

FCA Forest Forum



Summer 2022

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From the Editor

August 2022

In this issue Charles has written an article outlining the future of the FCA. He also refers to FCA Today and our current newsletter Forest Forum. I've been editor since the first issue came out as FCRA News and as an insert to the world famous "Slasher" in September 1997, a year after my retirement. Issues continued to be paper inserts, having changed title to FCA Today, until issue 40 in March 2010. After that, we had no more support from Slasher editorial staff. With help from a member, we went on line with Diane Birkett our webmaster



and producer of FCA Today, and later Forest Forum. She has done an outstanding job for the FCA and many have remarked on the high presentational standards she has maintained. We were so fortunate that she was recommended to me.

So now the way ahead. The website will close in August 2023 and unless you make arrangements to save copies, nothing we have issued on line can be accessed. Charles and I agreed to give it one year so the transition from the national FCA to the remaining local groups can proceed smoothly. Also I'm hoping that, as we have only one year remaining, many will be keen to send final copy and be remembered as supporting our newsletter to the very end. Now there's something to go for!

I don't know how many updates we'll be able to produce before August 2023, but the more copy I receive, the more opportunities for updates. So make the best use of our final year as both a national body and one which produces an on line newsletter. Ian Blake's Facebook page will continue to be a place where you can keep in touch with friends and colleagues.

Richard



Notices

The Future of the FCA

by Charles Dickens

Way back in 1997 I attended my first meeting of the Forestry Commission (Retirement) Association. At the end of that meeting I was buttonholed by the then chairman, Peter Clarke, one of the prime movers in setting up the Association. He twisted my arm and I took over the treasurership. Except for a break between 2007 and 2014 when David Parnall, Peninsula Group, ably took over the reins, I have looked after the books. I am honoured that the Association has kept me on for so long.

Up until 2019 the Forestry Commission generously financed us with an annual grant that allowed us each year to hold an annual general meeting in locations as far apart as the far south west of England and the highlands of Scotland. With the demise of the FC the grant stopped but prudent stewardship left us with enough funds to have one final get together in 2020. Alas, the coronavirus bug had other ideas and we had to scrub our meeting in North Wales and any notion of holding any further national AGMs.

Since then we have had sufficient funds to keep our website going but Richard Toleman and I decided that times have moved on. Interest in the FCA between England, Scotland and Wales has varied widely between an ongoing dialogue to no dialogue at all. Recruitment of retirees from the three countries has been sparse and insufficient to maintain a viable membership. Richard finds it increasingly difficult to obtain articles to post on the website. And plus the fact that Richard and I have been drawing our FC pensions for more years than we care to remember. Earlier this year, sadly, the Peninsula Group, which has been guided by Peter Webb for some years, decided to formally shut shop.

It is against this background that Richard and I have decided that we will shut down the website next August and close our national account. Any funds in the account will then be equally distributed among the still active Groups for them to use as they see fit.

However this does not mean that the FCA itself is closing down. We still have seven active Groups who, following the lifting of covid restrictions, are planning to resume their activities. In England we still have an active dialogue between Forestry England and Brian Mahony who acts as our liaison officer there. Although the FCA website will be shut down, communication is still open between FCA members via the Facebook page set up by Ian Blake (further details are on the website).



Notices

Forestry England Extension of Concessions to FCA Members

by Charles Dickens (FCA Liaison Officer)

The agreement with Forestry England (FE) whereby FCA members have enjoyed free use of FE car parks, access along forest drives and free entry to the Westonbirt and Bedgebury arboreta expires this March. I am pleased to say that Brian Mahony, who liaises on our behalf with FE has obtained from its Chief Executive, Mike Seddon, a three year extension to this agreement.

These concessions may be exercised by FCA members upon showing local staff the letter and permit issued by FE. In addition, a distinct FCA windscreen sticker must be displayed when vehicles are parked in the forest car parks or when using forest drives.

Specifically free entry to the Westonbirt Arboretum includes up to four other people in a member's party.

For Bedgebury, entry to the arboretum is included in the car parking charge that is covered by the general free parking permit.

Note that some of the FE car parks now use automatic number plate recognition technology and access thereto may or may not be controlled by a barrier. Details on how to access and use these sites are contained in the permit.

Permit letters and windscreen stickers may be obtained from your local FCA Group or from Brian Mahony or myself via the email address shown on the Group and contacts pages.

Unfortunately, the concession agreement applies only to England. It does not extend to Wales or Scotland but members from these countries may use this facility when visiting England.



Articles

North Wales Group Activities *by Arthur Miller*

After a long absence resulting from the pandemic, the North Wales Group met up in April 2022 for a lunch at the Eagles Hotel, Llanuwchllyn.

The event was a great success, and we were all happy to meet up again. There were several apologies, as Covid was still casting its long shadow.

Some of us had undergone hip operations and one member had suffered a heart attack, but despite that, there was an eagerness to keep the Group together. After the meal there was a general discussion on the future of the Group. It was decided that we should continue to meet and to restart the Committee meetings.

Accordingly the Christmas meal was booked for the first Friday in December at the Eagles, and provisional arrangements made for our next meeting. Since then we have met for another lunch at the Griffin Hotel in Llanbedr, and a date for our next Committee meeting has been arranged at the same venue.

Members are keen to re-start visits to local attractions.



Left to right, Gordon Griffiths, Margaret Searson, Neil Francis, Eleanor Francis, Marion Griffiths, Alison Evans, Karen Tonge, Ken Searson, Phil Lloyd, Ken Tonge, Jean Miller, Carol Jones, Arthur Miller, Gill Wells, John Roe, Sue Starling, Jen.

(Photograph courtesy of Les Starling)



Articles

Breckland Group Activities Post-Covid *by Simon Malone*

As we all know, Covid put a huge brake on Group activities for more than two years. The Breckland Group is still ticking over and we held a belated AGM and a lunch at the Mundford Bowls Club in early April 2022. We then held a committee meeting in May to plan how we might resume activities for the future.

In June we met at Bressingham Gardens and Steam Museum with a turnout of 18. We enjoyed a lunch in the nearby garden centre restaurant. This was our first event using independent travel as opposed to coaches. We were not unhappy with the turn-out as we hadn't known what to expect.



In mid-July we held a lunch at the Crown, in Mundford. A slightly disappointing turnout with only twelve attending. Perhaps it was the fixed price 3-course menu which put members off – we normally offer a choice of 2 or 3 courses with prices to reflect this. However, an excellent meal was enjoyed by all who came and it was a great chance for a catch-up.



Eric Rogers enjoyed a well-earned break

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Articles

Breckland Group Activities Post-Covid *continued*

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Also, in mid-July the local Forest District held an Open Day in celebration of the first plantings in Thetford 100 years ago this year.



The first plantings took place at Swaffham to the north of what became the main area of Thetford Forest. The Breckland Branch was invited to put on a display which was themed around events that have occurred in the 100 year life of one of those first trees.

What's next?

In September we are planning a visit to Fuller's Mill Garden, which is a garden run by a charitable trust to the south of The Kings Forest. (<https://perennial.org.uk/garden/fullers-mill-garden/>). Again, individual travel by car is planned.

We also plan to hold our usual New Year lunch although nothing has been booked at this time. Normally we have no difficulty in securing a venue post-Christmas which is a quiet period for pubs and restaurants. Our usual difficulty is agreeing amongst committee members which venue we will use!

It seems unlikely that we will get back to coach trips - even pre-Covid we struggled to fill a coach economically and with current fuel costs prices can only be higher. Also, none of us are any younger after two years and recruitment of new members on any scale looks unlikely. However, the Branch will soldier on all the time we can continue to form a committee. Let us all hope that Covid does not return to prevent us all from leading more normal lives.



Articles

Alice Holt Sign from Keeper's Cottage *by Brian Greig*

The following is an update on the saga of the Alice Holt sign from Keeper's Cottage, which was the subject of Simon Malone's recent article in Forest Forum and my subsequent letter in response to his note.

The sign came up for sale on the 26th March in the Auction Rooms of Andrew J. Smith, near Winchester. After a slow start the bidding quickly exceeded the estimated price of £300-500 and was eventually sold to Jamie and Jennie Awdry from Alice Holt. So after an absence of over 20 years the sign has returned home close to its original in Alice Holt Forest. Jamie and Jennie have had a replica of the sign made and now have generously donated the original sign to the Rural Life Museum in nearby Tilford, where it will be part of a new forestry exhibition. The bulk of the purchase price was borne by Jamie and Jennie Awdry, with contributions from three local residents from the village of Rowledge, where the sign was originally located.

Jamie Awdry was a valued member of the Silviculture Branch at the Alice Holt Research Station for his entire career. Jamie and Jennie have lived in one of the staff houses for most of their married life, except for the first few months when in a caravan behind Keeper's Cottage on the edge of Alice Holt Forest; thus their interest in the sign!!

Jamie's dad, Michael, also worked for many years at Alice Holt in the Pathology Branch.

Jamie Awdry is a collector of old forest tools and memorabilia and an article "Jamie's Tools" appeared in the Winter 2018 FCA Today.





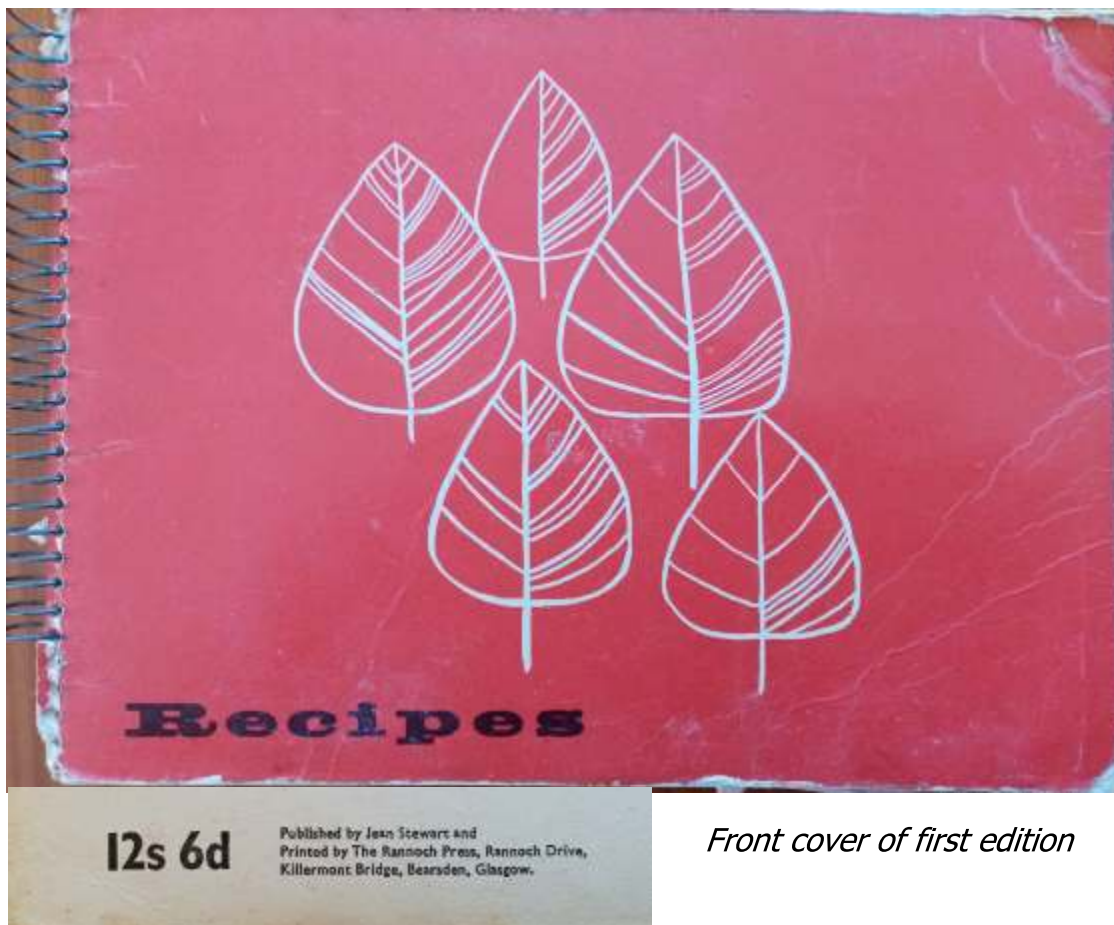
Articles

Forest Fare Recipe Book *by Simon Malone*

Tony Egan's letter to the editor in the Spring edition of FCA Today about the Forest Fare Recipe book brought back memories. I remember purchasing a copy of the first edition, probably in 1969. At that time, I was a trainee forester assisting with the FC stand at the Kent County Showground at Detling, just outside of Maidstone and just a couple of years out of Forestry School.

In those days the Agricultural Show Unit (ASU) was in attendance at many of the major county shows and other events. Among the things the ASU did, as well as being there to provide advice to the public about the FC and forestry matters in general, was to provide a bookstall selling various FC publications. It was from this bookstall that I purchased a copy of the first edition of Forest Fare for the princely sum of 12/6d. The ASU at that time was operated by forester E J Wilkinson, B.E.M. and assistant forester Ian Embry.

We still have the original edition, much used, minus the back cover and in rather a sorry state now.



Front cover of first edition

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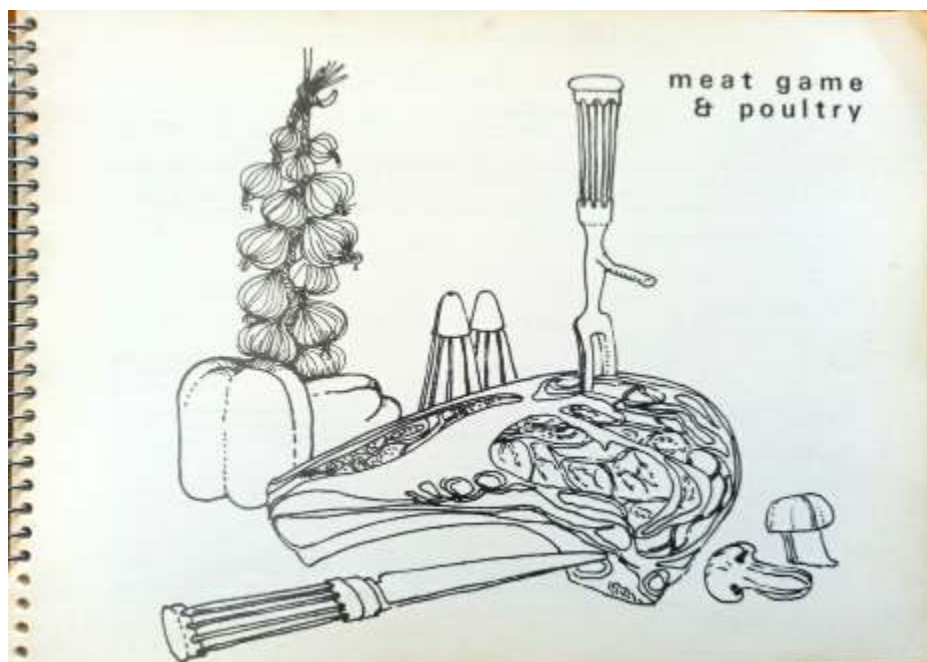
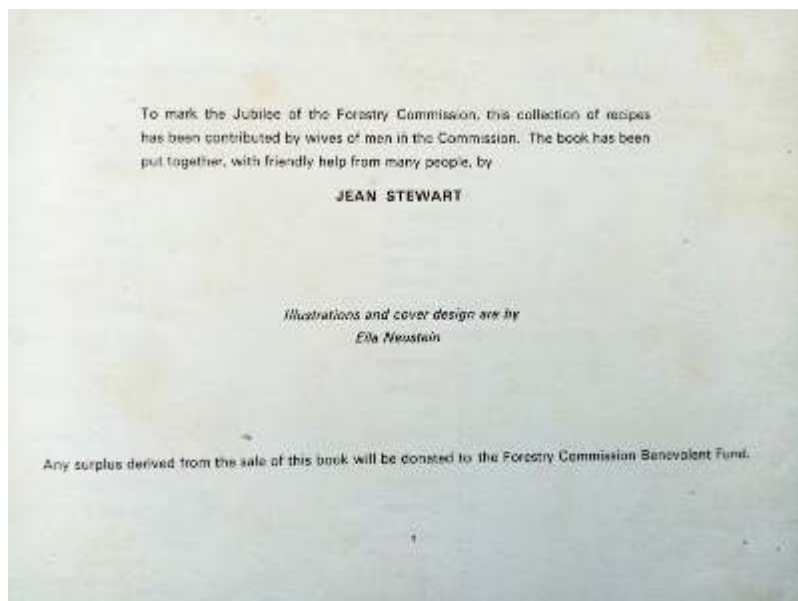
Articles

Forest Fare Recipe Book *Continued*

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After reading Tony's letter a quick search on Ebay found a copy of the second edition as shown in his photographs. In pretty good condition, this cost me £4.99 including the postage. Just another piece of FC memorabilia to hoard and for the family to one day throw in the skip!

The first edition was published as part of the Jubilee events marking the 50th anniversary of the FC



The format of the first edition was the model for the next edition referred to by Tony Egan with recipes grouped in separate sections.

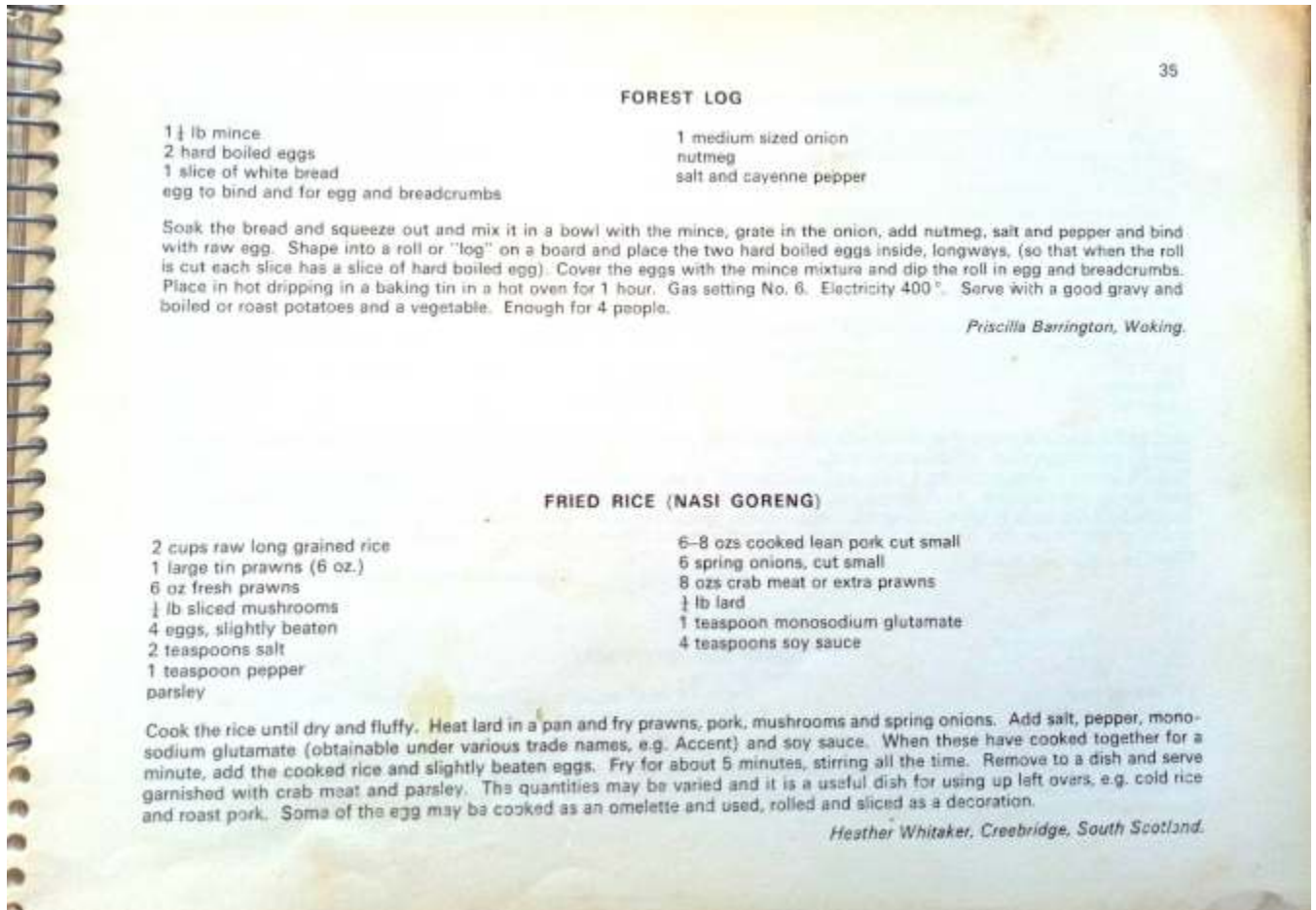
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Articles

Forest Fare Recipe Book *Continued*

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Priscilla Barrington was the wife of Charles Barrington, Conservator SE(E) at that time. Below is the entry in the 1939 Register for them both.





Lives in Brief

Roger Bradley FICFor

1936–2022

All at the Institute were saddened to learn of the death of Roger Bradley, a well-known and highly respected figure in our sector and former President of the Institute, who died on the 3rd February.

Upon graduation from Oxford in 1960, Roger was employed by the Forestry Commission as a Research Officer at Alice Holt Research Station. Between 1970 and 1983 he occupied the posts of: District Officer in Argyll, Scotland; Assistant Conservator in South Wales; Conservator, North Wales and Director, Wales.

From 1983 to 1985 he was Director of Harvesting and Marketing, before becoming Forestry Commissioner. In 1996, he left the Forestry Commission to become President of the Institute.

Roger was involved significantly in the establishment and development of the UK Forestry Accord, launched in November 1996. The vision was to help give effect to the Statement of Forestry Principles adopted at the UNCED at Rio de Janeiro in 1992; the Guidelines for Sustainable Management of European Forests adopted in Helsinki in 1993; and the UK Government's Sustainable Forestry

Programme. Aiming to bring about a bipartisan approach and consensus between business and environmental and social NGOs on a set of objectives and principles for responsible forestry, the desire was to offer a conciliation service seeking to reduce conflict and to provide opportunities for the circa 90 signatories of the Accord to participate through dialogue in cooperation and consensus building activities.

Roger was known to work at the highest standards – impeccable in his clarity of thought and directional abilities. As a mentor and guide to many, he was utterly courteous and always kind – his vision one that was needed at the time, and one needed now more than ever.

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Lives in Brief

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Roger will be greatly missed, and our condolences go to his wife Ailsa, his children, grandchildren and great-grandson.

This obituary was originally featured in the Spring 2022 edition of the Institute of Chartered Forester's TREES magazine. Thanks to Graham Gill FICFor, Jenny Ross, and David Foot FICFor for their input.



The obituary for Roger Bradley which appeared in the last issue of 'Trees' omitted one aspect of his career which was probably his most important contribution to forestry. This was the creation and production of 'Forest Management Tables', first published in 1966, and which had a profound influence on forest management. Until that time, foresters used the Revised Yield Tables dating from 1953. In these tables individual species were presented in 'Quality Classes' based solely on the relative rates of height growth. From a management point of view, this system of classification was of limited value.

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Lives in Brief

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Roger Bradley and David Johnston, working at Alice Holt in the early sixties, conceived the Yield Class system which was based on the volume production potential of a stand, a class system which we now take for granted. Details of the new system were presented in a paper published in the Commonwealth Forestry Review in 1963, prior to the publication of the FM Tables. The resulting yield tables for each Yield Class became the basis of reliable production forecasting which has stood the test of time, but other aspects such as thinning control were also included. The whole concept of Yield Class and its practical derivations was inspired and most of the credit for this is owed to Roger Bradley.

Roger was joint author of the book 'Forest Planning' which was published in 1967. This book also made a considerable impact. His co-authors were David Johnston and Arnold Grayson, both sadly no longer with us. These three were a formidable group of intellectuals who had a considerable influence on forest policy and management. Getting the Treasury to part with funding for forestry was high on the agenda at that time and that probably influenced the prevailing slant on economics. The use of economic appraisals and the use of NDR (net discounted revenue) calculations were encouraged in making decisions. That approach was probably unwelcome to some, but it introduced a more challenging approach to decision making.

When I joined the team at Alice Holt, an old hand told me that you could never win an argument with Roger Bradley. I don't think I ever did. Apart from his formidable debating skills, he was great to work with and was always the most considerate of colleagues.

Graham J Hamilton

I saw this in the recent issue of "Trees" and thought it important to include. This is the Roger that members will remember. His work made a major contribution to the FC and the forest industry. Ed.
