



Contents

FCA Today

	Page
Dean Forester Training School Reunion	2
Details of FCA AGM 2020	7
Centenary Event at High Lodge Thetford	9
Remembering a Celebration of 75 Years of the FC	12
Forest Name Signs	13
A Tale of Two Glider Pilots	16
The Centenary of the FC Celebrated at Glentress	20
Mount Rushmore	23
Forestry Centenary Event - Wales.....	25
Book Reviews	29
Letters to the Editor	32
Contact Details	34

From the Editor

Despite gloomy forecasts, the December issue is alive and well thanks to our regulars and the reports of various centenary celebrations. Please keep it coming. Don't feel that you can't contribute because you're not doing much. Most of us do interesting things and friends and colleagues enjoy knowing about these activities. I don't need lengthy articles. Short snappy ones that are well illustrated are always popular with readers. Why not have a go this Winter when you are looking for things to do on those long dull days. Brighten up those days and also those of our readers.

Happy Christmas and a Happy Writing New Year

Richard

Dean Forester Training School Reunion

by Gordon Griffiths

We were called and we came!

Thirty six of us were at the Speech House Hotel for a Reunion Dinner in the Verderer's Court, in the centre of the Forest of Dean on 21st September, 2019.

If I've got it right, there were 23 Dean Students and three from Gwydyr. About 30 other students heard the call, but sent their apologies.

The event was organised by Gerry Gissop and Martin Fletcher, but Gerry was kept from the actual event because of surgery only a week before.

As we gathered for drinks before sitting down we were labelled with name badges, so we began to eye up the strangers and

tried to work out the names we should know and recognise.

It was very well organised, and Martin and Gerry had lined up various speakers to say a few words between courses. After Martin's introduction, John Latter said Grace.

Following starters, Martin delivered various messages from absentees. Keith Wallis was called upon to propose a toast to the ladies. Keith stressed what foresters owed to their wives and families. It should not be overlooked or forgotten that our wives were uprooted from work, friends and families to unknown places where they had to start their lives and careers again.

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The gentlemen facing in the bar, left to right are Brian Greig, Roger Fitter and Hugh Milner

Dean Forester Training School Reunion *Continued*

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Diana Fletcher replied to this toast on behalf of all wives.

She said, and I think this is the gist of it, that before marriage Martin was managing life OK, but after marriage he was doing much better. She had also helped him with his Reunion introduction, welcome and messages. "Say this" and "don't say that", it had clearly worked very well.

Later, Roger Fitter, the earliest student present (1956-58) gave us reminiscences of his time at the school and later.

The Loyal Toast completed the formal dinner, and there was still lots to talk about for everybody and people to reacquaint with. The longest "re-acquaintance" gap,

if there is such a term, was between Peter Darch and Peter Noot, a gap of 56 years. My own biggest gap was 49 years with Brian Greig, with whom I briefly worked alongside in Thetford.

Slowly the tables were cleared of plates, glasses and debris, and essentially, we were shooed back into the bar so that the staff could prepare for breakfast.

There was very keen approval for another reunion, with a gap of two years, this has now been booked for 9th October 2021.

Ex FTS students from any of the schools would be welcome. Make a note.

Gordon Griffiths 1966-68.

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A jolly time is being had by some of the participants in the Verderer's Court at the Speech House

Dean Forester Training School Reunion *Continued*

Continued from previous page



The rest of the participants in the Verderer's Court.

The Menu choices enjoyed by the attendees

Soup of the Day; Freshly baked bread

Pork and Rosemary Terrine; Brioche toast – Apple Slaw

Smoked Salmon Tian; Chilli jam – Roast almond – Coriander crisp

Double Gloucester cheese bites (V); Red onion jam – Dressed leaves

~

Pan Roast Chicken Breast; Smoked Potato – Leek – Pea – Green Apple

Hake Supreme; Cured Ham – Roast New Potatoes – Chive and Onion broth

Gloucestershire Sausages; Creamy mash – Roast Carrots and Broccoli – Onion jus

Butternut Squash and Blue Cheese Tart (V); Crushed Potatoes – Hispi cabbage – Hazelnut

~

Sticky Toffee pudding (V); Clotted cream ice cream – Toffee sauce

Chocolate and Strawberry Sundae (V); Meringue – Elderflower

Blackcurrant poached Rhubarb; Vanilla cream – Sable biscuit

A selection of ice cream and Sorbet (V)

Selection Coffee or tea and Mints

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Dean Forester Training School Reunion *Continued*

Dean FTS Students Attending

Ex FTS STUDENTS			FTS YEARS	TOTAL ATTENDEES		FTS APOLOGIES	
Keith	Campbell	69 - 71	Keith	Campbell	Toby	Beadle	
Paul	Cooper	57 - 59	Paul	Cooper	Mike	Blud	
Ian	Cox	64 - 66	Dorothy	Cooper	Neville	Bousfield	
Dave	Craze	61 - 63	Ian	Cox	John	Brain	
Peter	Darch	63 - 65	Dave	Craze	Peter	Brett	
Roger	Fitter	56 - 58	Peter	Darch	Tony	Coxwell	
Martin	Fletcher	66 - 68	Pat	Darch	Bob	Culley	
Dick	Gossling	69 - 71	Roger	Fitter	Cliff	Dampney	
Bill	Gregory	65 - 67	Martin	Fletcher	Colin	Fruen	
Brian	Greig	57 - 59	Diana	Fletcher	Gerry	Gissop	
Gordon	Griffiths	66 - 68	Dick	Gossling	Family	Hendrie	
John	Latter	65 - 67	Bill	Gregory	Roger	Hodge	
Dave	Mackie	58 - 60	Elaine	Gregory	Mike	Houghton	
Hugh	Milner	64 - 66	Brian	Greig	Dave	Langford	
Peter	Noot	62 - 64	Rita	Greig	Roland	Liddell	
Harry	Oram	69 - 71	Gordon	Griffiths	Simon	Malone	
Dave	Rogers	69 - 71	Marion	Griffiths	David	Mercer	
Peter	Schweiger	66 - 68	John	Latter	Dick	Mihalop	
Pat	Smith	69 - 71	Rose	Latter	Arthur	Miller	
Les	Starling	64 - 66	Dave	Mackie	Rod	Newborough	
Derick	Stickler	69 - 71	Brenda	Mackie	Roger	Newland	
Keith	Wallis	58 - 60	Hugh	Milner	Dave	Pike	
Roger	Warn	68 - 70	Peter	Noot	David	Rice	
Peter	Webb	59 - 61	Brenda	Noot	John	Richards	
			Harry	Oram	Mike	Steward	
			Dave	Rogers	Bruce	Uglow	
			Peter	Schweiger	Dave	Watts	
			Pat	Smith	Dave	Yearsley	
			Les	Starling			
			Sue	Starling			
			Derick	Stickler			
			Keith	Wallis			
			Jill	Wallis			
			Roger	Warn			
			Margo	Warn			
			Peter	Webb			

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Dean Forester Training School Reunion *Continued*



Speeches During the Evening Introduction and Welcome

Martin Fletcher

~

Grace

John Latter

~

Messages

Martin Fletcher

~

Our Ladies

Keith Wallis

Reply

Diana Fletcher

~

Dean Forester Training School 1905 - 1971

Roger Fitter

~

Loyal Toast

Gordon Griffiths



In the bar, left to right are Paul Cooper, Keith Wallis and Peter Noot

Forestry Commission Association Annual General Meeting 2020

The North Wales Group are pleased to invite FCA Members and Groups to the National AGM to be held on Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 13th May 2020.

The Venue will be the Beaufort Park Hotel and Conference centre, near Mold in Flintshire.

It was our host location for the National AGM in 2017. We were treated very well, the rooms are comfortable and the food excellent.

Bar meals are available for delegates who arrive in time for lunch on the first day (not included in the price) and the Bar is well stocked.

The programme is to hold the AGM on the afternoon of 12th May, starting at 2pm. There will be a Conference Dinner that evening with a guest speaker.

The menu choice for the Dinner will be available at the AGM meeting.

We have been offered a good rate for Accommodation.

Room, Breakfast and Conference Dinner:

£115 for a double room (two people)

£85 for single occupancy

Dinner only, for non-residents: £23

Delegates will make their own bookings direct with the hotel, quoting Forestry Commission as a reference.

This is a very busy hotel, so the cut-off date for booking accommodation is 1st April 2020.

There is no lift at the hotel, but delegates may book a ground floor room if they so wish.

Contact details: -

Beaufort Park Hotel

Mold

Flintshire

CH7 6RQ

Telephone 01352 758646

Website beaufortparkhotel.co.uk

On the morning of 13th May we plan to visit the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port. This is a chance to see some of the local social and industrial history, the trading links with the rest of the country and the world in general. It is a unique experience with a working barge, views of the Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal together with many exhibitions of working and living conditions for those involved in the canal trade. Remember, these were the Motorways of their time.

The Museum is a 30 minute journey from the Hotel and is easy to find.

There is a cafe on site with a wide choice of food.

On departure, the exit of the museum is direct onto the M53 and the rest of the Motorway network.

The Group rate for admission to the Museum is £8.50

Delegates and their partners are all welcome at the AGM and Dinner. If desired bookings can be taken for the Conference Dinner alone. Just let us know and we will fit you in.

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Therefore, please inform either Charles Dickens or Arthur Miller of your plans for attendance and your wish to visit the Canal Museum, by Monday 27th April 2020.

Charles' e-mail is cpdickens@btinternet.com

Arthur's details are:

10 Hawthorn Ave

Connah's Quay,

Flintshire,

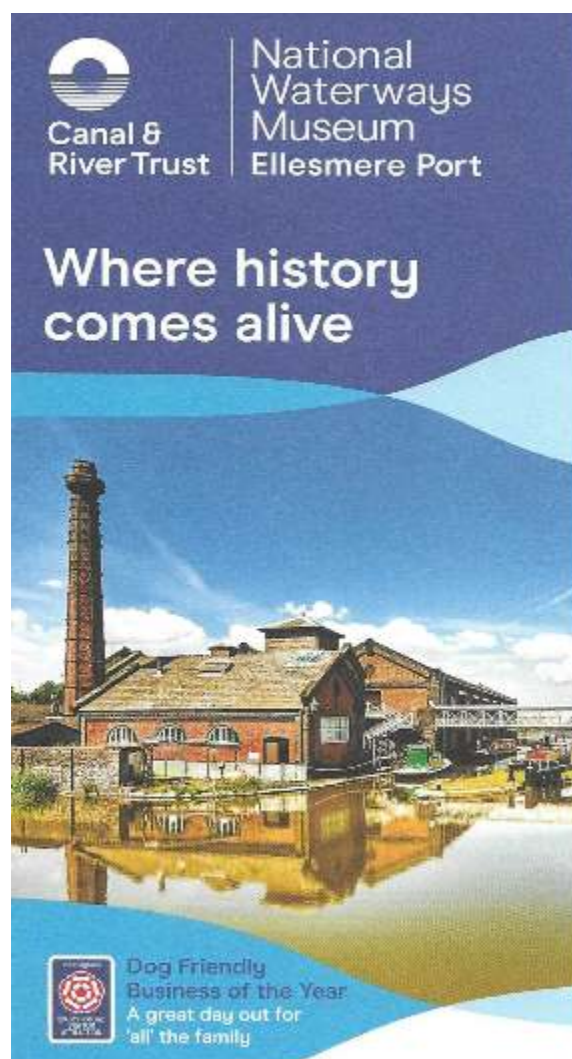
CH5 4TF

Phone 01244 831361

Mobile 07788 711307

e-mail arthurmiller@talk21.com

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the meeting and hope that you enjoy a visit to this part of the world, with all its scenery and long history.



Group visit on 13th May 2020



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www.fca-today.com



Centenary Event – High Lodge, Thetford

by Simon Malone



As we all know the Forestry Commission came into being on 1st September 1919, following the enactment of an Act of Parliament. On 31st August 2019, local forest staff held an Activity Day at High

Lodge Forest Centre, Thetford to celebrate this 100th anniversary.

As well as displays by the Friends of Thetford Forest, the Norfolk Militia, deer stalking and archaeological exhibits and displays of modern forest machinery, the Breckland Group of the FCA was invited to take part.



Left to right are Ronnie Birkett, former rake operator, Eric Rogers, retired District Forester and Paul Hellard, retired Forester

A gazebo and all the hardware facilities were provided by the local forest and members put together a simple but

effective display of old photographs and hand tools.



A selection of old photographs was obtained from the local forest archive and these generated some debate and amusement about where they were taken and who was in them.

Hand tools which were loaned by Group members and displayed, included an old Danarm chain saw from the 1960s, various axes, slashers, saws and weeding hooks.

The day dawned fine and sunny and the good weather held out throughout the entire day and a large crowd was in attendance, enjoying the various displays and the usual activities available at this popular venue. BBC Radio Norfolk put in an appearance early in the day as well.

On display in the Visitor Centre café was a huge birthday cake measuring around 5 feet by 2 feet in size. This was to provide the highlight of the day with a formal cutting of the cake mid-afternoon.

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Centenary Event – High Lodge, Thetford *Continued*

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The 5' x 2' FC anniversary cake

Surrounded by staff and visitors in the café, Tristram Hilborn, the Forest District Manager, gave a short speech explaining how the Forestry Commission had come into being on the 1st September 1919, before inviting Ron Hoblyn, MBE and Anne Mason to join him in cutting the cake.



Anne, Ron and Tristram attack the cake!

Ron is a retired forester who spent much of his working life at Thetford. He was awarded his MBE in 1992, just before his retirement, for services to ornithology and is today still active and much respected in this field.

Anne is the very enthusiastic chair of the Friends of Thetford Forest, now a very active group with over a thousand members of whom some 150 are regularly working in the forest, the arboretum and assisting with a wide range of projects.



Ron clearly enjoyed his slice of cake!

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Centenary Event – High Lodge, Thetford *Continued*

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Members of the forest staff wore T-shirts celebrating this fantastic milestone and visiting members of the public shared in the celebrations by tucking into slices of the cake as well. Between

them all, they made significant inroads into the cake in no time!

A great day and one which will be remembered by all present. A good number of our Breckland Group turned up during the day and there was much reminiscing about the "good old days".

I am grateful for the help of many of the Group members in preparing for our part in the event, for the loan of tools, for sharing their memories and for giving up their day to help make our display.



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www.fca-today.com



Celebrating 75 years of the Forestry Commission

by Angela Dudley

The photograph below shows personnel, messengers and Print Room staff celebrating 75 years of the Forestry Commission in 1994 at Silvan House.

Front row Left to Right:

John McGough, ?, Margaret Green, Susan McLeod, Moira Bardy, Theresa Andrew, Corina Kelly, Sylvanna Hewitt, ?, Irene Gilbert, Liz Kirk, Mary Goldie, Kathleen Burt, Kate Fielding, ?, Joanne Macauley, Walker Scott, Jan (print room).

Next row Left to Right:

Alister Taylor, Marion Quigley, Cathy Johnston, Pat Sinclair, Lynn Carty, Elizabeth MacArthur, Marjorie?, Muriel Stickle, Anne Stott, Angela Dudley, Lynne Rennie, David Niven, Coll Gardiner

Next row Left to Right:

George Prior, Gordon McLardy, ?, ?, Elizabeth? Grey Hair, Sandra Lawrence, Chris Smith, David Taylor, Jack Reynolds (Messenger), Tom Edwards, Alan Craythorne.

Can you fill in the missing names?

If you worked here, do you have any interesting recollections for this magazine?



Forest Name Signs

by Brian Greig

In the excellent and interesting article on "Jamie's Tool Collection" in the FCA Today Winter 2018 Edition, there was a photograph and a brief mention of the old Forest Name Plates. I had not realised that they are now "a rarity and much sought after", as I have a collection of about two dozen of these signs. I certainly agree that these attractive signs represent an era long past.

The name plates are very much a part of the history of the Forestry Commission and were very informative as each small woodland block proudly had its own name sign prominently displayed at the entrance to the woodland.

Over the years, I managed to collect the signs during my travels around the country for the Pathology Branch from Alice Holt, usually from old wet weather shelters or abandoned tool sheds following the amalgamations of forests, when the signs had been replaced by the new wooden ones.

The sign name plates for the Welsh forests were naturally in Welsh, (see the photo for Towy Forest), but I have one sign for Kerry Forest which is in English, although this may be because part of Kerry straddles the English/Welsh border and I do remember seeing other signs in Welsh for Ceri.

Apart from the Welsh wording, the only difference of the English, Scottish and Welsh name plates is the symbol at the bottom of the sign, a rose for England, a

lion for Scotland and a Welsh dragon (see photographs).

I intend to keep a few signs which have particular associations with my work in Pathology, mainly those forests where we had major experiments. They include Thetford, Swaffham, Lael in Scotland, Kerry and of course Alice Holt. However, I would be pleased to pass on the following signs to anyone who might be interested.

Hartland

Berry Hill Wood

Streford Wood

Huddisford Wood

Callow Hill

Okehampton

Clifford Wood

Black Hill

Talybont

Causeway Wood

Fernworthy

Bere Forest (West Wood)

Should Forest (Bilney Wood)

Mortimer Forest (Barnet Wood)

In addition to the Forestry Commission signs, I have two older name plaques for the State Forests of Halwill and Lydford (see photographs), which I presume predate the more familiar Forestry Commission signs.

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Forest Name Signs *Continued*

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I have no idea when the State Forest signs were replaced by the Forestry Commission heading, although I was told recently it was by Royal command!

I would be very interested to learn if anyone has any information on the history of these signs, especially when they were first introduced and where they were manufactured.

The design and iconic shape of the signs is also interesting and looks to have a professional touch.

Also in the collection are a few Fire Signs, one in Welsh, plus Road Closure and District Office notices, all of which bring back memories of bygone days.

I am extremely grateful to Harry Pepper for his photographic skills in taking the pictures of the Forest Name Signs.

Note

Somebody out there must know about their design and manufacture. They were so iconic that they were either devised by an inventive individual or, more likely, a committee.

Local members may like to approach current forestry offices now responsible for the named forests. They could reside there as symbols of the "Good Old Days". Other than that, it's likely that they will land up in the homes of ex-FC professional hoarders! Ed.



More signs on next page ➡

Forest Name Signs *Continued*

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A Tale of Two Glider Pilots

Let it never be said that the FCA Today magazine is parochial as this intriguing tale can verify.



A young Finlay MacRae

Graham Hamilton takes up the story:

My good friend and former colleague **Finlay MacRae** died on 5th June 2014. I prepared an obituary, which appeared in the Summer 2014 edition of this magazine and it was also published in Scottish Forestry Vol 69 (1) in 2015.

I had often heard Finlay talk of his wartime experiences with the RAF which he joined in 1942. He recounted some amusing recollections of his spell in Florida, training to be a pilot.

Later, Finlay transferred to the Glider Pilot Regiment. There had been huge casualties

incurred by the Army Glider Pilot Regiment, resulting from various glider airborne operations including D-Day and Arnhem.

This required the secondment ('volunteering') of RAF pilots to the Glider Pilot Regiment. Subsequently, Finlay took part in 'Operation Varsity' on 24th March 1945. This was a major operation involving moving British and American troops and supplies across the Rhine into Germany.

In his memoir 'A Tune in the Woods' Finlay described the event as the largest airborne operation in history.



Finlay on a training mission

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A Tale of Two Glider Pilots *Continued*

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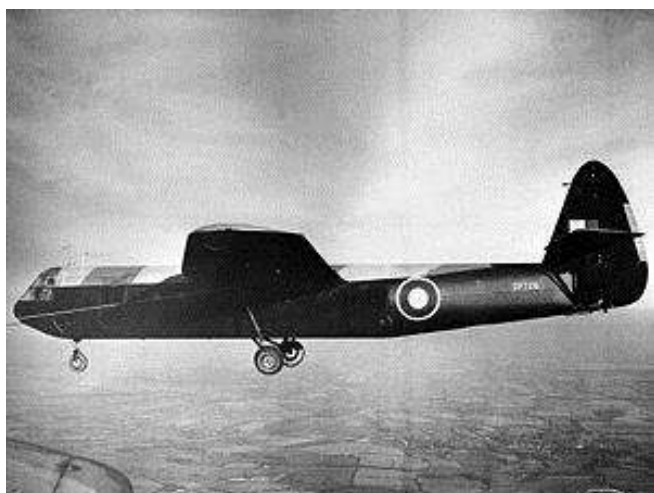
It remains the largest operation in history and included the following:

541 aircraft carrying paratroopers;

1,050 troop carriers towing an additional 1,350 gliders with troops and vehicles on board;

They were accompanied by 2,153 allied fighter aircraft;

In total over 4,000 aircraft and their pilots and over 16,000 paratroopers.



A Horsa Glider

The Horsa gliders were capable of carrying 28 fully armed men or a mixture of men and supplies. There were two pilots in each glider. Some 3,655 were built in Britain by Airspeed.

I referred to Operation Varsity in the obituary and mentioned that Finlay had been captured soon after the glider touched down. His subsequent experience as a prisoner of war was very unpleasant, but it was mercifully short.

In May this year our Editor, Richard Toleman, got a letter from a lady called Rowena Smith who lives in Hampshire. In the letter she explained that her father Flying Officer **Harry Grinham** had been a glider pilot and had taken part in 'Operation Varsity'.



Logbook for the "Glider pilots"

In his logbook, his co-pilot was named as Sergeant MacRae, but no first name or initial was given. Rowena had spent years trying to locate this person, who she also thought had been best man at her father's wedding.

Remarkably, in the process of searching for Sergeant MacRae, she came across Finlay's obituary in FCA Today and, given the reference to 'Operation Varsity' immediately saw the possibility that he might be the person she was looking for. I had mentioned Finlay's family in the obituary and Rowena managed to find a reference to Donna, Finlay's daughter, but that yielded nothing. So, she sent the letter to Richard who passed it to me. I then phoned

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A Tale of Two Glider Pilots *Continued*

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Joey, Finlay's widow, to ask if Finlay had ever mentioned Harry Grinham, who was originally from the Borders. This name rang a bell with Joey, but she could not quite recall the connection.

The possibility that Finlay was Harry Grinham's co-pilot was clearly a strong one, but some more evidence was needed. I passed Rowena's letter to Donna, Finlay's daughter.



Flying Officer Harry Grinham

Donna now continues the story:

When Graham got in touch and introduced Rowena and me to one another, I was quite amazed and really hoped that this Sgt

MacRae would indeed turn out to be my late father. Rowena believed that her father's co-pilot had also been the best man at her parents' wedding. I managed to find the photograph of the wedding online but, sadly, I confirmed this was not 'Dad'. However, Rowena quite undeterred went back to her family and discovered that her parents' best man had been a cousin of her father. So, we were back on the investigative trail. It was only when Rowena sent me a photograph of a page in her father's logbook that the puzzle began to come together.

Her father's logbook recorded an exercise with the glider (with troops on board) and landing in a field near 'Bigot Hall'. I suddenly remembered that in his autobiography, Dad had also recounted this story and said 'my Skipper was a fellow Scot from the Borders'. Rowena had said her father came from Dumfries. Dad also said that they were carrying men from the Oxfordshire and Buckingham Light Infantry and that they had landed near a big hall and when they made their way there, that the door was opened by a nun and that it was a girls' school. I went straight to Google and looked up Bigot Hall (recorded in Rowena's father's logbook). Sure enough it had been a girls' school run by nuns during the War! That was the conclusive proof we needed.

What a great story and how good to know that both these (then very young and very brave) men went on to earn their country's thanks for their civilian and Service achievements in the form of their respective MBEs.

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A Tale of Two Glider Pilots *Continued*

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Finally, a word from **Rowena**:

Having spent nearly 20 years researching my family history and piecing together my father's WW2 story, the search for his co-pilot, a Sgt MacRae, seemed impossible.

Upon discovering the very sad obituary in the FCA Today magazine for Finlay however, my excitement was escalated at the possibility of maybe discovering my father's missing Second Pilot.

Nothing ventured nothing gained, I composed what must have appeared a most random e-mail to Richard as Editor of the FCA Today magazine. I was amazed to receive an immediate response suggesting he would forward my details to Graham. I was beyond emotion and excited when I forwarded a copy of my father's Pilot Logbook to Donna.

By comparing entries in the Log to Finlay's first-hand account, Donna was able to confirm that Finlay was indeed the 2nd Pilot

in Horsa Glider RX875 towed by a Stirling Bomber. They took off together from RAF Great Dunmow, Essex on 24th March 1945 as part of the largest airborne operation of WW2 Operation Varsity, the Crossing of the Rhine.

I still have a lump in my throat that after 74 years, these two Scottish lads have now been reunited. I do not know whether either of them knew if one or other of them survived the war. My father being injured, was listed as Missing in Action. Finlay, route marched as a Prisoner of War. 'G' Squadron suffered 60% casualties.

Finlay and my father were two of the many brave men who piloted with skill and luck, a flimsy glider with no engine, that was not meant to survive intact for a return flight. They also had the added responsibility for the lives of the troops they carried on board.

I am happy to conclude that my father's story is now complete, and I extend my overwhelming gratitude to Richard, Graham and ultimately to Donna. Thank you.

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.



The Centenary of the Forestry Commission Celebrated at Glentress

On the 4th October we had a local celebration of the FC centenary at Glentress near Peebles.

It was hosted by the new forestry body in Scotland, Forestry & Land Scotland (F&LS).



A large number of past and present members of the old FC came along and it was great to catch up with old friends.

My word, you do look well / bright / perky / fit and that sort of stuff, (even if it was tricky to actually recognise an old friend!).

F & L S was very generous, providing drinks and eats and arranging for quite an extensive planting of specimen trees in a small grove close to the visitor centre.



More pictures on next page ➡

The Centenary of the FC Celebrated at Glentress *Continued*

Continued from previous page



More pictures on next page ➡

The Centenary of the FC Celebrated at Glentress *Continued*

Continued from previous page



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

Mount Rushmore

by Arthur Miller



The final scenes of Alfred Hitchcock's film 'North by Northwest' are set on the President's heads at Mount Rushmore. But the real effect and setting of the monument is not disclosed to its full extent.

In practice it is a homage not only to the Presidents, but also to America's talents for patriotism, showmanship and engineering.

The carvings represent George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln.

The work started in 1929 under the leadership of Gutzon Borglum, and was completed in 1941 by his son Lincoln Borglum.

Mount Rushmore is situated in the Black Hills of Dakota, which was selected because of its size, orientation to the morning and midday light, and fine grained granite.

However, it is more than just the heads, impressive as they are. The location of the site in the middle of the hills meant that new roads had to be built for access. The roads are not your typical straight American highways. They wind in and out

of the valleys and ridges of the hills, passing through beautiful scenery and extensive areas of forest. FCA members would feel quite at home.

Travelling south from the Memorial to the Custer State Park is the Iron Mountain Road. An impressive piece of engineering with many twists, turns, pigtails (spirals to us), bridges and tunnels. It was designed by an engineer whose brief was to make the journey exciting, memorable and to give the best long distance views of the Memorial.



So he started off by selecting the best ridges from which to see the heads, then blasting tunnels through the ridge to frame the view, and then joining up those tunnels with one of the best roads ever to drive and enjoy. Indeed, many drivers and motor cyclists visit the area just for the experience.

Continued on next page ➡

Mount Rushmore *Continued*

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At the Monument site itself there is a visitor centre, shop, performance arena and a viewing terrace. In addition is the most impressive display of patriotism you could imagine, *The Avenue of Flags*. On both sides of the Avenue, leading up to the viewing area, are stone pillars, holding the flags and giving the accession dates of all the states in the USA. So that Americans can go to find their own State, and then see it in context with the rest of the States.



A non-American visitor can gain a sense of history, and of both the independence and

also the interdependence of all the states in the Union.

The heads themselves are huge. Noses are about 20 feet long, eyes eleven feet wide and mouths about 18 feet wide. 400 labourers, mostly from the ranks of the unemployed, worked on the memorial. About 450,000 tons of rock were blasted from the mountain. An idea of the quantity of the work is demonstrated by the huge boulder field of waste rock that lies at the foot of the mountain.

The visitor centre (or center, in American) is very informative, with both static displays and film shows of the construction and history of the memorial. The whole of one wall is dominated by one photograph showing a workman on a face. Judge for yourself.

The memories linger on, but no words are really adequate to describe the experience. Just go and see it for yourself.

We were fortunate to visit in the summer of 2018 in the company of two very good American friends who have shown us many parts of the USA.



Forestry Commission Centenary Event - Wales

By Arthur Miller

September 27th saw Natural Resources Wales hold several events to mark the Centenary of the Forestry Commission.

Chris and Margaret Griffiths, together with David and Ann Williams were present at Gwydyr Uchaf, Gwydyr Forest. Chris was, at one time the F.D.M. there.

John Morgan and Bob Farmer, both past Directors (Wales) were at Llanafan.

In addition there was an event at Clocaenog Forest. The FCA were well represented with nine members: Eifion and Llinos Jones, Les and Sue Starling, Jean and Arthur Miller, John Roe, Andy Phillips and Phil Lloyd. We had all been involved in Clocaenog and the surrounding District over the years.

The events included a walk up to Pincyn Llys, at the top of the forest, where there is a tower commemorating the original planting of 1830 on the old hunting estate, together with a plaque marking the first FC planting in 1930. This time there was a tree planting and a notice to commemorate the centenary.

Amongst the large group of people who had made the trip, there were several youngsters, children and grandchildren of the current staff. Part of their fun was to leap in and out of the planting hole, to ensure that it was deep enough!

After a gentle stroll back down the hill we were treated to hot drinks and biscuits and a steady round of socialising and catching up with all the news, making new friends and linking up with old friends.

It was an obvious photo opportunity, as the pictures will show. One highlight was a time line. We all stood on one long row with the most senior FC member on the left, and the most junior of NRW on the right. There was also a group photograph of just present and current staff.

Enjoy the pictures, see who you can spot. There were too many people present to identify everyone.

In the evening we all repaired to a local hostelry for a very good evening meal and much more socialising.

The FCA members were well received by the current staff, who made us all feel both welcome and appreciated.

Our thanks go to Bruce Theobald and Ffion Hughes for arranging the day and making it feel so special.

Despite all the difficulties of recent years, it was gratifying and pleasing to see that the standards of the Forestry Commission were being upheld and maintained.

Pictures on following pages ➡➡➡



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

Forestry Commission Centenary Event - Wales *Continued*

Continued from previous page



More pictures on following page ➡

Forestry Commission Centenary Event - Wales *Continued*

Continued from previous page



John & Menna Roe



More pictures on following page ➡

Forestry Commission Centenary Event - Wales *Continued*

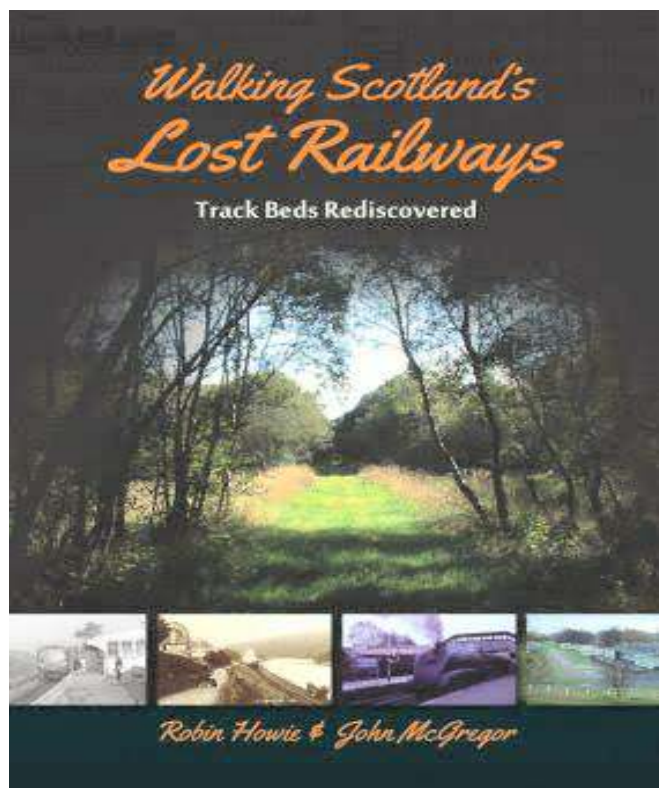
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Photographs by Natural Resources Wales



Book Reviews



Walking Scotland's Lost Railways: Track Beds Rediscovered

Authors: Robin Howie, John McGregor

For over 15 years Robin Howie had a popular hillwalking column in The Scotsman and is the author of the acclaimed 100 Scotsman Walks.

Dr. John McGregor is a railway historian.

Whittles Publishing Limited, 22 Jul 2019 - Railroads - 232 pages

ISBN 1849954038, 9781849954037

An invaluable guide for walkers to discover over 375 miles of Scotland's track beds that range from easy to adventurous walking. A general background history of the 'Railway Age' is provided along with detailed information, maps, and numerous old railway photographs to recall these past times. As well as being a handy guide for walkers, it is ideal for all railway enthusiasts and a great opportunity to get walking!

Scotland still has hundreds of miles of dismantled railways and the track beds give scope for many walks. Some track beds have been 'saved' as Tarmacadam walkway/cycleway routes while others have become well-trodden local walks. The remainder range from good, to overgrown, to well-nigh impassable in walking quality. This book provides a handy guide to trackbed walks with detailed information and maps. It is enhanced by numerous black and white old railway photographs, recalling those past days, and by coloured photographs that reflect the post-Beeching changes.

The integral hand-crafted maps identify the old railway lines and the sites of stations, most of which are now unrecognisable. The 'Railway Age' is summarised and describes the change from 18th century wagon ways and horse traction to the arrival of steam locomotives c.1830. The fierce rivalry that then ensued between the many competing companies as railway development proceeded at a faster pace is recounted. Although walkers may be unaware of the tangled history of the development of the railway system during the Victorian era, many will have heard of, or experienced, the drastic 1960s cuts of the Beeching axe. However, in more recent times Scotland has experienced a railway revival - principally in the Greater Glasgow area but with new stations and station re-openings elsewhere. The long awaited 30-mile Borders Railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, the longest domestic railway to be built in Britain for more than a century, is something on a very different scale. Early passenger numbers have exceeded expectations and towns served by the line have seen significant economic benefits.

The walks offer a fascinating and varied selection of routes that can fill an afternoon, a day or a long weekend.

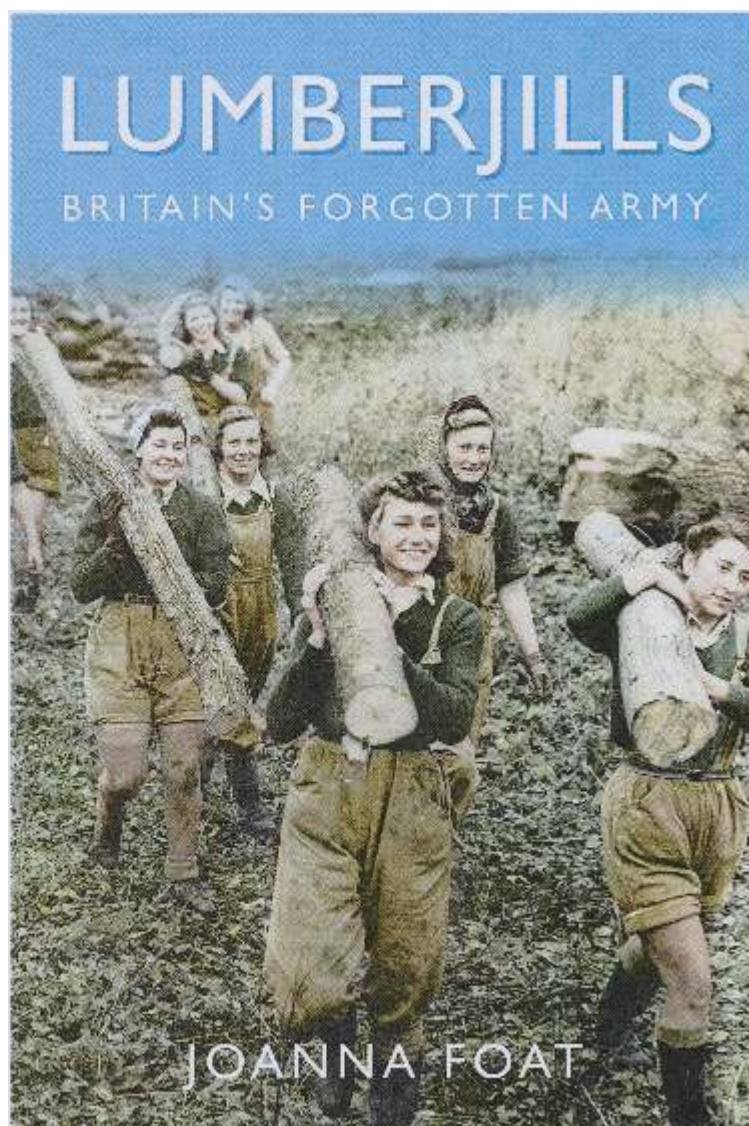


Book Reviews

***Lumberjills: Britain's Forgotten Army* by Joanna Foat**

When war was declared in 1939, Britain was almost completely dependent on imported timber – but only had seven months of it stockpiled. Timber was critical to the war effort: it was needed for everything from aircraft and shipbuilding to communications and coal mining. The British timber trade was in trouble. Enter the Lumberjills.

Lacking in both men and timber, the government made a choice. Reluctantly, they opened lumber work for women to apply – and apply they did. The Women's Timber Corps had thousands of members who would prove themselves as strong and as smart as any man: they felled and crosscut trees by hand, operated sawmills, and ran whole forestry sites. They may not have been on the front line, but they fought their own battles on the home front for respect and equality. And in the midst of heavy labour and wartime, they lived a life, making firm friends and even finding soul mates. In *Lumberjills*, researcher Joanna Foat tells their story for the first time, and gives them the recognition they so truly deserve.



£14.99

ISBN: 9780750990905

www.thehistorypress.co.uk



Book Reviews

COMING SOON!

A PATH THROUGH THE TREES

Mary Sutherland

FORESTER, BOTANIST & WOMEN'S ADVOCATE



PHOTO: NATIONAL FORESTRY LIBRARY, AUSTON

by Vivien Edwards

In 1916 Mary Sutherland became the first woman forestry graduate in the world, graduating from the University College of North Wales. It was daring to take up a male-only career when women's contributions were generally disregarded, and her job prospects were also affected by two world wars and economic depressions in England and New Zealand.

Mary was a founding member of the NZ Institute of Foresters, vice president for two years, and designed the official seal that today's logo is based on. The skills she developed as a forester enabled her to move into botany and farm forestry. She also championed women's

right to higher education and was active in the Federation of University Women. *A Path Through the Trees* tells the professional and personal story of this remarkable woman.

We are grateful to the Stout Trust for the generous grant that made publishing this book possible, and to the NZIF Foundation for its invaluable assistance through the process.

Please contact lynn@writeshillpress.co.nz to be kept informed about the release date and purchase details.

ISBN 978-0-9941494-4-2



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Letters to the Editor

Dear Richard,

I have had a dig into the Getty website which has the original much better version of the photograph below. The listing on the Getty website states the photograph was taken on 12th May 1960, when plans were discussed to conserve the Black Wood of Rannoch.

Unfortunately there is a cost to get the image legally and we will have to pass on that and forgo showing it on the FM website unless someone has a FC owned copy.

<https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/members-of-the-forestry-commission-consult-a-map-whilest-news-photo/3400381?adppopup=true>

I have had some good fortune on the image details and gathered some names from Duncan Menzies who was a forester in Rannoch at this time. He has named most of them and I have managed to name one, thus leaving one chap still to be sorted.

As Prof H M Steven was chair of East Scotland Conservancy RAC, I believe this was partially a RAC information gathering meeting.

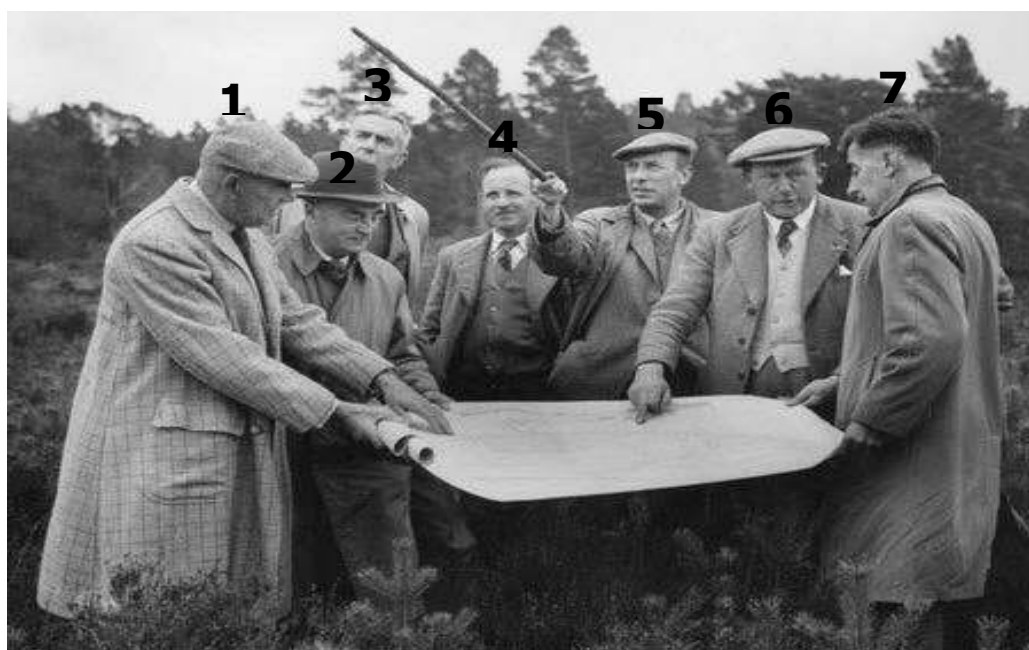
The people have been named as follows from the left:

- 1. ? RAC Member?**
- 2. Willie J Riddoch**
(Sawmill and RAC member)
- 3. Frank Oliver**
(Conservator East Scotland)
- 4. Pat Garrow**
(Head Forester Rannoch Forest)
- 5. Prof Stevens**
(Chair of East Conservancy RAC)
- 6. Sam Petrie**
(Divisional Officer East Scotland)
- 7. Davie Woodburn**
(District Officer–Dunkeld)

Any comments welcome.

Norman Davidson

www.forestry-memories.org.uk





Letters to the Editor *continued*

Dear Richard,

I have read the Summer edition of FCA Today in one bash - just couldn't put it down! What an interesting collection of memories and reports.

I would like to particularly mention both the Thetford items (AGM report & Treasure Trove in Thetford), Dick Ayre's article on pest and disease import control, but above all, Graham Gill's account of the William's Cleugh Pine Pollinations 2013.

We see and hear so much about environmental issues and impending disasters, yet on the ground there are those who quietly go about conserving and developing the richness of our natural heritage, who frankly deserve a medal.

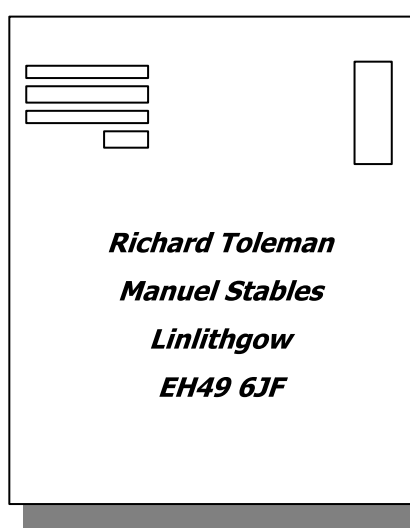
The latter is a figure of speech, because said gongs are handed out to so called celebrities like confetti and this project speaks volumes for the dedication of conservation staff and volunteers who deserve our heartfelt thanks.

My first letter to you, the Editor, it will be a shame, but it seems that FCA Today may not see another edition. In spite of this, I send the above, hopefully those contributors I have mentioned will somehow learn of my appreciation.

Yours sincerely,

David Holloway
*ex Learning & Interpretation,
Bedgebury Pinetum*

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 website at www.fca-today.com

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://www.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

If there are enough articles, the next issue of the FCA Today magazine will be available on the www.fca-today.com website in **April 2020**.

Articles for inclusion in the next issue of the magazine should be sent to the editor before 1st March 2020.

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

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

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.



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