regeneration following cessation of timber in 1940 is impressive. There are 100 species of trees.

Regeneration must have been successful as I saw no sign of the devastation that must have resulted up to the mid 20th century.

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A Trip to the Snowy Mountains National Park *continued*

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At higher levels most of the Balsam Fir have been killed by a Japanese aphid.

Recently blight has killed most chestnut, they were the largest trees in the Smokies. Now balsam fir and hemlock are suffering from an aphid attack that was introduced from Japan.

I saw many dead trees in the higher parts of the forest. Flowering dogwood is also under threat from an anthracnose disease. International trade is spreading plant diseases around the world.

When the National Park was declared in 1926, the settlers were moved and only a few houses were saved. These, two water mills, chapels, graveyards and a few farm buildings are all that remain.



The working watermill - everything but the millstones from wood.

It would have been interesting if some of the settlers had been retained to farm in the old ways. Museums around the park cover the story well.

Now to the woodcraft bit. As a member of the Association of Pole Lathe Turners, I was on the lookout for our special interest, but was disappointed. Straight back chairs, often rockers, with split or woven bark seats were everywhere. They were in museums, antique shops, craft shops and even supermarkets. But I couldn't find either a photo or an example of a pole lathe. One must be out there somewhere! However I did see a photo of a shave horse.



*Walking sticks & staves popular with hikers.
Theo Thudpucker's stand at a Country Fair.*

The Cherokee and settlers made superb baskets from wood splits and a local cane similar to bamboo. Many can be seen in museums and craft shops and can sell for up to \$3000. The settler and Cherokee wives wove and decorated cloth made from locally produced wool and cotton. The carving of animal and human figures is also popular and at a local show, the skill was impressive.

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A Trip to the Snowy Mountains National Park *continued*

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Lawn mowers need to be large too.

At a local town there is a two acre "shop" dedicated to machine and hand tools and training for the hobby. Decorated walking sticks and poles are also popular and can be bought everywhere. I looked for wooden spoons but found no originals. The new ones were not designed well for eating.



The settlers in the 19th & 20th centuries built everything out of wood - except the chimney!

The most abundant woodworking was houses, barns and fencing. The houses were made by splitting straight logs in half or quarter and keying them together at the corners, then roofed with shingles.

The gaps between the logs were filled with clay. The clay is left out of most reconstructed buildings.

Pens, fences and sheds were similarly constructed but without the clay infill. Later houses were lined with sawn planks. The whole structure was set on a stone base with a stone fireplace and chimney at one end.

Bee hives were made using hollow trunks two to three feet across and set under a roof.



Locals really enjoy making Country Music.

Music was important to the settlers and fiddles and dulcimers were, and still are, made in the area. Blue grass music is played all day long on local radio.

I have not mentioned the wild flowers, the birds - lots of wild turkeys, the animals – I saw bear, elk and fox, Walmart, highways, massive cars and trucks and the food. Oh the food! I'm not surprised that there are so many large folk!

People's History of Thetford Forest

By Simon Malone

Many readers of FCA Today will have spent some of their working life in Thetford forest.

Thetford Chase, as it became known, is the largest man made forest in southern England and although dwarfed by its larger brothers in the north of England, Scotland and Wales, it is nevertheless a spectacular 21,000ha (50,000 acres) addition to the lowland landscape.

The earliest plantings date back to 1922 and now, almost a hundred years later, a project has been commissioned to collect the written, oral and pictorial history of the forest over the decades.

As with all of the early generation of FC forests, timber production was the overriding objective, with production peaking at around 270,000 m³ per year in the 1980s.

Today the bulk of the first generation crops have been felled, the forest restructured and this remodelled, species rich and diverse forest currently attracts some million and a half visitors a year.

It will not be long before the earliest of the second rotation crops will be scheduled for felling, as restructuring and age class distribution continues.

"People's History of Thetford Forest"

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/BEEH-9VNEMT>

is part of a £2.2M scheme of exciting new landscape and heritage conservation projects for the Brecks, thanks to a £1.5M grant from the Heritage Lottery.

The "[Breaking New Ground](#)", (see footnote), partnership is responsible for delivering the scheme. Partners include regional, national and local organisations with an interest in the area, community groups and members of the community.

The People's History of Thetford Forest project aims to seek out the people who have lived and worked in the forest and who were employed in a variety of roles and allied trades.



The project will record their stories, memories, knowledge and experience contrasting those in equivalent roles today, to compare changes in working practices and conditions.

Volunteers collating the information have been trained in oral history interviewing, editing and typing up recordings and in cataloguing archival materials, to help create an oral and pictorial archive documenting the history of Thetford forest.

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People's History of Thetford Forest *continued*

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So, whether your connection to the forest is as a forest worker, student, forester or contractor, or if you only passed through for a few days on a training course or spent a busman's holiday in the area, the project would be delighted to hear from you. Any photographs you have would be welcomed as well.



The project is led by Vicky Tustian who you can contact at: -

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Santon Downham,
Suffolk, IP27 0TJ.**

Email: victoria.tustian@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 0674551



Breaking New Ground

In March 2014, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirmed the award of nearly £1.5million to the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership, enabling a £2.2m scheme (the largest of its kind in East Anglia) to start delivering a range of exciting Heritage and Landscape Projects in the heart of the Brecks.

<http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk>

The Brecks is a surprisingly large area in the heart of East Anglia with a unique landscape characterised by heathlands, sandy soils, pine hedgerows, shelterbelts and forest plantations.

Not only does this make the area look and feel different to other parts of Norfolk and Suffolk, it has meant that the way humans have lived and worked in the landscape throughout history has been very different.

Kielder - And Elsewhere. The Wild Days?

By John Martin

Reading Simon Malone's article on his early career in the Forestry Commission and his contact with Wilf Howell, a local forester, awakened memories of my early career as a workshop manager in Kielder in 1975.

The head ranger in Kielder at that time was a Wilf Howell and I assume it was the same colourful character of whom Simon had memories. Drink seemed to be an important part of Wilf's lifestyle and often a strong smell of whisky would accompany him on his visits to the workshop on many a Monday morning. It was perhaps not



surprising that he needed a drink given some of the rangers he was responsible for. The younger generation of rangers in particular had a reckless attitude to gun safety and image was important with

cartridge belts in full view confirming their occupation. Rangers' vehicles in those days often needed weld repairs and the mechanics had learnt from experience to check carefully for live rounds before starting to weld.

Accidents with guns were not infrequent and the rear door of a van had a high velocity bullet through it on one occasion and later the front wing of a Land Rover was blasted with a shot gun.



Wilf was keen to get repairs carried out

without the need to produce accident reports which could lead to unwelcome attention from Conservancy Office staff in York.

The workshop in those days was part of what may have been a pre war camp and is now under the waters of the Kielder reservoir, which was just starting to be constructed.

Getting mechanics to come and work in the workshop was not always easy because of its location, and an FC house was one attraction which was available to encourage suitable men to apply. An FC house did not always attract the best of staff and on one occasion a father and son from Manchester were taken on probation, but strangely they were always off sick at the same time which resulted in them being dismissed.

Across the yard was a Civil Engineering clerk of works who shared his office with Mrs Young his forest clerkess. The FC was more formal in those days and I only remember the clerkess being referred to as Mrs Young.

Although the FC supplied lorries and vans to the civil engineering unit, most of the excavators, vibrating rollers etc. were on hire from a Tyneside plant hire company, the owner of which was related to the Civil Engineering clerk of works. This I thought was a little strange and 30 years after leaving Kielder and having retired from the FC, whilst working as a freelance interviewer, my suspicions were confirmed.

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Kielder - And Elsewhere. The Wild Days? *continued*

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In a run down croft house about 25 miles north-west of Inverness, I interviewed a man who also knew Kielder well. In the 70s he had worked as a sales manager for the Tyneside plant hire firm and confirmed that he used to take round the brown envelopes and whisky at Christmas. This greatly amused me, but my only regret was that the clerk of works was no longer around for me to taunt.

As with many members of staff, in that and earlier times in the FC, the civil engineer was a robust character full of bluster. However when it suited him he could break rules or insist on keeping to them. On one occasion he was sent a transfer advice, correcting an account, for the grand sum of



1p. This he felt was a total waste of time and refused to action it. It was pinned on the wall of the office to show to visitors.

Some time later an accounting inspection was due to take place. When the EO accounts left her ID in the hotel some 17 miles away, he remembered the rule which required ID to be shown. Access to the safe and cash account money was denied until she had returned to the hotel for her ID.

During my time at Kielder, I had to attend an industrial tribunal board after the workshop clerkess, who shared my office, took the FC to the tribunal claiming some form of constructive dismissal. (Years later

I was told that this was the first such tribunal the FC had to defend).

The clerkess took her husband to the tribunal for support. He had retired a year earlier from the post of chief forester at Falstone Forest. He knew the workings of the FC well, having worked in all 11 Conservancies and both Research Stations during his career (a very popular forester!). At the end of the tribunal, the ruling went in favour of the FC version of events, much to my relief.

Following this unwelcome experience and the criticism levied at me by the retired forester during the tribunal, I took an interest in his FC career. He was another character with no regards for the rules. I stayed in an FC house in Stannersburn, a small village on the opposite side of the valley from the Falstone forest office. There was a small private garage in the village which did repairs and sold fuel. The garage owner confirmed that the forester never bought fuel from him again after the bulk petrol tank was installed in Falstone. He could be seen on a Sunday filling up his car at the FC pumps. Subsequently, I found out that this was something he had done throughout his career.

Stealing fuel was totally unacceptable in the FC. However, there were other income boosting activities, especially for



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Kielder - And Elsewhere. The Wild Days? *continued*

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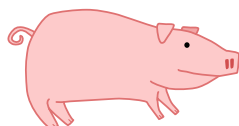
forest staff living in the more remote areas, that were less serious activities and perhaps should have been encouraged for the benefit of the FC.

The following are some of the activities I came to hear about during my career.

Carrots were grown up the sandy rides in a Lincolnshire forest and only banned when the high level of drains maintenance was queried in what was an area of low rainfall.



In S(S) unofficial private shooting parties were arranged by the forester resulting in his transfer across the Conservancy.



Pigs were reared in the out-buildings of a forester's house in Slatford N(S).

On one occasion when a senior officer came to the FC house to meet the forester, his wife said he was in the out-buildings with the pigs. "You can't miss him, he is the one with the bonnet on". Having met him some years later

in S(S) I could understand why his wife said that.

To reduce a problem with roe deer numbers in Kirkhill Forest outside Inverness, the forester allowed his friends to hunt them with shotguns.



Not the most humane way of killing them, but at least the FC was credited with the income from the carcasses. The practice was only stopped when the game dealer showed the skins to the forester's supervisor.

I remember agreeing to an FC Transit van being used for the funeral of a forest worker when no hearse was available. It seemed fitting that his last journey should be in the back of the FC van in which he had spent so much of his working time.

There must be many more stories of this nature which could be retold before all of the older generation, who did so much to create FC as it is today, go on their final journey. *(These stories always improve with the telling! Let's have more. Ed)*



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



Book Review

by Chris Badenoch

Voices of the Forest by Mairi Stewart Birlinn 2016 £20. ISBN 9781906566647

This volume from Birlinn is a truly mammoth work following the tradition set by the four University of the Highlands and Islands' *Touchwood Histories* published in the early years of the second millennium. It readably represents a quite colossal amount of historical and personal research, presented in a way which deals with the realities of the development of forestry in Scotland through the lives of the people actually involved in developing our forests largely through the late 19th and 20th centuries.

We tend to be used to remote and passive histories which deal solely with royalty, politics, legislation and crude economics, but the author has managed to mingle successfully the time-line of Scottish forestry with real, active personal accounts and memories from the people and firms who

have actually made the industry what is, not shying away from quoting their sometimes justifiable criticisms of *the way things have gone*.

In this way she has skilfully interwoven some of the developing subtleties - especially that curious change from forestry on the big estates and the foresight of some of their owners with the remaining landowner attitudes. At the start of an organised trade union to better wages and conditions, the leader, John McEwan, was aware that "among all the men that I met there were only two Socialist foresters". It was changed forever by the First War from the employment of ex-service (and injured) men to the rise of

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VOICES OF THE FOREST

A Social History of Scottish Forestry in the Twentieth Century

The creation of large new tracts of forest, together with the development of a modern wood processing sector, was the single biggest transformation to occur in the Scottish countryside during the twentieth century. While the environmental and landscape aspects of this change have been much commented upon, its impact on Scottish culture and society has attracted comparatively little attention. This book tells the fascinating story of the human side of forestry, drawing heavily on the thoughts, experiences and reflections of a wide range of individuals from all levels and all sectors of the industry as it has developed in Scotland over the last two years. The book also analyses the evolution of forestry policy and the changing roles of both the state-run Forestry Commission and the private sector. However, at its core are the stories of the men, women and children who have lived and worked in the many communities where old and new forests have been planted - communities whose, especially in the middle decades of the twentieth century, forestry was often the largest source of employment and income, and without which many of these places would have struggled to survive.

Mairi Stewart graduated in Geography from Glasgow University. After spending ten years working in conservation and land management, her interest in woodland history led her to undertake an MPhil at the University of St Andrews. She subsequently worked as a project officer at the Centre for Environmental History at the University of Stirling and as a research fellow at UHI Centre for History. She is currently a freelance historical researcher specialising in environmental history. She is the author of *The Birth of British Environmental History*.



VOICES OF THE FOREST

A Social History of Scottish Forestry in the Twentieth Century





Book Review *continued*

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the FC and the development of forest holdings and the involvement of women foresters. Nor does Stewart forget the important political influences, notably things like the Geddes Axe which, but for the intervention of Lovat, almost slew the infant Commission.

The Second War and its demands and effects, both direct and indirect, are covered well, including the place of the lumberjills and the Canadians, especially the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit which was a logical extension of the First War's Newfoundland Forestry Corps, their camps, impressions and lives. (It was later said in Speyside that one could ascertain where the 'Newfies' had been cutting because they left – 'wasted' – the bottom metre!) The initial, rather unsavoury, we now might say racist, views of natives for the British Honduras Forestry Unit are also covered.

The post-war timber demands for reconstruction, the acquisition of many abandoned lowland estates by prudent sawmillers, and the attendant change of pace of planting, planting methods, ongoing silviculture, and a developing sound timber trade, to say nothing of the gales of 1953 and 1968, bring us almost to the present day together with glimpses of the changes in FC organisation and an excellent account of forest life and people in the post-war period.

Voices of the Forest also manages to interweave the training and education systems for forestry, giving insight into the ever-changing developments over the last 100 years, together with (some of) the great academics and researchers who underpinned it all. The shift from manual to machine operation is there, and the unsaid, but significant between the lines, strength of an industry based very much on egalitarian exchange between the theoretical and the practical: the forest worker who became the District Officer and then went into research.

Understandably, perhaps, the account tends to concentrate on the big plantations of west and Highland Scotland so that some of the more kenspeckle characters from the great southern forests – Rose, Cotter-Craig, Davies, Kingan, Wilson, Watson etc. - have been missed, as have some of the major mills. One might have hoped also for more comment, although it is mentioned at forester level, on the very militaristic operation of the Commission, especially from those overseas foresters who returned from the Empire at the time of the Second War. There are also gaps in some of the nursery support and its associated worthies – McGarva, Williamson, Ogilvie etc, and their firms –but Stewart's canvas is vast enough.

Mairi Stewart has done a great service not only to forestry, but also to the wider social

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Book Review *continued*

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fabric of 20th century rural Scotland. She has made it all the more interesting for some of the ancients among us who remember, and worked in and with, many of the places and people, and shared opinions, mistakes and successes which have contributed to this colourful woodland century.

The book has an excellent series of references, and is printed with a huge range of fully referenced photographs, and supportive diagrams on quality paper; the only gripe being that its format and weight are unable to fit comfortably on a lap or a bookshelf - but this is scarcely the author's fault! Enjoy it.

Chris Badenoch

Author Biography

Perthshire author, Mairi Stewart graduated in Geography from Glasgow University.

After spending ten years working in conservation and land management, her interest in woodland history led her to undertake a research degree at the University of St Andrews. She subsequently worked as a project officer at Stirling University's Centre for Environmental History and as a research fellow at the University of the Highlands and Islands' Centre for History. She is currently a freelance historical researcher specialising in environmental history.

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Personal Collections of Forestry Photographs & Papers and the Forest Memories Website

by Norman Davidson

I have been prompted by David Foot to write on an issue which confronts many of us who have been longer term occupants of the retirement club, and have a number of forestry related photographs and documents which are perhaps of little interest to the younger generation. Certainly I have heard of more than one incident of slides and photographs consigned to the refuse bin.

For those who were fortunate enough to have served all or part of their forestry time in Scotland, and are now wondering what to do with that few dozen slides or paper forestry notes, I can offer an option that may be of interest, I can scan and record the items and place them on the Forestry Memories website, should that be acceptable, and add them to an archive box which I hope to offer to either the National Records of Scotland, or local archives such as Inverness or Aberdeen University. The latter option depends not only on the numbers of donors and photographs and papers collated, but also on the quality of information supplied for each item.

I realise this last point is a bit of an ordeal but photographs and slides are of much more interest and value if they are accompanied by some details on year, location, names, activity and so on. Here again should you be on an email system, I can offer to return larger scanned images for you to work on. The Forestry Memories web site is Scotland orientated (hosted by The University of Highlands and Islands), hence the request for Scotland only items.

Should anyone be interested in this facility, please do not hesitate to get in touch - my contact details are shown at the end of this article.

Some of you may have seen the website www.forestry-memories.org.uk and perhaps even used it. The website was initially set up as part of a project in 2007 to record the social history of forestry in Scotland in the 20th century and was funded by University of the Highlands, Forestry Commission, the Scottish Forestry Trust and the European Union. The main part of the project involved conducting and archiving oral interviews with many forestry people from all sides of the industry, and also compiling a book. The book 'Voices of the Forest' by Mairi Stewart is now complete and on sale from Birlinn Books (*Well worth a read and has many previously unpublished photographs. You can read the review in this issue. Ed*). The website continues gathering more information and the University of Highlands and Islands are the current website hosts.

My own personal involvement began around 2009 and it has been a bit of a roller coaster ride gathering and receiving many items to place on the Forestry Memories website. To this end, we have been fortunate to have been given lots of personal papers, photographs and other items which have been scanned, annotated, entered and then the originals returned to the donor.

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Forest Memories *continued*

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Further to this I have subjected some forest district offices to requests to look into the dark recesses of their 'archive rooms' and been rewarded with some glorious finds dating as far back as the 1920s and 30s. I have to say that the Forestry Commission has not been good at all at archiving its past and with all the office closures and attentions diverted elsewhere, a great deal of material has gone to the 'big fire' in the sky. However some material was either forgotten in corners or there were some dedicated archivists out there, and some rare glimpses of the past sometimes come to light. It gives me great satisfaction when something like a L948 Timesheet Book A6 was discovered and scanned, and is now there for all to see on the site. I am even more delighted when, following some personal visits to the National Records Offices in Edinburgh, some boxes of material are now finding their way from the Forestry Commission to the Records Offices.

Some original planting maps, hand drawn and coloured, still survive and have been scanned or photographed. There are old forest annual reports from the 1950s, glass plate photographs, black and white photographs and slides. We have received forest records laboriously filled by operation and compartment during the 1930s and 40s, including the names of senior and forester staff since the origin of the particular forest unit. All have been added to the eclectic mix of items now on the site. The numbers of photographs and slides now run into thousands and the

pages of records and reports are many times that. The number of records shown in the Image Library of the website is currently over 3200, but each one can contain background detail in the form of PDFs which may have up to 100 scanned pages, or many other photographs. The subject matter is amazingly varied, but high on the list are bogged tractors, horses working in timber, windblow, harvesters, group meetings or events, planting, timber lorries and boats along with many planting and stock maps. A great number of people are named.

Earlier this year, the website in its old format 'fell over'. It had to be rescued from backups into its present interim format which fortunately has proved to be much more user friendly. The ambition was to move to a much newer format and even more user friendly system later this year, had the first format not disintegrated. The interim system still has to be modified to work with some video and audio systems that were loaded on in the early days, and hopefully that will be accomplished quite soon.

You are welcome to dip in and try some searching of the Image Library. The simplest way is to insert a person's surname, a machine type, forest name or even try that old favourite time record 'Timesheet' and see what appears. For the more ambitious there is an advanced search facility (not really advanced) which goes some way to home in on specific material from the library. Another option is to click on the

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Forest Memories *continued*

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headings 'Years' and 'Groups' located on the second top bar and see what appears, and then click on the pictures that come up. We welcome any advice and comments on the contents, the format and the overall role of the website as well as offers of material to enter.

My contact details: -

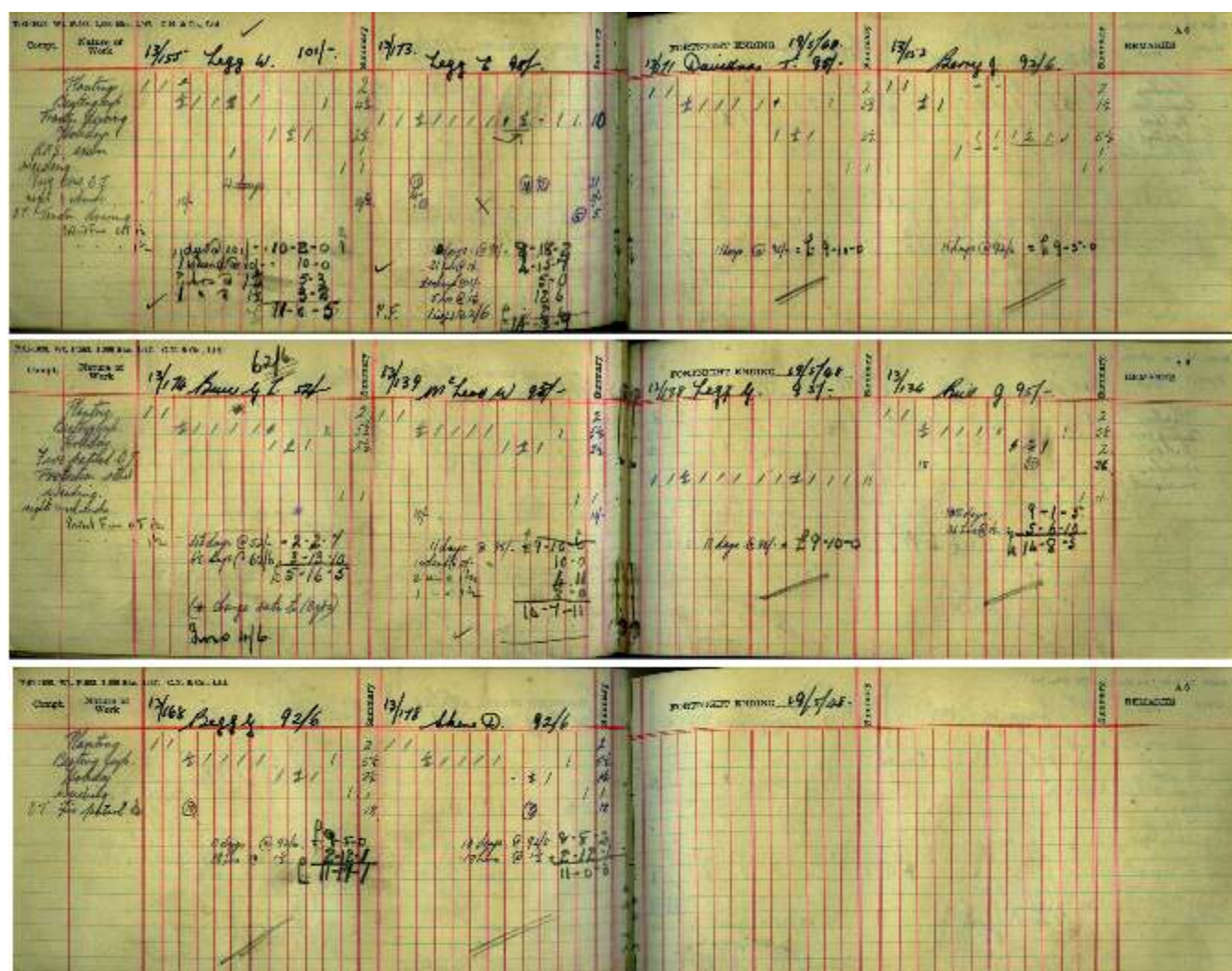
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Visit the Forestry Memories website
www.forestry-memories.org.uk



Durris Time Sheet book circa 1948.

[More pictures from the archives](#) ➡

Forest Memories *continued*



Bridge built over the Dramlachs near Fochabers by George Riddoch (Riddochs of Rothiemay) circa 1895. There are three horse and carts plus 10 people on the bridge. (Sandy Touch)



Steam driven mobile sawbench sawing logs from the 1953 windblow on Deeside. This was the last as fixed mills took over. (Sandy Touch)

Forest Memories *continued*



Glenurquhart Forest 1927. Underplanting experiment.



The occasion of the first load of pulp wood to leave Carron Valley for the Caledonian Mill. David Foot, David Henderson Howat, Steve Quigley, Jaako Palensen (2 others unknown?) 1988.

LIFE IN BRIEF

Mike Whitlock remembers **JACK AARON** who died in April, just hours after his 90th birthday. He was born In Goole, Yorkshire and on leaving school he worked for a while for the F.C. as a forest worker in the Pickering area. He then went to New College, Oxford where he obtained his forestry degree. For a while he worked for the Timber Development Association but rejoined the F.C. as a district officer in South Scotland.

It was around this time that he studied heathland botany at Birkbeck College, London where he obtained a M.Sc. However, he returned to timber development work with the F.C. This he did in conjunction with the Forest Products Research Laboratory at Princes Risborough.

He was soon posted to the Alice Holt Research Station where he spent the rest of his career, continuing research into the qualities and uses of home grown timber. His main achievement was the introduction of conifer bark into its uses in horticulture. He collaborated with E.G. (Dick) Richards in the publication of papers on this and related subjects. It was during one of his visits to mainland Europe that, when staying in Switzerland, he met his future wife, Jutta.

He retired from the F.C. in 1983 which gave him the opportunity of engaging in various activities including playing bridge and bowls. He joined the Alice Holt group of the FCRA on its inception and Jutta and he took part in the many activities such as coach

outings and indoor meetings. In latter years when Jack had given up driving they were unable to join the remnant of the group in pub lunches, although they were able to attend the annual Christmas lunches which were held in Alton where they lived.

During the last few years of his life Jack became very deaf and communication was by written note. Jutta also had to enter a residential home. He was, apparently, well known in Alton speeding along the streets on his mobility scooter. He was still mentally alert and had planned his own memorial service which was held in the church he attended.

Do you have any articles for publication in this magazine?

Send your articles to the editor

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

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

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.

FCA Today on Facebook

by Ian Blake



I have set up a FCA Today Facebook page. Those with an account can search for FCA Today to become a member. If you don't have an account, I recommend you access the site shown below to set one up.

Simply follow the steps shown - they are quite straightforward. Once you're signed up, search for the FCA Today group to become a member, then you can disseminate information as and when you like.

Alternatively, there are a myriad of sites to assist in setting up Facebook, if you don't like this one, just type 'How to set up a Facebook account' into your browser.

<http://m.wikihow.com/Set-up-a-Facebook-Account>

Forestry Commission Association Organisers

FCA Liaison Officer: *Charles Dickens*

e-mail Group membership enquiries to: -

FCA Today editor: *Richard Toleman*

membership@fca-today.com

FCA Today Magazine

The next issue of the FCA Today magazine will be available on the www.fca-today.com website on **5th December 2016**.

Articles for inclusion in the next issue of the magazine should be sent to the editor before 1st November 2016.

The publication dates of the FCA Today magazine are: - **Spring edition: 5th April, Summer edition: 5th August and Winter edition: 5th December**

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

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