

THE SLASHER

FORESTRY
COMMISSION
News & Views

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* CHRISTMASTIDE *
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The festive season being upon us we start this Slasher by wishing all our readers well over their feasts and much happiness in the New Year.

In keeping with these jovial sentiments we devote our leading article to recent attainments by members of the Commission here mentioned, to whom we offer our

CONGRATULATIONS

FORESTRY COMMISSIONERS:

The Queen has been pleased to approve that Alderman Edward Gwynfryn Davies, CBE, JP, Major Sir Fiennes William Strang Steel, Bt, DL, JP, and Ralph Bruce Verney, Esquire, JP, be re-appointed part-time members of the Forestry Commission on the expiry of their terms of office.

NORTH WALES - PRINCE OF WALES AWARDS FOR 1971:

The citations read:-

In GWYDIR Forest - "Mr. Donald Shaw, an outstanding forest warden of Llanrwst and his men created a number of walks in Gwydir Forest and published an excellent guidebook for visitors. Boys and girls from local outdoor education centres were involved in the work".

At TAN-Y-COED picnic place and forest trail, Corris. "Forest works, directed by Chief Forester T.L. Jenkins, and boys and girls from a nearby Outward Bound school, created a public picnic spot beside a busy tourist road which this last summer was visited by 60,000 people. There is a car park, rustic furniture, unusual specimen trees and footpaths through the woods and glorious valley views."

It is also a matter of congratulation that Mr. Langshaw Rowland, a member of the North Wales Regional Advisory Committee, also won an award. He is a pioneer forester in Wales and a Gold medallist of the Royal Forestry Society for woodland management and wildlife conservation at Pendugwm Woodlands, Montgomeryshire.

THE COMMISSION'S RANGERS:

At the recent World Exhibition of Hunting, Budapest, 5 roe, 6 red, 2 Sika and 1 Chinese Water deer, all connected with the Commission in some way, have gained medals. This in a show of world-wide entries and repute says much for our deer and the management of the herds and, indeed, at Budapest there was great admiration of the quality of our deer - the roe in particular. The Chinese Water deer and a Muntjac owned by Fred Courtier (New)

were the only examples in the exhibition.

CHIEF FORESTER FRED SLATTER, SOUTH WALES:

The Edward John Memorial Cup - a trophy awarded at the annual Vale of Glamorgan show for the best trade exhibit - was this year won by the Forestry Commission entry. In charge of the exhibit was Chief Forester Fred Slatter of Tair Onen, who has done so much to improve the standard of the FC's exhibits in South Wales during recent years. A fitting 'send-off' this - for it was his last show before retiring, - see S(W) notes.

THE COMMISSION'S 'IMAGE'

Once upon a time an ancient mariner, fearing his end was nigh, took advice of a religious how to make his peace with his Creator. "To begin, read the Ten Commandments and tell me on which your conscience is clear". Ten minutes' meditation was followed by "Only one, I've never made a graven image".

And neither, in our opinion, should a Public Relations Officer. In the long run organisations get the 'image' they deserve; if efficient and worthwhile, they will earn sustained public regard even while under malevolent attack by those with vested interests who do not, cannot, or do not wish to, understand its purpose and attainments. It is the job of the PRO, having (as he must have if he is to be successful) a sure belief in the righteousness of his cause, so expertly to expose the workings of the organisation he represents that truth will out; the achievement of this requires, at times, the exercise of great patience and the refusal to be side-tracked from the maintenance of this objective by the use of "gimmicks".

For this reason it has been gratifying that, after a period of frustration caused by emotional and unjust attacks, three recent BBC TV programmes wholly or in part concerned with the Commission's operations, have been largely fair and objective. These were (in order of transmission) Christopher Brasher's "Mountains of my Youth", Richard Thomas's "Man Alive" and John Kenyon's Farming units' "Forestry: Have we been lumbered?". This latter was very fair on the hill farming versus forestry controversy and we are purchasing a copy of the film for use by FC staff at lectures, etc.

A PRO can by no means claim all the credit for such changes as these in the presentation of his organisation's intentions; his task is to brief the journalist/interviewer by translating into simple terms the technical work of his organisation and then to ensure that the best qualified and most suitably graded officials meet the reporter at the place and time most favourable to the organisation. After that it is the professional zest and communicative skill of the individual official of whatever grade which - given an open-minded approach by the journalist/interviewer/editor - determines the inference of the resulting programme.

May we therefore take this opportunity to express our admiration for all, from Commissioners to skilled workers, who both "to camera" or behind the scenes, did so much to convince the producers of these programmes of our strong belief in the very real value of our work for commerce, for public recreation, for conservation and wildlife management.

That all these efforts did not prevent forestry - the Commission in particular - being put "in the dock" in the "Man Alive" programme need not depress us unduly in this day and age when "the Establishment" is fair game for any attack, however puerile or insubstantially based; especially as in this case forestry came out of it very well. (In fairness, we must stress that it was not the producer's intention that we should be so put on trial).

But two facts are of interest. Mr. Tom Weir, the well-known Scottish journalist, mountaineer, hill-walker and wildlife photographer, was transported by the BBC to London

to speak against us. At the recording of the programme, when asked his views, he stated he had no quarrel at all with the Commission who had admittedly made mistakes but had learned from them, and whose conservationist heart was in the right place; this portion of the recording was missing when the programme was transmitted. One gentleman, allowed plenty of air time, was one who only a few months ago bought a very few acres of poor woodland abutting on Mortimer Forest, about our management of which he was allowed to express his views at some length.

"Forestry: Time to Re-think". This pamphlet, produced by the Ramblers' Association, was published on the day of the "Man Alive" programme. On this same day our Chairman, Lord Taylor of Gryfe, issued to the Press a detailed rejoinder. Few newspapers took this latter - or the Forestry Committee for Great Britain's recently published and widely distributed "The Case for Forestry", into consideration when discussing this attack upon forestry in general, and the Commission in particular; but, as mentioned above, this is the spirit of the age. Notable exceptions to this comment were "The Guardian", "The Scotsman" and "Country Life", all of whom - having read the Chairman's reply - took the trouble to ring up Headquarters to discuss the matter.

In fact, critical opinions unsupported by more than a very few facts can be self-defeating. Mr. Fred Redman, whose strongly favourable article appeared in the "Sunday Mirror" 28th November, became well inclined to forestry's cause by the emotional imbalance of the Press coverage inspired by those opposed to our activities.

The Chairman's reply to this attacking pamphlet was also distributed within the Commission on a wide circulation and we hope that it may be of value to field officers when they are called upon to answer criticism of our activities by the Press and the public.

SAFETY

In the cause of accident and injury prevention we are proposing to publicise in the Slasher, accidents in which injury has been prevented, or reduced, by the use of safety equipment or clothing. Here are the first:-

VALUE OF SAFETY HELMETS PROVED YET AGAIN. 21-year old Graham Hopkins, a skilled forest worker at St Gwynno, S(W), was felling Norway Spruce thinnings recently when a tree, left hung up in an adjoining row by another employee, became dislodged and struck him on the head. The force of the blow shattered his safety helmet and bruised his back and shoulders. His safety helmet undoubtedly prevented a fractured skull with possibly fatal outcome.

Another 'near miss' occurred in Blairadam (Carden) Forest, E(S), when a ganger was thinning hardwoods. A dead branch broke off the crown of one of the trees and hit him on the head. Had he not been wearing his safety helmet a very serious injury would have resulted.

FC BENEVOLENT FUND

The Fund is acknowledging all subscriptions, donations and covenants. If you don't get an acknowledgment, please contact The Welfare Officer, Eric Hale, at Headquarters, Basingstoke.

DEER

VENISON FOR HER MAJESTY

The official luncheon menu on the occasion of a visit of The Queen and Prince Philip to the Barrow Works of Vickers Ltd, to launch the Royal Navy's first type 42 destroyer, "HMS Sheffield", included the item "Roast Stuffed Saddle of Lakeland Venison Grand Veneur", the venison coming from Grizedale Forest. Mr. Bill Grant, the Chief Forester in charge of Grizedale was an old school friend of the District Manager responsible for the catering.

FIELD GUIDE TO BRITISH DEER

Since this book made its first appearance in 1957 knowledge of the wild deer of this country has increased considerably. There must be few forests, at least in England and Scotland, that are without some deer. Now the British Deer Society has published a second edition of this practical little handbook and several of our Commission colleagues have contributed to its revision. It is full of useful information on the recognition and behaviour of deer with sections, for example, on tracks, voice, antler development, feeding habits and so on. Perhaps the list of Forest Parks, Forest Museums and Nature Trails is rather inadequate and the definitions of forestry terms in the Glossary are not as accurate as in the earlier edition, but with 85 pages and 35 illustrations this remains a valuable little book for the forester's book-shelf and indeed for his pocket.

It costs £1 and can be obtained from bookshops or direct from the publisher:

Blackwell Scientific Publications, 5 Alfred Street, Oxford OX1 4HB, or
9 Forrest Road, Edinburgh EH1 2QH (postage 10p)

NEWS FROM ABROAD

DEATH OF JOHN Q. WILLIAMSON, lately Director of Management Services and one-time Education and Training Officer, Deputy-Surveyor of the Dean, Senior Officer, Wales, and Conservator South Wales.

We - and surely all who knew him - were deeply grieved to hear of the sudden death of this well-known Commission character, at Santiago de Chile, on the 7th November. He was home in September and had a check-up which had found him sound, and so he returned to his job as Forestry Adviser to the Chilean Government - an FAO post. Our heartfelt sympathy, as well as that of the many foresters he trained when Education and Training Officer, his friends in the Commission, in Wales, and in his beloved Forest of Dean, goes out to his widow.

If we may be permitted one personal note, it is to express our admiration for his powers of communication, ebullience of personality and love of, and belief in, the Commission and all its works, which combination made him a powerful public propagandist. His office and ours nearly facing each other, he bore the brunt during our early days with the FC of answering all the elementary questions a new boy must ask; though many of these must have seemed stupid to him he, a very busy man, most cheerfully gave us his whole-hearted attention - he even managed to make comprehensible to this novice the hoppus foot! He was a generous mentor and guide with a great capacity for friendship.

PETER WOOD, who recently retired, is now visiting friends in the Argentine. He is, he tells us, touring a great deal both north and south of the Tropic of Capricorn and near the Bolivian border in search of wild flowers. He sends his best regards to all his old friends from his days at Park End School in 1946-8 (under Messrs Streets and Edwardson) and at Oaks Moor, Elsham, Burwell and Markshall forests.

NEW TRADA REGIONAL OFFICER FOR SCOTLAND

MR. MICHAEL KNOTT has been appointed Scottish regional officer of the Timber Research and Development Association. Mr. Knott is based at the new TRADA office in the Building Centre of Scotland, 6 Newton Terrace, Glasgow G3 7PF (telephone 041-221 0719).

Mr. Knott served in the Royal Navy during the war and until 1948. He joined TRADA Industrial Department early in 1965 after a varied experience in the timber trade, having been engaged in most of the department's activities, particularly in feasibility studies on the use of computers in the timber trade, an end-use survey of hardwoods, courses on operational management, and consultancy and advisory work.

He is an Associate of the Institute of Wood Science, a Member of the Institute of Purchasing and Supply, and a Fellow of the Institute of Materials Handling.

DUTCH ELM DISEASE SURVEY, 1971

This serious and most urgent survey covering the southern counties of England was recently completed by the staff of the Field Surveys Branch.

But every problem has its lighter moments as the following anecdotes submitted by Forester surveyors testify:-

"I wandered around the farm buildings searching for someone to give me permission to walk through fields to look for elm trees. Having inspected the interior of various barns and machinery bays I eventually found a gentleman who turned out to be the owner of the farm and the adjoining estate. Having explained my business, the owner said that he was "very worried about his elms" and had written to Savile Row for a booklet (I was able to meet this request from my supply of free leaflets). The owner then asked me if I would look at his elms so we climbed into a small truck. I found that I had to share the passenger seat with an amiable dog but one which insisted on claiming its right to at least half of the seat.

"We were off! Along narrow winding lanes at breakneck speed, bumping over fields, through parkland. The experience reminded me of R.L. Stevenson's poem "From a railway carriage":

"Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain."

"Early on in this journey the driver, who was the estate owner, produced a small silver box into which he proceeded to speak. This was done whilst he steered the truck with one hand. I realised that the silver box was a pocket tape recorder. When we reached the park we circled the groups of trees and I pointed out the elms which were affected by disease and suggested what might be done to remedy the situation. The owner immediately recorded instructions such as "cut off branches on three elms in clump near gate."

"At the time I found the experience odd and amusing but on reflection I realised that this gentleman was ahead of most of us. We carry the well thumbed S.O. notebook - his notebook was a tape. Perhaps this is the shape of things to come!"

M.D. Whitlock

"I had to call at a large house to request permission to survey a random strip which fell across their property. There was rather a magnificent flight of marble steps, and behind the massive porticoed entrance could be seen marble figures standing in a palatial hall. The door was opened by a splendid figure in striped trousers and black tails, a genuine "Gentleman's Gentleman". After explaining my business, the conversation went something like this:

"Ah ... elm disease, Sir ... ?"

"Yes, that's right"

"I'll see if Mr. - can see you, Sir. Please step inside"

"Will my gumboots be all right?"

"Ah ... gumboots, Sir ...?" peering incredulously down, "Well, ... perhaps not!"

And I had to remain outside".

M.A. Colley

ONLY 76 SHOPPING DAYS TO CHRISTMAS!

ON 28TH SEPTEMBER, Slebech Forest, South Wales, sold 5 Xmas trees to a local firm. Just how they propose to use them so early isn't known! Nor how they will keep the needles on! "Who'll buy my Christmas trees? All nude - very with it! Come and buy."

Certainly we don't wish to start a "First Cuckoo" type of correspondence - but this must surely be the first sale this year?

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FROM H.Q. AND THE CONSERVANCIES

Headquarters, London

FINAL PAGE TURNED OF
DEAN SCHOOL HISTORY

ON 1ST OCTOBER, 1971, PHILIP GOUGH, last Education Officer of the Dean School, retired after completing 42 years' service with the Forestry Commission. He brought to a close not only an interesting and varied career, but also a long line of Chief Instructors/Education Officers who through their tutelage and leadership have made an appreciable contribution to the development of forestry both in the United Kingdom and overseas. Many stories remain to be told of their various quirks by past staff and students ... but enough of this sentiment, what about Phil?

After leaving the Scarborough High School for Boys in 1929, he began work as a forest apprentice at Allerston Forest under the wing of his brother, Mr.W.(Willie) Gough, who retired from the Commission a few years ago and now lives in Wykeham. From 1931 to 1933 he was a student at the Dean School where he gained the Woodman's Certificate and Forester's Certificate. As a loyal Yorkshireman, it is perhaps fitting that he is remembered in the Dean for his prowess at cricket. In a match against Lydney Grammar School he hit the ball clean out of the ground. (It is said that Phil's bowling received the same treatment!) After leaving the school his first appointment was to the Sample Plot Party and he recounts how in 1934, whilst climbing the Corsican Pine plots in the New Forest, the late Alec Mackenzie passed out but somehow managed to keep a grip on the branches. Phil quickly climbed up and brought him down - fast!

In 1936 he was posted to Thetford Chase as a Research Forester and in 1946 was promoted to the rank of District Officer. In 1949 he joined the staff of Lynford Hall Forester Training School and later, in 1953, was transferred to the Benmore School. Subsequently he took charge of this school and had the unfortunate task of closing the establishment in 1965. The next five years were spent as a Training Officer with the Education and Training Branch at HQ(B). In 1970 he moved to his final appointment as Education Officer in charge of the Dean School, which he closed in September after a final and typical thorough check of all the equipment, books, bedding etc. Phil remains in the unique position of having taught at five of the Forester Training Schools with the added touch that he closed three of them!

His many friends throughout the Commission were anxious that his retirement should be suitably recognised and on 1st October, his final day of service, he was entertained to lunch at Basingstoke by a number of his colleagues. Afterwards Mr. C.D. Begley, Conservator of Forests and a former Chief Education and Training Officer, presented him with an Omega Automatic Watch suitably inscribed, and a gift cheque for his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Gough have now taken up residence at Ross-on-Wye. Their son is a science graduate of Aberdeen University and recently accepted a teaching appointment in Scotland. Their daughter is studying at Bath University of Technology for a degree in Horticulture. And in case it is thought that the Gough family have now severed their connection with the Commission, it is pleasing to report that Phil's younger brother, Guy, is still working at Allerston Forest.

We have received the following letter from Phil Gough:-

"At my recent retirement my many friends in the Forestry Commission subscribed to my presentation - I received a magnificent 'Omega' watch suitably inscribed and my wife received a cheque with which she intends to purchase some crystal.

"It is our intention to thank each one individually but as this will take some time I shall be obliged if you will insert a note of thanks in the next issue of the Slasher.

"I hope to meet many friends during my retirement and look forward to doing so."

North West England

MR. E. J. TUCKER

COLLEAGUES will be sorry to learn of the death of Mr. E.J. Tucker on 14th October, 1971.

He retired in 1966 at the age of 60, having been with the Commission since 1928, when he started at the Dean School. He was in W(S) until 1941 - from there he served in the HTPD, joining NW(E) in 1947 at Sherwood Forest. After a spell at Kinver, Mr. Tucker was posted to Corvedale and eventually retired there, living at Church Stretton.

The funeral took place at Shrewsbury and Messrs. J. Stokoe and D.R. Thomas attended on behalf of the Commission. We all extend our deepest sympathy to his widow.

North East England

SPONSORED WALKS - PICKERING DISTRICT

AS a means of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first plantings in the Pickering

District, and in order to promote public awareness as to just what their forests have to offer, a committee of foresters was formed and local organisations approached with the idea of holding a mass sponsored walk, the proceeds of which were to go to the charities concerned.

Response, in particular from the 'Linen and Woollen Drapers' Cottage Homes Charity', soon indicated that the venture should be justified and, in the event, it was successful enough to warrant the time involved in overseeing the two, rather smaller, repeats that were subsequently requested.

The route was a 15 mile, waymarked forest trail, that had been constructed two years previously and around 350 sponsored walkers completed the course. The majority of these appeared to have been press-ganged and arrived ludicrously ill-equipped to tackle the terrain; kinky boots, sandals, overcoats, suitcases and even a push-chair being encountered. Despite this, however, and aided by some good weather and a commendable spirit of determination, there have been no mishaps and a total of over £1,000 has been raised for the various causes.

Forests are, of course, generally well suited to catering for this type of event and compare very favourably when the dangers inherent in similar 'public road' walks are considered; nevertheless, the beat Forester must bear a responsibility for their safe conduct. But the majority of the District staff have co-operated in performing the various marshalling functions and it is thought that the benefits which accrued in terms of publicity and Press coverage made such efforts well worthwhile.

NEW BRIDGE AT KIELDER

ON TUESDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, a white ribbon was cut to mark the opening of a fine new bridge below Kielder Castle to replace an old timber bowstring girder bridge which was not strong enough to sustain the heavy loads of timber which will shortly cross it en route to the pulp mills.

The numerous onlookers who included Forestry Commission staff, residents of Kielder villages, Forestry Commission workers, photographers, a reporter and local school children, heard Mr. G. Godwin, Conservator, invite Mrs. M. Young to open the new bridge, both as a member of the Kielder Parish Council and as Clerk to the Superintendent of Works.

Because of its location in a high amenity area special pains with the appearance of the structure have been taken by Civil Engineering Branch so that it shall blend with its environment; for this purpose, local dressed stone has been used for the abutments, wing and parapet walls, and the approaches and the bank have been seeded with grass.

East England

THETFORD FOREST - RED DEER

THREE RED DEER HEADS shot by members of the St. Hubert's Club between 1957 and 1959 were entered in the International Hunting Exhibition recently held in Budapest.

Mr. Biggs, one of the shots in 57/59, has reported that each head gained a gold medal.

South East England

CONSERVATOR'S BIRTHDAY DEPARTURE

NOVEMBER THE FIFTH was the last day of service in SE(E) of MR. D. A. MITHEN, recently promoted to the post of Senior Officer for Scotland and Conservator W(S); it was also his birthday. A large crowd of well-wishers gathered in the Verderers Hall at Lyndhurst to hear Chief Forester George Cross, MBE, present Mr. Mithen with a shooting stick and wristwatch as mementos of his time in the Conservancy.

Assistant Conservator Rod Hewitt also made a speech of appreciation, and then Bowman (AFO) had the happy idea of reading out Mr. Mithen's horoscope for the day, which was as follows: "Proceed slowly and things look promising. You will find less opposition and can make plans to be realised before too long. Money prospects excellent."

New Forest

DEATH OF WALTER WATSON

ALL who knew him will be saddened by news of the death of Walter Watson at the age of 66. He retired from his post as Chief Clerk for the New Forest Surveyorship at Lyndhurst in 1969.

He was born in Norwich and was a pilot in the RAF during the last war. He joined the Forestry Commission at Cambridge and moved to Lyndhurst in 1951. He served under three Deputy Surveyors and was much concerned with the administration of the New Forest legislation. He was instrumental in getting the 1964 Act through Parliament and was also involved in drawing up new Byelaws for the Forest.

He was awarded the MBE in 1968 in recognition of his services to the Commission.

He leaves a wife, a son and daughter, and seven grandchildren, to all of whom, on behalf of his friends and colleagues, we offer our deepest sympathy.

New Forest

RETIREMENT OF HEAD KEEPER

GILBERT SMITH

IN the Verderers Hall, Lyndhurst, Mr. Donn Small, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, on behalf of a gathering of friends and colleagues, bade farewell to Gilbert Smith after 50 years service with the Commission.

The New Forest is fortunate that it has a tradition of long and faithful service, and of no family could this more truly be said than the Smith family, whose last serving member has just retired.

Gilbert was a true forester. He was born in the Forest at Holly Hatch Cottage, and at the age of 13 he left school to work for Bill Humby at Roe Cottage. In the early 1920s he was planting trees in Slufsters, and in 1923 his father took over Ashurst beat and the family moved to Church Place Cottage, where he and his brother, Bert Smith, were possibly the last people to plant acorns in the Forest.

He also had something to do with animals at this time: the Forestry Commission in

those days must have been unaware of his true value as they were prepared to lend Gilbert to a certain Mr. Crum-Ewen at Ashurst Lodge, where his job was to milk three cows. This job lasted for nine months, after which he left the Commission to go to the Langley Estate in 1935. However, fortunately for us he decided to return to the Commission in 1939, when he took up the post of Keeper at Bramshaw Wood.

After leaving Bramshaw Cottage Gilbert moved to Shave Green, and on his father's retirement in 1950 he moved to Church Place Cottage and took over Ashurst Beat. In 1968 he was promoted to Head Keeper and moved to Long Beech, where he still lives.

A keen fisherman - he was an expert "tickler" of fish at a very early age - he has for the last 16 years been Honorary Water Bailiff and River Authority Bailiff, and he represents the Brockenhurst Manor Fly Fishing Club. He is also an authority on migratory sea trout and was associated with some television programmes on the subject made by the late Oliver Kite, who also featured his bird table at Church Place. He is an honorary life member of the Brockenhurst and Boldre Fly Fishing Club, in recognition of his work for the Club.

Mr. Donn Small presented Gilbert with a cheque subscribed to by his colleagues, and also a shooting permit for the Forest which excluded, as Mr. Small pointed out, both deer and Deputy Surveyors.

South West England

RETIREMENT OF

DISTRICT OFFICER S. W. ROGERS

FRIENDS and colleagues of Stanley Rogers will be sorry to learn that he had to

retire on medical grounds earlier this year.

Stanley served the Commission for 25 years in North East, East and South West England. He worked hard and conscientiously and did much in his own time to further the interests of forestry with the public. It was sad that he had to retire prematurely.

He was presented with a cheque with which he bought a pair of binoculars. We hope that they will give him much pleasure, and we all join in wishing him a return to better health.

North Scotland

RETIREMENTS -

CHIEF FORESTER A McLEMAN and

HEAD FORESTER J MACLEOD

RECENTLY, Mr. R.A. Innes, Conservator, and District Officers J. Ogilvie and P. Biggin,

met Chief Forester A. McLeman and Head Forester J. MacLeod at the Torlundy District Office and presented them with a wallet of notes on behalf of their colleagues on the occasion of their retirement.

A dinner and social evening was held in the Alexandria Hotel, Fort William, that evening. The company was welcomed by Mr. J. Ogilvie, District Officer, who wished Mr. McLeman and Mr. MacLeod well in their retirement. Mr. McLeman suitably replied. Mrs. Marjorie Mac Dougall paid tributes on behalf of the office staff.

An enjoyable social followed, compered by Mr. D. Grant, Fiunary, during which the local staff at Torlundy presented Mr. McLeman with a painting.

HEAD FORESTER JOHN MACKAY RETIRES

IN the North of Scotland a strange stillness hangs in the corridors of power, for

John MacKay has left the Commission and moved to a croft at Lairg.

Rumour has it that consequent upon the Iron Man's retirement, 50 percent of the office staff are out of work. Another source has mentioned that an official from the Department of Agriculture has visited the Conservancy Office asking for help to deal with the storm that has hit them.

Who was this man John MacKay, well called the Iron Man? His nick-name originated from his defensive tactics while playing for Brora Rangers. Like the ego of the District Officers, opposing forwards were unceremoniously chopped down. Many young officers, having emerged intact but with their minds mesmerized, found the experience gained stood them in good stead when later in their careers they were faced with aggressive accountants and Treasury officials.

John's attitude to forestry took some getting used to. His way was to grow trees and harvest them as simply and economically as possible. He took a power saw to the intricate web of red tape, and office staff left holding the ends viewed John with a mixture of awe and affection.

It was often said, sarcastically, that everyone was out of step but our Jock. However, after a few hours with John one believed that everyone else was indeed out of step. (If you didn't think so, you had to agree for a quiet life).

The proudest moment of John MacKay's career came a year before he retired when he fell asleep while he and his District Officer were working out the budgets.

He was one of the great characters who brought a breath of fresh air into the Service. The Iron Man cannot ever retire, and although he has left the Commission his exploits will gradually take their place among the legendary tales of the Forestry Commission's history.

Good luck, John - may you always find opponents worthy of your scorn.

East Scotland

RETIREMENT OF

MR. JOHN A OGILVIE

JOHN A. OGILVIE, the longest serving industrial employee (in E(S)), retired on

29th October after 49 years' service, having started as a lad of 14 in 1922. Apart from a spell with the Home Grown Timber Production Department during the war, he has remained in E(S) ever since.

Apart from being the first Commission acquisition in East Scotland, Monaghty had a number of acquired woods which provided felling experience before other forests and so Mr. Ogilvie became a noted axeman in the locality and through diligent application and long experience he became a Skilled Forest Worker in the best sense of the word.

In a Compartment which he helped to plant, and later partly to fell and re-plant, he was presented with a Long Service Certificate by Mr. E.G. Richards, Conservator E(S), and with a wristwatch by Forest Worker Mr. R. Adam on behalf of his colleagues. Afterwards Mr. Ogilvie entertained the party at the Forest Office.

RESIGNATION OF

MISS M. RANKIN

MISS M. RANKIN, clerkess at Dunkeld Forest, was presented with a clock at a ceremony to

mark her resignation to be married.

Mary had served the FC for almost 17 years and her excellent work and cheerful outlook were reflected in the large turn-out of her colleagues and friends who attended the ceremony. Chief Forester Stewart made the presentation and passed on the appreciation and good wishes of all staff who had come to know her.

Mobile Mechanic D. Campbell added a nostalgic touch by singing a Gaelic love song. The ceremony ended with Head Forester T. McMillan asking the company to toast the future health and happiness of Mary and her husband.

DEATH OF

MR. W. F. SKENE

in-Charge at Delgaty, E(S).

MR. SKENE, who died on 17th October, retired nearly 3 years ago from the post of Forester-

He was one of that fast disappearing race of foresters who learnt their job the hard way, and he for one learnt it well. He was a hard worker and had no time for those who were not.

Many are the stories told about him, most with more than a grain of truth, such as the time he met his District Officer, miles from the forest office, produced his cash from one pocket, the A 100 from the other, and commented that it was a long time since they had been checked.

When he retired, forestry in the Buchan area lost a real character and is the poorer because of it.

West Scotland

RETIREMENT OF

MR. WILL KEILLER

THIRTY-THREE YEARS after joining the Forestry Commission as a worker, Will Keiller decided to return to an offshoot of his youthful interests in game keeping to assist in producing a Wildlife Centre at Cumbernauld. This move took him full circle through a variety of posts, since he is now working on land on which he was brought up as a boy, his father being head coachman on the estate which then occupied the land.

He started as a forest worker at Carron Valley and worked his way up through the ranks of ganger, foreman, assistant forester, forester to Head Forester at Tighnabruaich. There he not only carried out his duties as a forester in an exemplary and forthright fashion but he also took a prominent part in the local Angling Club which has good reason to be thankful for his efforts.

He leaves behind him two features which will be lasting tributes to his endeavours towards public recreation, viz, the now celebrated picnic place with its glorious views of the Kyles of Bute, east towards the Ayrshire coast and south to Arran, and the wildlife centre where a variety of water birds, plus deer, sheep and hares are to be seen in their natural environment.

At a farewell party his friends in Tighnabruaich and in the Commission presented him with a pair of binoculars and a cheque. To Mrs. Keiller, a present of an Oban glass bowl was made, while mine host of the hotel presented them with a picture of a group of gun dogs, long admired by Will.

Now he is working with the well-known naturalist, David Stephen, producing a wildlife centre for Cumbernauld New Town. The Commission's loss is definitely Cumbernauld's gain.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR

JOE HUNTLY

A large number of Forestry Commission staff joined local mourners at the memorial service to District Officer Joe Huntly in Dunbar Parish Church on Sunday, 19th September.

Mr. George Stewart, previously Conservator W(S), represented the Forestry Commissioners and FC folk, some retired, from as far away as the western seaboard of Argyll, came to pay their respects to a much loved District Officer who will be sorely missed.

In the congregation were many fishermen. Mr. Huntly was tragically drowned helping to free a net for fisherman friends, and the fishing community amongst whom he was brought up was terribly saddened by his death.

North Wales

RETIREMENT OF

MR. KEN MAYHEW

KEN MAYHEW has retired after 43 years' service; many friends and colleagues, past and present, gathered at the Marine Hotel, Aberystwyth, recently to wish him well. Such is the measure of regard in which he is held, that many ex-colleagues emerged from retirement and others travelled long distances, to say goodbye.

The gathering enjoyed a buffet and social evening at which Mr. J.H. James, Conservator, welcomed the guests and, after outlining Ken's career with the Commission, handed over to Mr. F.C. Best, who was Conservator for North Wales from 1947-1965 and who spoke of the great help he had received from Ken during his years of office, ending with hopes that Ken would enjoy as happy a time in retirement as he himself is doing.

Mr. James then presented a cheque for approximately £100 contributed by Ken's well wishers. Mrs. Mayhew was presented with a pair of gold earrings by Miss M.C. Tudor, who worked with Ken for many years before she retired in 1961, and a bouquet, presented by Miss Christine Meredith, the youngest recruit to the office staff.

After thanking everyone, Ken announced that he would be using the cheque to buy new furniture.

Ken joined in 1928 at the office of the Assistant Commissioner E & W in Whitehall. In 1938 he moved to the Division 2, as it was then called, at Shrewsbury as Chief Clerk and Divisional Accountant, and in 1941 was transferred to the same post in No. 2 Division of the HTPD. After a period of service in the Royal Navy he resumed duties with the Commission in 1946, in North Wales, in the post of Chief Clerk, later to be called Administration and Finance Officer. Since then he has served continuously in North Wales, in 1968 resigning his established post and continuing as a dis-established HEO in the same office, until his retirement.

He and Mrs. Mayhew intend to stay in Wales.

DEPARTURE OF

CHIEF FORESTER PADDY HEAVENER

AT a large gathering of well wishers at the Maesgwm Centre, Coed-y-Brenin, who had come to say farewell to Paddy, a number of presentations were made to him, coupled with a splendid barbecue laid on by the wives of the District Forest Officer and Foresters.

A presentation of a wristwatch was made by Mr. J.H. James, Conservator, on behalf of colleagues past and present. Mr. Trevor Lloyd presented him with a pen and pencil set on behalf of the forest staff and Mr. Gwyn Hughes, (D.O), made the presentation of a magnificent hand-carved oak plaque on behalf of the forest supervisory staff. The plaque, which depicts a well-known picnic site, was made and carved by Bob (Herman) Hughes who is a Forest Worker at Coed-y-Brenin. Mrs. Heavener was presented with a pearl necklace.

Mr. Heavener started his career in farming with his parents in Eire but after about 6 years he took an interest in forestry and applied to enter a Forestry Training School. Unfortunately, he was turned down as he was unable to speak Gaelic; he then joined a private estate, eventually becoming Assistant Agent.

At the outbreak of World War II he came over to England with the express idea of joining the 3rd Hussars, but was turned down as forestry was regarded as a reserved

occupation. Undeterred, he obtained a job as a civilian Clerk with the RASC, with the intention of joining up after a few months' clerical duties but, before he could manage this, he was posted to the Commission and told to report to the Forest of Dean for an interview which consisted of being shown a map of what was to be Monmouth Forest and told to recruit labour and start the forest.

After six years at Monmouth, Paddy Heavenner spent a number of years as an Instructor with Education Branch at Northerwood and the Gwydyr Forester Training School. During this period he also spent a year with the Agricultural Show Unit. From Education Branch he transferred to E(E) where he was based in the Chilterns doing private woodland duties, which were later coupled with our own forest management. In 1953 he returned to N(W) as a Head Forester and later Chief Forester i/c Coed-y-Brenin.

It is perhaps indicative of Paddy's character that he has moved to Australia, where he fully intends to sort them out "forest wise". We understand that he has good prospects of obtaining a job in forestry "Down Under".

South Wales

RETIREMENT OF

CHIEF FORESTER F.A.(FRED) SLATTER,
TAIR ONEN

AFTER 25 years' reckonable service with the
FC, Chief Forester 'Fred' Slatter of Tair Onen

retired recently.

Enlisting as a Forest Worker in 1925, Fred later served two years' apprenticeship and was then appointed Foreman. After a further six years with the FC he resigned to take up an appointment with the Birmingham Municipal Authority, rejoining the Commission in 1945. His 25 years in South Wales were spent first at Slebech, and from 1959 at Tair Onen. From 1969 he had been Chief Forester in charge of the Tair Onen complex - taking in both the former forests of Coed Caerdydd and Llantrisant.

A born Nurseryman - so much so that in the '66 reorganisation he turned down promotion to Chief as it would then have meant a move from nursery work - Fred has clearly left his mark on nursery development and techniques, and present well-established and accepted practices owe much to his unique flair and dauntless enthusiasm. Certainly large areas of green forest now beautifying the former desolate parts of the neglected South Wales valleys are living proof of the quality of Fred's seedlings and transplants. And not only in South Wales: it would indeed be interesting to know how many 'baby' trees passed through his hands!

The retirement 'get-together' - attended by Conservancy Officers, the Tair Onen staff and friends and colleagues throughout South Wales - was held at the Bear Hotel, Cowbridge, a local hostelry near the Nursery. Chairing the proceedings, Mr. J.W.L. Zehetmayr, Conservator, recalled some of Fred's earlier exploits and paid tribute to the enthusiasm and zeal with which he tackled nursery work and developments; Mr. Zehetmayr later presented him, on behalf of the South Wales Conservancy staff, with a clock and barometer. During the evening, Mrs. Slatter (much improved in health, we are pleased to say) was presented with an attractive bouquet. The Tair Onen staff made their own presentation of a table lighter to their retiring Chief.

Replying, Mr. Slatter thanked all concerned and said that he was leaving with many treasured memories of his FC service in South Wales; he added that he would not be cut off entirely as he would be settling down at Pencoed, a village in the Vale of Glamorgan only a few miles from the Tair Onen Nursery.

RETIREMENT OF

CHIEF FORESTER R.J. (JACK) JENNINGS

CHIEF FORESTER R.J. (JACK) JENNINGS, of
Crychan Forest, retired on the 29th October.

For many years a regular contributor to the Slasher and other Commission journals, Jack's fame has spread far and wide. Many poets can be conveniently labelled - Romantics, Mystics, etc., etc., but as readers will have gathered, Jack could turn his hand (or rather, his pen) to a wide range of subjects. A squirrel darting across a field on a clear morning certainly has no connections with the new budgetary procedures. But Jack could compose a highly entertaining piece of prose or poetry about both.

First joining the Commission in 1933 as a Forest Worker, Jack later served a two years' apprenticeship at the Dean and then proceeded 'through the ranks' until he became a Chief Forester in October 1966. During his 38 years with the FC, Jack served at Glocaenog, Corris, Dovey, Kerry, Halcyn - and then spent 8 years at the Dean before being transferred to Crychan in 1966.

Mr. Ian S. Watt, the District Forest Officer at Llandovery, writes:

"Crychan and the Commission will not be the same and I am sure that the wildlife will also miss his kind, mothering eye. Who is going to keep the Journal interesting without his poems and stories? It was in the quiet and beauty of nature that Jack got inspiration for his compositions and it was in this sort of setting that he would have liked to have said farewell. However, as it was not very practical to expect buzzards, ravens and polecats to provide suitable refreshments, a group of local colleagues, contractors and rangers met at the Trout Inn, Beulah, on Monday evening, 27th September, to present Jack with a cheque from well-wishers. It so happens that Jack has been looking for a book-case for his new house and when he finds the one he likes, he is to have a small engraved plaque put on to remind him of the occasion. We are quite sure that Jack, in spite of his forebodings, had a most enjoyable evening: certainly it did not affect his wit, for his reply - after the presentation was made - was full of wit and reminiscences. Everybody wishes Jack good health and a long, active life because he will certainly not retire in the accepted sense. We shall possibly see and hear more of "R.J.Jennings" if we keep up with the Commission publications".

Editor's note: We shall be as grateful to Jack Jennings in the future as we have always been in the past. His latest piece follows:-

"I will take this opportunity of thanking all the field and office staff in the Commission who I have worked with over the whole of my career for their good will and for making my job such a pleasant one. I was fortunate in that over the years I came into contact with some very distinguished folk and it is nice to have known them and to have heard their opinions and criticisms.

"For a number of years I was the forester grades Whitley rep., so I have some memories of Savile Row, too, when H.A. Turner, Sir A.H.G. and, amongst others, Bill Wilbraham held the floor.

"Of course our duties and jobs have changed out of all recognition since I came out of the Forestry School and what is demanded of men in my shoes nowadays bears no relation whatsoever to what we were trained for. I have no complaints at all, my work was varied and interesting and, in retrospect, most of the time it was good. I am retiring to Herefordshire, a county that I have become familiar with during my time in Wales and the West of England. I can see Haugh Woods from my bedroom, which is a part of a Commission unit - Hereford Forest a mere mile or so away.

"I often go and see friends at the different forests that I have been working at and they are many ... Glocaenog ... Dovey, ... Kerry ... Cannock ... Dean ... I have eaten walnuts from a tree that I planted in Kennington village in 1928; I have had my tea in the shade of Douglas firs that I planted in the Dean in 1934 and some of them are so large at breast height that I cannot get my arms around them.

"A lot of people criticise the Commission and when they complain in my company I ask them to name me one other Government Department that can show so much for the money that they have spent. They have no answer to that one.

"I have moved to a new and permanent address and should you by chance have any other correspondence to send to me then perhaps you would be kind enough to send it to me at:

Stone Lea,
Rectory Road,
Hampton Bishop,
Hereford

Again many thanks"

DEATH OF MR. W. D. MILSOM

ON Wednesday, 29th September, the little Vale of Glamorgan Church of Welsh St. Donats, near Cowbridge, was filled to overflowing for the final tribute to a Forester who sprang from its soil and who left his mark upon its skyline.

Wilfred Milson, forester for 23 years at Wales's oldest State Forest, Llantrisant, was laid to rest in the churchyard that nestles in this verdant corner of Wales beneath the backdrop of his beloved Garth Maelwg woods. Aged 59 and - tragically - within a few months of his retirement, Wilfred Milsom's sudden passing at East Glamorgan Hospital was a shock to all his colleagues in South Wales. Those at the funeral service noted how the company present reflected his life's work and his popularity. His family and friends were there; the Forestry Commission was represented by the Senior Officer (Wales), Mr. J.W.L. Zehetmayr, Mr. A.D. Miller, his District Officer, the Conservancy Office staff and his neighbouring foresters; the farmers who were his near neighbours - and his own forest workers who paid their final tribute as bearers.

Beginning his career as Forest Worker in January 1936, Wilfred Milsom attended Parkend School and served as a Ganger at Crychan (1938), Rheola (1939) and Giedd. His first location as Foreman was at Michaelston (1940), then at St. Gwynno (1943), Crychan (1944) and returning to Michaelston in 1947. In July 1948 he began his two decades as Forester at Llantrisant where he remained until that forest was lately amalgamated with Tair Onen, whereupon he joined the Tair Onen staff. From his secluded home at Ty Maelwg he had the unique satisfaction of seeing his son David and his daughter Rosemary graduating - receiving their Degrees in a joint ceremony. To them and to his widow came many tributes in their sudden bereavement.

A lover of camping, a popular musician and, latterly, a painter of no mean repute, Wilfred Milson's lasting memorial will always be the noble sweep of his Llantrisant Forest crowning Mynydd Garth Maelwg overlooking his native Vale of Glamorgan.

MR. DANNY MORGAN (Chief Forester (Ret'd) Cymer Forest) writes:-

Readers of the Slasher, particularly those in S(W), or those who have connections with the Conservancy, may be interested in the following coincidence that occurred many thousands of miles from home, as related to me by my daughter, Janet Hopkin (nee Morgan), when on a world tour with the Welsh Women's Hockey Team.

The World Tournament was held in New Zealand, but among the many other countries they visited were: Ceylon, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada and America.

They stayed in Fiji for about a week where they played (and won) three matches. In between playing and training, they were given V.I.P. treatment, being taken out to dinners and dances and several sightseeing tours.

One day they were taken by speedboat to a very small island some miles off the mainland, an island where only Europeans and the better off Fijians occasionally go for relaxation.

After playing in different climes and confusing times, relaxation was what the team needed and on this, almost uninhabited island, they found it - lazing on the balmy beach, clad in the briefest of brief bikinis, perhaps even less - enjoying the sun, the sand and the soft sea breezes.

About mid-afternoon the peace was broken by the sound of a motorboat as it throttled down and beached quite near them. From the boat stepped a sun-tanned gangly man, followed by his wife and family, complete with picnic hamper, beach ball and fishing rods. The man surveyed this bunch of beauties in bikinis for some minutes, then walked up to them. He singled out Janet and shook hands with her, saying as he did so, "I know you and I know your father, Danny Morgan of Cymer Forest, very well". When she came to her senses, as if from a dream, Janet asked him who he was and where had they met? "My name is Alan Oram. I met you several years ago at a Venison Barbecue and Barn Dance at Cymer", he replied.

After formal introductions all round, the Orams joined the girls and spent the remainder of a very pleasant afternoon with them.

Mr. Oram wished to be remembered to all his friends and colleagues in S(W) Conservancy, and this wish I pass on at second hand, through the medium of the Slasher.

FORESTRY COMMISSION GOLFING SOCIETY THE SUTHERLAND CUP, 1971

The 1971 18 Hole stroke (Handicap) Competition for the Sutherland Cup was organised by North and South Wales Conservancies and was held over the Carmarthen Golf Club's course at Rhydymarchog, Carmarthen, on Thursday, 23rd September.

Of the 13 contestants only 5 completed the full round.

Just as the ultimate winner, Dick Stumbles, was tapping in his final putt on the 18th green for a net 74, the 5-week dry spell in Wales ended. Spots of rain developed rapidly into a shower. By the time Dick and his partner reached the Club-house it was a downpour - monsoonlike in intensity! A 3-ball game had followed Dick and his partner off the first tee. They gamely battled through the last 2 holes in a deluge. The runner-up, Islwyn Oliver (net 77) and the third prizewinner, Brian Maxwell (net 78) are therefore to be complimented on their respective scores as, too, are J.H.James, Conservator N(W), and J.J.Lee, the only other competitors to finish the round. However, the soaking (who said "It never rains on a golf course?") only served to make the amenities of the 19th more enjoyable!

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