

The ELASHER

FORESTRY
COMMISSION
News & Views

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BIG DAY FOR KIELDER

FOREST MUSEUM OPENS IN CASTLE

Lonely Kielder Castle was "in the news" when TV and radio men joined guests at the opening of a fine forest museum and attractive tearoom on March 29.

This impressive addition to our recreational facilities makes the Castle, built in 1775 by the Duke of Northumberland as a shooting lodge, the centre of public interest in North Tyne Forest area.

The museum was opened by Miss K Morrison-Bell, a County Alderman and Northumberland National Park Committee Chairman. She began by saying she and the Commission had "not always seen eye to eye" but went on to say very nice things about us indeed.

"Your job is to protect trees, ours to protect the National Park," she declared. But she liked to think her presence at the ceremony "is a demonstration of our mutual goodwill and our desire to co-operate in the future for the good of all concerned --- farmers, foresters and the general public."

Miss Morrison-Bell paid tribute to the "very great contribution members of the Commission of all ranks, from forest worker to district officer, have made to this community, in this valley, over the years."

She added that the Commission and National Park Committee were "happily completely united in our duty to promote the enjoyment of the general public in the countryside." In this field the Commission had a "distinguished record" and were "senior partners." The museum would contribute enormously to all visits to Kielder in future.

Mr G E Godwin, the Conservator, said recreation was very much to the fore of Commission activities. "People who work here can be proud of Kielder Forest.

"This venture was something thought of by the staff of Kielder. The museum is the fruit of the imagination and keenness of the local staff who have done this using very slender means."

"Unique" Art Form

The museum is housed in three rooms of the Castle, which also acts as administrative offices and Border fire protection centre. Extensive photographic displays tell the forest story --- planting and felling, construction of roads and bridges, research, fire protection and education and training of staff.

Exhibits include a fascinating - and, so say Kielder, unique - art form: chainsaw carvings. For wild life enthusiasts prize exhibit must be a magnificent stuffed eagle owl, very rare, standing almost two feet high with a four-foot wingspan, shot locally in the 1900's.

In addition, there is a badger set and a show of small mounted mammals such as stoat, weasel and red squirrel. Also on display are stuffed wild fowl such as goosander and widgeon and birds of prey, buzzard and harrier.

Acting Chief Forester William Bartholomew told the gathering that it was not so much a museum, which to him meant old things, but an exhibition of forestry up-to-date.

The tearoom, fitted out in period style and run by the wife of Head Forester Wilfred Howell, is sure to be a focal point.

Kielder Castle is now the centre of the area's recreational provisions. Access has been improved recently by the new Kielder Castle Bridge over the Tyne. A road, to be completed shortly, will by-pass the village and link up with the bridge.

Facilities near the Castle include a picnic site, forest trail and adventure playground. Just completed on the bank of Kielder Burn, one-and-a-half miles from the Castle, is an interesting wild life observation hut: 22 feet long, it is hexagonally-shaped to offer up to 30 people all-round views of water and game birds and deer.

Great sorrow was expressed at the opening ceremony that it had not been seen by Chief Forester Charlie Simpson, whose death is recorded in our obituary column, and whose life was devoted to North Tyne Valley.

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CONGRATULATIONS

NEW CHIEF ENGINEER

The Commissioners have decided that MR E F GRANFIELD will succeed Mr E H Macmillen, who retires as Chief Engineer in June.

WORK STUDY GRADUATION

After more than three years' concentrated study, GEOFFREY BLAND-FLAGG, a Forester with Southern Region Work Study Team, Brockenhurst, Hants, has become first member of the Work Study Branch to qualify for graduate membership of the Institute of Work Study Practitioners.

MILLIONAIRES!

On first working day of 1972, E(E) total cash receipts for the current Financial Year zoomed past the £1 million mark. By January 14 receipts for produce sales alone reached the magic million.

In spite of a nasty knock from the miners' strike, E(E) are still confident that the final total cash receipts figure for the year will top £1 $\frac{1}{4}$ million, of which produce sales will account for some £1,150,000.

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SAFETY

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WEARING!

Two items stress the vital need for safety boots.

Mr F T Cowperthwaite, Superintendent of Works S(S), reports that in the past men

engaged in quarrying had frequent foot injuries from falling stones and stepping on sharp rocks. Due directly to safety boots, no accidents have occurred among his men in the last two years.

In draining, too, these boots are proving their worth. Mr G W MacDonald, forest worker in Craik, was rutting the side of a drain when his spade slipped, cutting into the rubber toe-cap of his safety boot. The metal lining prevented him from losing his toes.

DON'T BE A FALL GUY

Advice from Ministry of Agriculture

Below are extracts from an article by Mr J C Weeks, MAFF Chief Safety Inspector. His advice is aimed at farmers but may be useful to some of us:-

Every year hundreds of farmers and farm workers are injured by falls. Many suffer only minor injuries, but others are seriously handicapped for life and a number are killed. It is probable that more time is lost to agriculture each year as a direct result of falls than from any other cause.

A study of accident reports clearly shows that most of these falls could be avoided if certain elementary precautions were taken.

This is the normal time for maintenance and repair jobs left over from busy seasonal work. For instance, roofs and gutters may require attention. Before tackling this work make sure you have the right equipment, used correctly. Remember roofs are not designed to walk on, so always use roof ladders and crawling boards. A useful additional precaution is a secure lifeline long enough for freedom of action but short enough to prevent falling from the roof.

Fragile roofs, such as those of asbestos-cement sheets, are brittle and dangerous to step on. Too many people have ignored this, fallen through and sometimes died. A warning notice should always be displayed on buildings with these roofs.

When dismounting tractors or machines, always use the step provided - never jump. Many people have sprained or broken an ankle or worse through landing on a hidden obstruction or simply uneven ground. When getting down from a load, get someone to hold a ladder for you.

Never ride on the drawbar of a trailer or any tractor-drawn machine. This suicidal practice causes numbers of deaths every year. If you fall, the driver can't stop in time and you will have little chance of avoiding the trailer wheels. If there is no safe and secure place to sit, don't ride at all.

Finally, check your footwear. Well-worn soles provide no grip against falling, especially on smooth, wet concrete and other slippery surfaces.

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OBITUARIES

SIR FREDERICK BAWDEN

Sir Frederick Bawden, Director of Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts, and Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Forest Research, has died aged 63.

Sir Frederick was one of Britain's most distinguished plant pathologists with a worldwide knowledge of plant diseases, especially virus diseases.

He was appointed Head of the Plant Pathology Department at Rothamsted in 1940,

Deputy Director in 1950 and Director in 1958. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1949, he became Treasurer in 1968. He was awarded the Research Medal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1965 and received the accolade in 1967.

The Forestry Commissioners invited him to join the Advisory Committee on Forest Research in 1960 and appointed him Chairman in 1964; he was recently reappointed to a further term of office (1972-1975). The Commission was represented at a memorial service by Mr G G Stewart, Commissioner for Forest and Estate Management, Mr G D Holmes, Director Research, and Mr G H Bowers, A & FO Research Division and Advisory Committee secretary.

CHIEF FORESTER C N SIMPSON

Following a long and difficult illness, Charlie Simpson, Chief Forester, North Kielder NE(E) died at the age of 52.

Returning from war-time service with the Royal Engineers, Charlie was for many years concerned with the Smales beat of Kielder. Promoted Head Forester in 1962 he took charge of Kielder South. When the Border Production Unit was formed Charlie was its Head Forester and was promoted Chief Forester in 1965. Having served its purpose and quickly expanded harvesting activities, the Production Unit was disbanded and Charlie became Chief Forester at North Kielder - a post he held until death.

But Charlie was much more than a successful forester. He devoted his life to the North Tyne Valley, both its people and its forest. Said a colleague: "We shall remember him proudly as school manager, councillor, able colleague and, above all, good friend. The valley is diminished by his death. Few men could have played a better part in its growth and development."

MR J TAIT

The Tyne Valley has lost Jimmy Tait, who spent his whole Commission career in The Border area.

Jimmy, who died suddenly, started as a forest worker at Kershope in 1931. He moved to Kielder and rose to Forester. After 12 years in Whickhope Forest he returned to Kielder and retired in 1969 as Head Forester, Plashetts Beat.

Said a colleague: "He will be remembered for his dedication to forestry. Often spending much of his spare time in his forest, Jimmy was conscientious to a degree. It was significant that after his retirement he chose to stay in the North Tyne Valley close to the forests he knew so well."

MR E J JONES

Forester E J Jones of Tywi, S(W), has died suddenly, aged 56. He served the Commission 37 years, mostly at Brechfa, Penllergaer, Teifi and Tywi. A born countryman, he was keenly interested in all aspects of amenity and for a number of years had taken an interest in the huge Llyn Brianne dam project in Tywi valley.

His brother Gwilym, who worked for the Commission as a roads foreman, died some three years ago. But the family's connection with the Commission continues - Forester Jones's son is with the civil engineering team at Llandovery.

A private funeral service was held at Aberduar Chapel. The Conservancy office was represented by Mr J R Hampson, Assistant Conservator.

MR E C SANDERS

After an eight-month illness, the death has occurred of Mr E C "Sandy" Sanders, who since joining the Commission in 1946 had been Foreman Mechanic at Conservancy office. There are few in South Wales who have not, at some time or other, benefited from his wealth of experience of vehicles and machinery.

Aged 57, he enjoyed fairly good health until June 1970 when admitted to a Cardiff hospital with a serious illness. He retired on medical grounds in October 1970.

MR O L B HALL

The death has occurred, in retirement, of Mr O L B Hall, who was a Clerical Officer in Headquarters, London, from September 1957 to August 1971.

J Q WILLIAMSON

Further echoes of this late colleague reach us. The following is from the Santiago paper "El Mercurio":-

"At the funeral of Mr John Q Williamson, International Director of PNUD, D Jaime Tohá expressed the following sentiments:-

"For the first time Chilean foresters have the sad task of saying goodbye forever to one of our own.

"John Q Williamson, a Scot by birth, achieved high office in the Forest Administration of Great Britain due to his great professional and human qualities.

"One day in 1966 we had the good fortune of having him in Chile for the first time. We were soon aware that his gifts made him a man without equal, with a fresh, kind and youthful spirit. A modern crusader, he hoped to achieve in a year that which had not been achieved in the field of forestry in decades. On another day he returned to his country with the same humility with which he had arrived. Undefeated, but deeply saddened.

"With the start of the Forestry Development Programme of PNUD we were delighted to have him with us once again. He arrived last year doubly enthusiastic and happy to be once again in the land he so much loved and understood.

"He was aware of his grave illness and knew the consequences of the efforts involved in assuming his responsibilities. Nevertheless, he continued working until the last two hours of his life, in the hope of seeing this land converted into the forestry country he always dreamed of.

"When a man gives his life in pursuit of an ideal, and this man comes from a far-off land, he provides a lesson which none of us can forget. Above all, for those of us who as young Chileans often feel burdened by difficulties. On these occasions John, we shall have in our minds your smile, your optimism, and your eternal faith in our country.

"We ask your wife, your family, and FAO, to receive the heartfelt homage and eternal recognition of the Government of Chile through the Forestry Committee, the National Forestry Corporation and the Forestry Institute.

"Receive in the same manner the heartfelt farewell of all your Chilean friends."

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COMMISSION ON TELEVISION

The Commission has helped the BBC in the production of a series consisting of a personal exploration of the countryside by Dr David Bellamy of Durham University.

The programmes in which we have been concerned are: "Deeper in the Mire" to be televised on April 23 and filmed at Rothbury Forest, Northumberland; and "You Can't See the Wood" (May 7), shot in Thetford Chase.

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DUTCH ELM DISEASE

ARMY GOES TO WAR

The Defence Ministry have joined the battle against Dutch elm disease. They are very conscious of the detrimental effect a large-scale infestation could have on the amenities of Salisbury Plain and surrounding areas, particularly the Avon Valley from Durrington to Upavon.

A severity assessment survey was carried out at the end of last summer with the aim of controlling the spread of the disease as swiftly as possible. Diseased elms have been felled and destroyed; others were marked for review this spring. Plans are in hand to replant at selected places.

And in order that the lessons learned could be given maximum publicity within the Department, a course was arranged for lands and technical officers of the Ministry at the Defence Land Agent's office at Durrington.

Organised by Mr Jim Wilkinson, an MOD Lands Officer, and Mr Brian Painter, Head Forester, both of the Land Agent's Staff, it was attended by officers from Brecon, Oxford, Aldershot, Fareham and London, and DOE officers from Bristol, Bulford and Colerne. There were demonstrations of affected timber and the scolytus beetles and their larvae. Among slides shown was the Forestry Commission teaching series.

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APPEAL FROM HUNGARY

Dr F Beldi, Vice-Rector of the University for Forestry and Timber Industry, Spron, Hungary, has sent us an appeal on behalf of the 16-year-old daughter of his best friend.

The girl is studying English and would like to stay with a family in England this summer. Dr Beldi, who visited England in 1965 on a study tour and was a guest of the Commission, suggests the best scheme would be for her to visit a family who have a daughter of their own; this girl could then pay an exchange visit to Hungary next year.

Offers, please, to Information Branch, HQ(L).

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THAT CRI DE COEUR

In the last issue of 'Slasher' Forester Gordon Griffiths, Field Surveys Branch, Brechfa S(W), had a footwear dilemma. Boots or wellingtons? Or preferably symmetrical feet so he could change both items of footwear around at will.

His problem has provoked the following letters:-

"I appreciate the 'cri de coeur' of Forester Gordon Griffiths, having done a 6 weeks' survey in the Highlands last summer. The solution I came up with was to wear snow gaiters over a pair of well dubbed hiking boots.

While this combination is not 100 per cent waterproof, by not hanging about to admire the scenery I was able to cross fairly wide streams in relative dryness. My gaiters are made by Dunlop in heavy duty nylon and have Velcro side fastenings, thus doing away with troublesome zips.

In the unlikely event of dry ground or hot weather the gaiters can be removed easily, although this is not advised as they perform the very valuable function of denying clegs and midges access to one's legs.

I hope this proves useful to Forester Griffiths, who need not now contemplate a foot transplant."

Keith Wilson, DO II
Northampton

"Forester Gordon Griffiths's problem with footwear brings to mind the Commission acquisition of a farmhouse in the Vale of Clwyd in the late 1940's. I had the doubtful pleasure of tidying up following the previous tenants' occupation for a half century.

The hired man's room over the scullery yielded a dilapidated travelling trunk stuffed with Victorian clothing, among which was a pair of expensively made men's boots with elastic sides. They were remarkable and unique in that they were not shaped for either left or right foot; each boot fitted either foot quite comfortably.

I learned from a girl there that they were her grandfather's 'Sunday Straights', constructed on a special last by the local cobbler. Both boots were precisely the same and could be worn on alternate feet on alternate visits to chapel, funerals - presumably to ensure even wear of the soles and save on repair.

I sent them to the National Museum of Wales who probably have them in store.

So you don't have to have identical feet to acquire identical boots ... just nip into Cardiff and ask the curator for a pair of Sunday Straights!"

Jack Jennings
Hereford

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ON CAMERA

Mr Alexander Lauritis, a leading civil engineering assistant, South Wales, hit the headlines recently. The following are extracts from a South Wales Echo story:-

"A Caerphilly man has invented a camera which could revolutionise panoramic photography. But so far he cannot find anyone interested in manufacturing it.

The invention has solved the weakness that has always been the problem with panoramic cameras (the type used to take those long photographs).

Now, Mr Alexander Lauritis, aged 61, of Sir Stafford Close, Caerphilly, has devised and built a camera which can be tilted to take panoramic pictures from virtually any angle and without any distortion.

'It has taken me nearly 10 years to perfect this camera', said Mr Lauritis. 'I have written to major photographic companies all over the world, but while they acknowledge my achievement they will not take advantage of it. It is very disappointing'.

Mr Lauritis, a civil engineering assistant with the Forestry Commission, said: 'It would be an enormous asset in surveying of any kind - undistorted photographs of up to 360 degrees of buildings or land would be useful for many reasons both in industry and central and local government.

'I would think, too, that it would be an ideal camera for the Americans to use on the moon!..

Mr Lauritis is a Latvian who came to Britain with his wife and many others from their country in 1947 as displaced persons. The Germans had occupied their homeland in 1942 and Mr Lauritis was one of thousands marched off to work in the Fatherland's huge industrial centres.

After Germany's defeat it was the Russians who took over their home country, and Mr and Mrs Lauritis decided they would make Britain their home. Eventually Mr Lauritis found a job with the Forestry Commission and the couple have been living in South Wales since 1949.

Photography has been his hobby since he was a boy, and apart from having to leave relatives and friends in Latvia, Mr Lauritis left behind a laboratory full of photographic equipment - much of which he had built himself.

A spokesman for Kodak Ltd's product services department said that although they were interested in Mr Lauritis's technical achievement it was not worth developing.

'He must realise the camera is of extremely limited application and I would not think it is a marketable proposition!', he said.

A member of our own photographic staff said: 'It is a very clever and very interesting camera. It is ingenious and it really does produce the results he claims, with very high quality.

'It is a specialist camera for a specialist job; it may be that you could sell only one in the whole of Wales.

'For a firm to break even producing the camera, it would have to price the special panoramic camera out of the market!.."

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SHIPWRECKED ON SPADEADAM

Perhaps tractor driver Ted Armstrong knows now how a captain feels when he abandons ship and watches his pride and joy sink without trace.

Mr Armstrong was digging a drainage ditch in Spadeadam Forest, NW(E), when his eight-ton tractor began to sink. He cast off and his "ship" gradually disappeared completely beneath waves of glutinous peat bog mud.

It took much time and effort plus three heavy vehicles to "salvage the wreck" and nearly as long to clean it. But, to continue in naval parlance, it's now "back in commission."

Spadeadam is well known for bogs and this type of thing has happened several times before --- and in Kielder, too. But this is the deepest ever "sinking."

According to a Conservancy recollection, frogmen were used just after the war to attach a line to one sunken tractor!

Perhaps there's a U-boat under all that mud ...

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POETS' CORNER

Around 1930 the first Dutch elm disease outbreak inspired a poetess. Our thanks to Publications Officer H L Edlin for unearthing the result:-

AN ELEGY ON ELMS

OH, well-aday for you, our quiet friends!
If you should perish, what should make amends?
England and Elms - the two words run together
Like sun and happy thoughts in summer weather,
When one without the other cannot be.

What child of England, driven to foreign realms,
Brooding on home, but pictures English elms
In the green meadows, or along the lane
The homeward path he yearns to tread again?
Or sees their branches 'gainst the winter sky
Snow-laden, woven in delicate tracery?

Beeches are noble ladies, oaks are kings,
Birches are fairies with green silken wings,
Alders are wise and sad, and pollard willows
Are gnomes and sprites among the misty shadows
Threatening us thro' the mists the river sends:-
But oh! the elms, the elms are all our friends!-
As dear to us as to the kine who browse
In their cool shade or munch their lowest boughs.

Oh, stealthily it swept across the seas
And crept along the land, that dark disease,
And on our trees it laid its withering hand:-
And now, where'er you go throughout the land,
You find a tree with branches sickly yellow
And one that should have been its flourishing fellow
Thick with ten thousand leaves, all green and quick,-
It points to heaven a leafless, lifeless stick.

Strangers have come from many a foreign shore
And some who claim to have lived with us before,
And to our landscape only have been lost
Through long continuance of untimely frost.
Hemlocks and thuyas and the cypresses
In every garden plot they take their ease
And o'er the woodlands, high and ever higher
The Noah's Ark tree* points its growing spire:-
And they are welcome - these new foreign trees,-
But not the best, and not the host of these
Could they our land with verdure overwhelm
Would comfort us for our familiar elm.

If elms should perish, what should greet the spring
 With crimson clouds on sunny evening?
 What trees at Hallowe'en would light the land?
 Oh, not as trees, as very saints they stand
 Shining in glory like the holy ones
 With raiment borrowed from the setting suns!
 But now the wind, whirling the leaves around
 Has laid the lovely garment on the ground.

If elms should perish quite from shore to shore
 England would be the land we know no more.

A RUTH FRY

* Lombardy poplar

Now two little poems reproduced from "Everyweek," a children's paper. They were sent to 'Slasher' by G N Berry, Work Study, Inverness; his daughter found them:-

THE OAK TREE

Alone on a hill an oak tree stands,
 Its branches reaching high,
 Its leaves together in clust'ring bands,
 Black against the sky.
 Last night an awful storm arose,
 It tore and rent the skies,
 The oak tree gave a creak and groan,
 Now in a ditch it lies.

JANET STEPHENSON
 Pendower Junior School,
 Newcastle

MACHINES

Machines to saw up timber,
 Machines to pick up trees,
 Machines to smash the forest
 The smell,
 The fumes,
 The echo,
 Noises ringing in my ears.
 Machines, yellow in colour,
 Move through mud
 Like it was not there,
 Dragging their prey behind them.

GRAHAM PELL
 Ecclesfield Comprehensive,
 near Sheffield

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MORE THAN A TREE --- A TREAT!

If a tree is in the way it may be cut down but a more positive attitude is found near East Claydon, Bucks. A roadside tree is encircled by a seat protected by a thatched roof built around the protruding branches. Better than cutting them off, --- Letter in Daily Telegraph. I suppose you could call this combination of tree and seat a treat! - - 'Slasher' Editor.

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NEWS FROM THE CONSERVANCIES

North West England

700-YEAR TRADITION

A replacement Cank Thorn, planted ceremonially on Cannock Chase, serves a new twin role. It marks the boundary between Staffordshire County Council and Forestry Commission land and symbolises a new spirit of co-operation between the two biggest Chase landowners.

In the past 700 years there have been several Cank Thorns at Broadhurst Green marking the meeting point of the old Cannock, Rugeley and Penkridge Manor boundaries.

It was all thanks to the efforts of Forester W H S Tyler, who took the cutting, rooted and nursed it, and Charles Venables, a member of our RAC who was the driving force behind this ceremonial planting as a joint effort.

The actual planting was done by Councillor Harry Walton assisted by Chief Forester C Lewis of Cannock Forest.

In a tradition dating back to 1671, Mrs Sheila Walton, wife of the Vicar of Brocton, read a "gospell at the thorne" - a psalm.

RETIREMENT

MR C J COTTRELL, Superintendent of Works, Mortimer, has retired after 24 years. At a buffet supper in the Compasses Hotel, Wigmore, a large gathering saw Mr Harold Potts, Road Foreman, present him with a pair of binoculars on behalf of local civil and mechanical engineering staff, and Mr C S Allen, Conservancy Engineer, give him an inscribed pewter tankard from Conservancy colleagues.

AND RETIREMENT

MR J CLARK, Superintendent of Works, Thornthwaite, has retired after 25 years' service in the Lake District. At a buffet supper in the cosy glow of power-cut candles in Ravenstone Hotel, Bassenthwaite, Mr J S R Chard, Conservator, presented him with a portable radio on behalf of many friends.

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East England

RETIREMENT OF NORTHANTS

STALWART

ALEX HARKER has retired as Head Forester, Salcey, after a working lifetime in Northamptonshire. He started as a forest worker in 1934 and in 1949, as a foreman, suddenly found himself in sole charge of Apethorpe Forest (now part of Rockingham) due to the illness of his forester. There he remained until taking over Salcey in 1969.

Thirty people came from as far afield as Thetford for a farewell dinner at Northampton's Westone Hotel. Head Forester Ted Acott presented an inscribed tankard and oak coffee table and District Officer Norman Munro praised Alex as a cheerful and willing colleague. He had seen Rockingham, as one forest, break into four forests, and amalgamate into one again. Alex and his wife are spending retirement in a bungalow at Sheringham, Norfolk.

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South West England

PETER NEWMAN'S DEPARTURE

A party at Dartmoor's Highwayman Inn marked the departure from the Commission of Peter Newman, foreman mechanic at Exeter Repair Bay. Peter, who has worked for the Commission since 1963, will not be severing connections with forestry entirely (if you'll forgive the pun) --- he's now working for a chainsaw firm. Colleagues presented him with a briefcase and cheque.

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Research

DON'T FEAR THE UNKNOWN

A message from Northern Research Station:
"Colleagues who fear the unknown of 1975 take comfort in the knowledge that many strangers to Scotland and the Lothians have settled very happily in a short time and have found social life, as well as work, very agreeable."

The cheerful note is contained in a report of the second major event of the sports and social club of the Northern Research Station. One hundred and twenty members and guests dined and danced at the Navaar Hotel, Penicuik. First event was a children's party at the Station last December. Our correspondent adds: "Clearly the staff of NRS mean to enjoy the good pleasures of life in their very agreeable rural environment --- and share their enjoyment with others."

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