

# The ELASHER

FORESTRY  
COMMISSION  
News & Views

Issued by  
INFORMATION  
OFFICER

No 274

July/August/September 1972

## PRESSING HOME OUR POINT OF VIEW

Following the recent Government Review of Forestry Policy, with its emphasis on recreation and amenity, the Commission achieved timely publicity from three events which all underlined this aspect of our activities.

Felling of conifer "nurses" to reveal a beech forest at Friston, Sussex; opening of Grizedale's new information centre; and a "forestry in the landscape" seminar conducted by Miss Sylvia Crowe in West Scotland: all served to remind the press, and through them the public, that amenity in our forests is by no means a new idea.

### Friston Press Tour (August 16)

About 30 journalists attended a very successful press tour, the climax of which was the actual felling of conifer "nurses" to transform what appeared to be a pine forest into a beech wood. The press were told that the forest was planted in the 1920's, and now the beeches were maturing the conifers were being cleared at a rate of 100 acres a year. In 12 to 15 years' time Friston would be almost 2,000 acres of mainly beech.

Resulting publicity was largely favourable, producing headlines like "The beeches of Friston are an answer to the critics" and "Trees get chop and the aim is good". The Times drew attention to criticism of the Commission voiced in its columns by Richard Crossman a day before: "As if to discredit the complaint by Mr Richard Crossman MP, the former Labour Minister, on behalf of the Ramblers' Association, that the countryside is being ruined by too many coniferous woodlands, the Forestry Commission showed here one of its largest developments of broadleaves."

"The Friston Forest is only one of a number of such developments emerging in the South of England by this particular method of silviculture... Commercial considerations weighed at the time of planting, but over the past few years the amenity value of woodlands has become important."



A leader in the Brighton Evening Argus headed "A tree or two in the year 2050" talked of the "magnificent bequest from the Forestry Commission to the children of the future... At a time when our natural resources are being consumed at an alarming rate, and our links with the past are being rapidly severed in the mad race for bigger profits, it is reassuring that someone, somewhere, is taking the 21st century into account... By creating an area of great natural beauty for the future instead of destroying for short term gain, it (the FC) is setting a shining example to us all."

Of course, it wasn't roses all the way. The London Evening News: "Down came the marching teutonic ranks of the Scots pine, caucasian pine and larch, which have cast a cheerless gloom on many a walk behind the Seven Sisters cliffs... the brooding sunless 2,000-acre blot on the Southdown landscape - a place of spiders, dead pine needles and the ghosts of the brothers Grimm!!" Teutonic Scots pine? caucasian pine?

But the loudest groan of all was caused surely by the sub-editor who dreamed up the headline "Once more into the beech!!"

#### Grizedale Information Centre - Press Preview (September 5)

Lord Taylor, the Chairman, addressed members of the press and later answered their questions at a preview of the new Information Centre at Grizedale. Much of the Chairman's statement was later published, particularly his forceful remarks on criticism of conifers.

The Guardian quoted Lord Taylor as saying that mature conifer forests had a beauty of their own, and people could walk, without fear of traffic, on the Commission's 9,500 miles of forest roads, cleared to make timber extraction possible. The Times led by saying the Commission was aiming "to convert the man in the car, and the public generally, to the idea that forests are not sterile acres of regimented conifers, and that it would be rewarding to people to use their feet and discover what is actually stirring among the trees."

Newsmen toured the new information centre, designed to complement the already popular Wildlife Museum, and, for photographers, a Spanish harpist, star of a special gala performance in the "Theatre in the Forest", posed by a forest stream! The resulting photo coverage proved the value of a pretty girl on hand to help the publicity along.

#### Forestry in the Landscape Seminar, Aberfoyle, (September 6)

Miss Sylvia Crowe, the Commission's landscape consultant, held a two-day seminar in West Scotland Conservancy, one of a series for Commission staff throughout England, Scotland and Wales.

The fact that this seminar was in the Trossachs, an area of great tourist attraction, was enough to suggest it would create press interest. So press were invited to meet Miss Crowe and members of the seminar at David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle, in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park.

Senior Officer for Scotland Mr D A Mithen attended to answer questions of broader policy. Leading Scottish newspapers were represented, including the Scotsman, Glasgow Herald and Scottish Field, together with Farmers' Weekly and BBC Scotland's radio programme Farm Journal.

Landscaping in forestry was not new, the reporters were told, and in West Scotland great attention had been paid to amenity for some 30 years.



In a BBC broadcast next day Arthur Anderson asked Miss Crowe whether she felt that, with increased demand for leisure, the role of the landscaper in forestry work would increase in future. Miss Crowe replied: "Yes, I think it will, because people are realizing more and more that the forests give an opportunity for open air recreation which no other land use can equal... The Forestry Commission are the greatest landowners in Britain, and fortunately it's quite possible to let people walk along paths through the forest without interfering with the production of timber."

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#### We can't win

Following the Friston press tour, Information Branch received the following letter from Mr P F Garthwaite, forestry consultant:-

"It may amuse and interest you to know that I was called on the telephone this evening by a dear friend, an old lady of over 75, who said, 'I say, Mr Garthwaite, did you see the photograph in the Daily Telegraph this morning? I have known Friston since the planting started there, and I think it is criminal that they are felling the conifers.' I explained the facts of life gently to her, and satisfied her that there would still be some conifers left in the forest to give warmth and shelter in the winter to an otherwise damp and cold beechwood, and that due to chlorosis the pine would not have lived much longer in any case, so it was better to fell them and make some money from them while they were still healthy.

"Your Slasher readers might get some consolation from this tale. Unfortunately our critics are unlikely to get the Slasher, but would not understand it if they did. Silvicultural racialism is even more bigoted than the human kind."

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#### CONGRATULATIONS

In our last issue we recorded the award of the British Empire Medal to Thetford blacksmith Mr Hedley Mills, who has done so much notable work for the Commission since the 1930's. At an investiture at Santon Downham district office on September 8, Mr Mills received his medal from Lord Stradbroke, Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk.

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"IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY ....."  
(Article in AA's "Drive" magazine, spring edition)

Many readers must have been distressed by this article. How did it come to be written - and what efforts were made to put right the damage done?

We were approached about the possibility of an article by Mr Dyson, a "Drive" journalist, towards the end of last year. Subsequently he was given comprehensive briefings by Information Branch and Forest Management's Conservation & Recreation Branch about the many recreational facilities we now provide. This was followed by visits to forest recreational areas where a considerable amount of foresters' time was spent answering enquiries and showing Mr Dyson around; any facility requested by him was granted.



Despite all the time and trouble thus taken to ensure that Mr Dyson was in possession of all relevant facts about our recreational facilities, the article when it appeared was by no means comprehensive. For those of our readers who may not have seen it we quote some lines from which the tone may be judged.

"So far little advantage has been taken of the fact that many of Britain's conifers are maturing from the ugly thicket stage into forests of great beauty...

"The taxpayer foots the annual bill of about £15m for the 265 Forestry Commission's forests scattered through almost every county, but though the Commission has plans to increase leisure facilities - subject to Government approval - those that exist at the moment are few and far between. In all 265 forests there are only 11 camping and caravanning sites and four forest drives. The Commission, which has consistently made a loss from its commercial timber operations, has been under attack for years for putting commerce before public leisure...

"More than 15 million people visited the Commission's forests last year, including popular beauty spots such as the New Forest and the Forest of Dean. If demand of that size exists, when the Commission provided almost nothing in terms of facilities and did no advertising and little sign-posting..."

It will be remarked that nowhere in the article is any mention made of the hundreds of forest trails, picnic sites and car parks now provided by the Commission, or any credit given for the many other facilities we provide, such as information centres, observation posts, youth camping sites, etc.

#### Letter of protest

As soon as this article was seen at headquarters a letter of protest was sent to the magazine, which said:-

Dear Sir

In your spring edition you carried an article by Mr John Dyson entitled "If you go down in the woods today". In this article he makes statements to the effect that so far little advantage has been taken of Britain's many forests for recreation, that the Commission makes a loss from its commercial timber operations, that the Commission has a duty to preserve the appearance of the countryside and provide public facilities, about which it does little at the moment, and that last year the Commission ran such facilities as it has at a loss of £320,000.

I would be grateful if you would allow me to correct these statements. The Commission's awareness of the opportunities it offers for public recreation are well exemplified by the fact that it led thinking about National Parks in this country by some 15 years for it established its first Forest Park in Argyll in 1935, opened two others prior to 1939 and now has seven in all, which provide some 600,000 acres of forests and uplands totally available for public camping and recreational use. In addition, throughout its 3 million acre estate the Commission has steadily encouraged public access wherever it is permitted to do so (in some cases terms of land we have under lease preclude public access). On this land the Commission has developed, at considerable capital expense - which it should be remembered is charged interest at compound rates - 3,300 caravan and camping pitches in 9 fully equipped camp sites, 36 youth club camping sites, 73 properties let to youth organisations, 200 picnic places, over 200 forest trails way-marked and complete with guides, 16 forest information and interpretation centres, 19 wildlife observation towers, 3 wildlife museums, 134 forest car parks, 4 scenic forest drives for motorists, 10,000 miles of roads available for ramblers, orienteers, etc, 87 fishings let to angling clubs and 21 fishings available to anglers on day permits. To these facilities over 15 million day visits were paid in 1970 and some 1 million camper nights spent therein.



The Commission has spent a considerable sum of money and effort in sign-posting its facilities but does no commercial advertising as we find that, on the whole, the press and public word of mouth work willingly and efficiently to pass the good news of all we offer.

Only 25 per cent of the Commission's forest estate is yet productive so that it can neither be argued that it is making a loss or making a profit. All indications at present are that before the Commission is 100 per cent productive it will no longer have to draw upon public funds and will be more than self-supporting.

Finally, the Forestry Commission last year spent some £561,000 in the provision of camp sites and recreational facilities and in amenity planting, also in the maintenance of these facilities; the Commission's receipts came to £240,000, leaving a deficit of £320,000 approx. This, it must be emphasized, was not a "loss" for much of the expenditure was the investment of capital in new projects for which we are sure the country will be grateful.

D B Rooke  
Principal Information Officer

"Great deal of concern"

The reply was less than satisfactory in that it completely rejected the facts we presented and, indeed, the Editor said that in his considered opinion these reflected a partisan view (sic); the suggestion that matters should be corrected in the next edition of "Drive" was ignored. In protest against this unsatisfactory reply our Chairman, Lord Taylor of Gryfe, wrote to Lord Brentford, Chairman of the Automobile Association, saying that the article had caused a great deal of concern, not only in the Commission but among private landowners, representing as it did a distorted view of the forestry industry and its contribution to amenity and recreation.

Lord Taylor finished with the words: "I feel strongly that something should be done in the magazine to redress and correct some of the distortions and I shall be very glad to meet you personally to discuss how this might be done and to explain the background for our complaint." In his reply Lord Brentford supported his Editor's reply to our original letter; we are unlikely, therefore, to get any correction printed in the magazine itself.

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THE LETTERS PEOPLE SEND...

The masterpiece that follows occupies pride of place in the correspondence files of Slebech Forest:-

"Dear Sir Yesterday my Mummy and daddy and Brother and I went on your natcher traile.

It was very intresting There were small hols where animals hade made burows.

On one of the logs I was watching an ants nest and then I spotted a liserd with a bit of is tale mising it was the first time I have ever seen a wild Liserd.

The Liter bins and chers were verey cleverly made an were good.

Graham Brearley

8 years old."



And from one compliment to another. This letter was sent to our office in Cardiff by a lady in Petts Wood, Kent:-

"Dear Sir

I want to say how much my husband and I appreciated the work of the Forestry Commission during a recent tour of Central and South Wales. Almost always its plantations, particularly when larch was prominent, seemed to improve the areas in which they appeared - strikingly so, of course, on coal tips and land just recovered from open cast mining.

We also admired your picnic places. The timber furniture, including a rubbish receptacle prominent enough but not of a shape which encouraged the deposit of bulky lumber, and the elegant sign on its dark olive background was very agreeable to the eye.

Such proximity to industrial and built up areas in the South must bring you many problems, but I should imagine tremendous satisfaction, at any rate on the environmental front.

Yours truly

JOSE EVANS

And, of course, we much enjoyed the 'right' to wander along your excellent tracks....."

Now, from the sublime to the...well, unusual. A P Horn, private woodlands head forester for Suffolk, receives many requests for Elm Disease advice. One letter ended with this paragraph:-

"If you wish to look round and have not made prior arrangements for access, sound your hooter three times at the gate and explain your business to whoever appears. (The wood is let to a Sun Club.)"

Mr Horn says: "Having spent the morning trying to decide whether to take my clothes off or ask them to put theirs on, I finally lost my nerve and passed the letter on to the relevant county council elm inspector. At the time of going to press I am still awaiting a copy of the report on his inspection."

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#### OBITUARIES

##### SIR HENRY BERESFORD-PEIRSE

Sir Henry Beresford-Peirse, Director General of the Forestry Commission from 1962 to 1968 and Deputy Chairman from 1965 to 1968, died in Lisbon, Portugal, on August 11. He was 67.

Educated at Eton and Magdalen College, Oxford, he joined the Commission in 1929 in North Scotland. After service with the Lovat Scouts from 1939 to 1940 he was recalled by the Timber Supply Department, Ministry of Supply, with whom he served until almost the end of the war.

He was appointed Director Scotland in 1948 and Deputy Director General in 1953. Before his appointment as Director General in 1962 he served for two years in Rome as Deputy Director of the Forestry Division of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation.



Sir Henry had an international reputation as a forester. During his service with FAO he was presented by the Mexican Government with a medal for meritorious service to forestry. He was elected an Honorary Member of the Society of American Foresters, there being only 30 such Members of this body in the world. In 1964 he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, for his distinguished services to forestry at home and abroad.

In 1932 Sir Henry married Margaret, daughter of Mr F M S Grant of Knockie, Inverness-shire, who survives him along with one son and one adopted daughter.

DANNY MORGAN: 'TRUE COUNTRYMAN'

Former Chief Forester D M (Danny) Morgan of Cymer, South Wales, has died in early retirement.

Over the years Slasher's pages have recorded "bits and pieces from" Mr Morgan's pen; indeed, one of his last reports was an appreciation of the late Chief Forester Norman Smith, a long-standing friend.

A colleague writes: "Aged 63, Danny, in 45 years' service in South Wales, really left his mark as a born writer, keen naturalist and true countryman. Serving the first four years as a forest worker at Rheola, he later went to the Dean School and then served at Brechfa, Margam and finally Cymer. At Margam he was also keeper of the Commission's herd of fallow deer.

"Retirement to many these days almost means the end of the road as far as activity goes. Not for Danny: in his 18 months' retirement, so tragically cut short, he pursued his hobbies with a zeal normally shown only by newcomers.

"But how could it be otherwise with one so endowed with such a burning love for nature and the countryside?"

A private funeral service was held at Llanfynydd near Brechfa. Head Forester Gil Davies and forest clerk John Rees were among the bearers and many foresters were present.

Mr Morgan leaves a widow and two married daughters.

LORD KINNAIRD

Lord Kinnaird, a member of the Commission from 1927 to 1956, died in a Dundee nursing home in July aged 91.

MR J A LAMB

Ex-Head Forester J A Lamb, a pioneer member of the Commission's staff, has died in Ballycastle, Northern Ireland. He was one of the small band of men who attended the forest school at Birnam in 1919.

Mr Frank Oliver, Mr Lamb's Conservator for many years, writes:-

"On passing out he took part in the establishment of nurseries at Seaton and Craibstone in East Scotland Division. Thereafter, his cause was entirely in that Division, and, apart from service at Kirkhill in the second war, entirely in nursery work.



In 1945 he took charge of Newton Nursery near Elgin. He was a dedicated nurseryman and at Newton was a complete example of the right man in the right place.

Newton Nursery already had a high reputation. Mr Lamb had the task of increasing its area and output to meet the postwar plant demands and this he did with complete success.

Trained on traditional lines he was a perfectionist in details but was not slow to incorporate new techniques and methods, while retaining cultural methods suited to the Newton conditions. It was remarkable how this nursery, largely unmechanised, continued to produce high class stock at costs below those of other East Conservancy nurseries.

It was always a pleasure to visit Newton and we soon appreciated that to Mr Lamb's quiet efficiency was due the first class organisation and excellent relations with staff. During his time there Newton's high reputation was enhanced and was spread throughout Scotland by the many visitors who came to see and learn.

James Lamb left Newton in 1955, prior to his retirement, and established a nursery in Banffshire for Messrs A G & W J Riddoch. He finally retired in 1962 and went to live in Northern Ireland, near his son and daughter.

James Lamb, one knows, took a quiet satisfaction in the knowledge that the thriving forests of East Scotland, and beyond, owe much to the many millions of splendid plants raised in Newton.

Our sympathy goes to his widow and to his son and daughter."

#### SAD LOSS IN EAST SCOTLAND

East Scotland Conservancy have suffered the deaths of two clerical officers. Martin Donnelly died after a brief illness and shortly afterwards there was the sudden death of Kenneth Barton.

#### Martin Donnelly

A colleague writes: "Martin, a clerical officer with us since 1953, had not been his normal self for many months, but though obviously not in good health he did his best under what must have been very difficult circumstances. None of us knew how ill Martin had been and certainly he gave no outward sign of his problems.

"We appreciate his sterling qualities the more when we realise his difficulties.

"Members of the public on more than one occasion have gone out of their way to say how much they appreciated the enthusiastic help they received from Martin Donnelly when they called at Conservancy office about properties for sale.

"Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow, son and daughter."

#### Kenneth Barton

A colleague and "close friend" writes: "Until February this year, Ken hadn't a day's illness since his arrival in East Scotland in November 1955. He returned to work in July and seemed well on the way to full recovery. At the time of his death Ken was acting executive officer on substitution for his executive officer who was in hospital.



"Ken Barton was very highly regarded; he always gave of his best cheerfully and without complaint.

"Successive executive officers can testify as to his value to them, to the effort he made when the going was hard, and to his reliability; his output of work could be quite exceptional, and he set a standard few will match.

"Ken served with distinction as a sergeant-pilot in a bomber squadron from 1943 to 1947. Prior to joining the Commission he spent eight years with the Post Office Savings Bank at Harrogate.

"The sympathies of East Scotland staff go to his widow and son."

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#### SOUNDS FANTASTIC

If sitting under a damp, dripping sitka spruce, microphone poised, waiting to record the chirrup of a wee beastie digesting its evening meal, just happens to be one of your passions, read on...

Closing date of Scotch Magnetic Tape's 1972 wildlife sound recording contest is November 30; further details can be obtained from W R Bowles, Public Relations Executive, 3M United Kingdom Ltd, 3M House, Wigmore Street, London W1A 1ET.

Let it be said however, here and now, that, should you enter, you will face tough competition. Last year a special award for originality (and sheer guts, I would have thought) went to a gentleman who captured the exquisite sound of beetles burrowing under cattle dung.

Another special award went to a recording of a Roman snail noisily chewing a lettuce leaf — a gem obtained by placing this edible snail together with a microphone in a plastic sandwich box.

So, ingenuity must clearly run riot, if not to anarchy, if you wish to be up there with the Greats.

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#### A BRIGHT IDEA FOR NEW HQ

Thirty letters containing 100 ideas — that was the response to an invitation to staff to contribute ideas on structural aspects of the new Headquarters in Edinburgh.

The suggestions covered almost everything! Windows, heating, restaurant, reception room, siting, use of timber, car-parking, ventilation, views from the top floor, soundproofing, floors, lifts, lighting, use of roof area, doors, toilets, fire escape, drinking water, wind protection, recreation, first aid...

Every suggestion was considered by a special sub-committee of the Staff Suggestions and Monetary Awards Scheme, and 21 staff were awarded sums ranging from £3 to £10.

Top award went to Mr J R Ward, an HEO at Lyndhurst office SE(E) for his electrical circuit to enable the dark side of offices to be illuminated without lighting the daylight section, with consequent eyesight benefits and saving of electricity.



Says Mr E F Hale, SSMAS Secretary: "We're pretty pleased with the response to the first stage invitation and with the encouragement of all these awards we expect even more replies to the second stage invitation for ideas on internal fittings."

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#### DEER MENACE IN GERMANY

In West Germany wild deer are now a major road hazard. Some 30 drivers and 60,000 deer die each year in a growing number of crashes.

Stricter conservation methods are being blamed. The deer population has increased and become more mobile. And the result? In the three years 1968-70, deer caused nearly 10,000 serious road accidents in which 104 people died and property worth £20m was damaged.

Efforts to halt the carnage have included coloured lights at the worst black spots and the spraying of chemical barriers on the roadside. But with no success.

However, a development by the country's largest automobile club is giving rise to optimism. They have been testing a special electric fence on high-risk autobahns and country roads, with great success. Eight feet high, comprising six electrified strands, it gives the deer a shock strong enough to scare them away but not enough to kill.

What about deer versus the motor car in this country? I am sure Forestry Commission staff have some interesting stories to tell. How about one or two for the next issue of Slasher ?

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#### MONEY FOR MUNICH

In the wake of the Olympic Games we record that, as a result of Civil Service Sports Council Appeal, Commission staff donated £21.43 towards the cost of supporting the British team.

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#### MANY THANKS...

Mr E H Macmillen, who retired this summer as Chief Engineer, writes: "Perhaps you will allow me the use of Slasher to thank most sincerely the many members of staff for their good wishes on my retirement and for their presentation gifts. Without these, they would, in any case, be recalled as colleagues and friends over the past 11 years. But their choice of a flask and a carriage clock will give my wife and I most positive reminders of the time spent in their company."

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## MEMORIES OF NAGSHEAD NURSERIES

By ex-Chief Forester Jack Jennings

I often revisit some of the old places that I worked at in the Forest of Dean and last week found me standing at a place that will be remembered by many generations of old forestry students, namely Nagshead Nursery. Although, of course, the scenery is changing one place remains the same now as it was half a century ago and that is the Nursery hut. I looked through the window and when I saw the names of the ex-students inscribed in the wooden boards on the wall memories came crowding back.

Did any of you know Ian Wynne? Can you recall Percy Tribe? Has anyone now in the Commission's employ worked or boxed with Bill Drake? Did you ever meet Bill Gulliver or George Button?

These men were giants in their day; how many foresters can remember them now? The villagers of Parkend still talk of them and their escapades.

Following my student days nearly 40 years ago I was an ex-school ganger at Nagshead for a while and the old shed there holds for me memories of many amusing and humorous incidents. One in particular seems worthwhile putting on paper, if only for its idiocy.

It was a cold wet day in November and Joe Bird the foreman wanted a brew of tea. "Get and light a vire with some a they old daddicky seed bed shelters," Joe told a half-starved youth who stood shivering in the doorway. And then pointing to a huge pile of rubber-covered electricity wire with which the shelters were woven, "You wun't want much paper; put a goodish yup of thic ole wire underneath the grate and it'll zoon vlare up!"

Half an hour later Joe said to me: "An't thic boy lit a vire yet. Go an zee what him's at. Us'll never git no tay at this rate."

I went round to the youth who said to me: "I canna git thic bloody wire to catch light no how." Which wasn't really surprising because instead of trying to ignite the rubber covered wire he was putting matches to a rolled up coil of No 8 gauge, galvanised zinc, single-strand fencing wire wound round with a square of rusty rabbit netting!

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### STAMP A TREE

First day covers for the forthcoming Tree Planting Year stamp to be released next February are being published by Philart Productions Ltd of 11, Bermondsey Street, London SE1 2JT.

Reference photographs for the design were provided by the Photographic Branch at Alice Holt Lodge.

Says Mr Edgar Levy, a director of the firm:

"We wonder whether members of the Forestry Commission and others interested would like us to provide first day covers of the stamp, appropriately postmarked on the first day of issue with the correct pictorial postmark?"



"We shall be happy to let you have bulk supplies of the envelopes at our normal rates of 5p each or at varying discounts for quantities; fully-serviced we can supply them at 20p each, sent direct, or 25p each, if sent under separate cover to ensure delivery in perfect condition."

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#### THE FOREST IN MANY TONGUES

Next time you're in the Congo, Rawalpindi or even Rio de Janeiro and you fancy a film-show, why not go and see your favourite movie, "The Changing Forest"? Only snag is that the commentary will be in French, Urdu or Portuguese!

Copies of this classic film about the Commission, originally made by British Petroleum, can be borrowed now from British Embassies and High Commissions in 65 different countries and in fifteen foreign language versions.

The Central Office of Information is constantly acquiring films for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to project Britain abroad. When they viewed "The Changing Forest" they felt it was a winner. The response from overseas was overwhelming and COI made more than 100 copies.

Copies are held in such places as Prague, Helsinki, Nicosia, Cairo, Tehran, Tel Aviv, New York, Buenos Aires, Ottawa, Johannesburg, Lagos, Tokyo, Rangoon and New Delhi. They are available in Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, Finnish, French, Indonesian, Italian, Spanish, Malay, Nyanja, Sinhalese, Turkish and Urdu.

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#### LAST LAUGH

Information Branch had cause to send the following letter to the Editor of the Liverpool Daily Post:-

"Sir

On 14 September, with your tongue firmly in your editorial cheek, you reported: 'A colleague 'phoned the Forestry Commission in London yesterday and asked for the Press Office. He was told: "Oh, you want the Information Branch..."'

But, Sir, I protest: this is our standard response to trunk calls!

Yours etc."

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## AROUND AND ABOUT

### Headquarters, London

SCOTLAND'S OWN INFORMATION OFFICER      Miss Hazel Pottinger has been appointed Information Officer for Scotland and the Borders. Augmenting the Information Branch staff under Colonel D B Rooke, she is currently working from Savile Row but will be based at Scottish Headquarters, 25 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, from Monday, October 16.

Miss Pottinger comes to the Commission after eight years with the Government's Central Office of Information in Newcastle, where since 1967 she had been Information Officer in a busy press office.

She was a junior reporter with the Sunday Post in Edinburgh, and later staff reporter to The Dundee Courier, Dundee Evening Telegraph and Evening Citizen, Glasgow.

Within the first few weeks of her appointment she has managed to visit, briefly, three of the Scottish Conservancies and looks forward to seeing the others in the near future.

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### Research

#### AN ECOLOGIST RETIRES

Holt.

When Mr J M B (Michael) Brown retired he had completed over 24 years as ecologist at Alice

Before joining Research Division he took his biological science degree in Belfast and a Forestry Diploma at Oxford and served as an entomologist at the then Imperial Forestry Institute.

He has interested himself especially in climate and soils and in beech and Corsican pine, although in recent years he was developing work on sitka spruce. His most notable publication, "Studies on British beechwoods", is a classic known to foresters and botanists alike.

In retirement he is spending much time in his garden but also plans to write a bulletin on Corsican pine so will remain in close touch with Alice Holt.

At a farewell ceremony Mr George Holmes, Director Research, presented Mr Brown with a cheque to buy books and shelving.

#### A FEAST OF ART

Meat and two veg gave way to paintings, drawings and collages in the canteen at Alice Holt Lodge recently. An art exhibition featured over 40 items, the work of various members of staff; the standard surprised not only the organisers but many of the artists' colleagues, unaware of the talent in their midst.

A total of £19.08 was raised by donations and sale of some exhibits, and the money was sent to the British Diabetics Association.

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## North Scotland

NEW CONSERVANCY OFFICE

Mr Gordon Campbell, Secretary of State for Scotland opened the Conservancy's new offices in Church Street, Inverness, on Monday, September 18.

The new premises are on two floors of a modern office block already occupied by the Highlands and Islands Development Board. Formerly, staff occupied old and cramped quarters in the same street.

At a small ceremony in the Caledonian Hotel, attended by distinguished guests, members of staff and the press, the Chairman, Lord Taylor of Gryfe, welcomed the Scottish Secretary, saying that because of the importance of forestry in Scotland it was reassuring to have his support. Mr Campbell unveiled a plaque in the entrance hall and was presented with a four feet high Scots pine from Glen Affric Caledonian Forest by Mr Robert Innes, Conservator.

In his speech, the Secretary of State said that the opening was very appropriate at a time when so much of the Commission's work was in North Scotland. He went on:

"Forestry is a valuable and suitable industry in the Highlands and the North where it can make best use of certain kinds of land. Of course there is increasing competition now in the North for new projects, but forestry will continue to play an essential part and it need not compete for sites.

"It has sometimes been said that Governments in the past have neglected the Highlands. It is impossible to say that now of this Government. This is a 'Go' area and it is causing the centre gravity of Scotland to move North. This area is setting an example to the rest of the country, not least in team work and good industrial relations.

"The importance which the Government attach to forestry was underlined by the publication in June of a consultative document. This set out the results of a very comprehensive review of forestry policy in the light of the fullest information obtainable about the financial and social returns in present-day conditions and invited comments from interested parties.

"Forestry is unique in the length of time which must elapse before the investment produces a return in financial terms. But a social return - particularly in terms of jobs in remoter areas - is realised much sooner. The value which the Government place on this social return is demonstrated by our intention to pursue an active planting programme, of broadly the same size as at present, in the public sector.

"In practice the size of the programme and its distribution are determined, not by availability of finance, but by the availability of suitable land for planting. The rate of planting could not proceed faster in fact, whatever target figures might be brandished. We also intend to continue to provide grant assistance for private planting.

"Discussions are proceeding between the Commission and representatives of the private growers as to the form which such assistance can most suitably take in the future. We hope to be able to announce our conclusions early next year."



'NO WET TIME NOW'

To mark his retirement after 47 years' service with the Commission at Craig nan Eun, forest worker Donald McDonald, accompanied by his wife, was entertained by friends and colleagues at the Glenmoriston Arms Hotel.

On behalf of everyone, retired Forester Tom Fraser presented Mr and Mrs McDonald with a barometer and a fine pair of binoculars --- very appropriate as Donald runs a thriving upland croft.

District Officer A C Christie presented Mr McDonald with a long service certificate and paid tribute to his constant and valuable work.

A week after retirement Mr McDonald was visited while hoeing turnips in heavy rain. "No wet time now," he remarked.

DOUBLE BONUS

Yes, a double bonus for Stewart Mackintosh, an EO, in the form of time saved and money gained. His suggestion to extend Nursery Form PS7 to make it an accounting as well as management document has proved so successful that he became first recipient in the Conservancy of a prize from the new Monetary Awards Committee --- £10, well worth the effort!

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#### South Wales

PAT ON THE BACH

The Commission's exhibit at the Eisteddfod this year featured local forests, Cwmcarn scenic drive, nursery work, Dutch Elm Disease, sign production and forestry in Wales generally; and our efforts as a whole brought many messages of thanks.

One, from Haverfordwest Rural Council, reads:

"May I express my great appreciation of the help you gave in connection with the Eisteddfod, particularly in the supply of tree tops for placing around the pavilion and field.

This made a great improvement to the appearance of the ground and was remarked upon by many people...

May I, too, congratulate your department on the forest walk at the rear of your stand; it was really excellent.

A J Davies  
Engineer and Surveyor"

VISITORS CWM IN DROVES

Opening of the scenic drive at Cwmcarn in Ebbw Forest, reported in our last issue, so caught the imagination of local people that they entered a float featuring it in Llanfach carnival --- and won third prize.

Despite very poor weather, 4,000 cars --- an estimated 16,000 people --- visited the drive in the first six weeks; and the reaction of the public is most encouraging.



## BROWNIES' ADVENTURE

Mrs Lena Griffiths, personal secretary to Senior Officer (Wales), in off-duty hours, is Brown Owl of the Brownie Pack at St Dyfrig, which lies near St Gwynno Forest, Glamorganshire. Recently she arranged a big adventure for the girls --- a visit to the forest, one of the most beautiful in the South Wales coalfields. Although it is so near their homes, it was the first time they had been there.

They were suitably impressed by the tall trees but the highlight of the visit was looking for "Indian" signs, guided by Chief Forester W E Powell, suitably disguised as the "Great Buffalo Hunter", and assisted by Ganger Harry Marshall, who made an excellent pack horse for several tired Brownies and their collection of stones, bark and cones.

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## North-East England

### ROYAL VISIT

The Duchess of Kent spent 10 minutes at the forestry exhibit at the Great Yorkshire Show and was shown round by Mr R H Totty, Chief Steward of the Royal Forestry Society, and Mr G E Godwin, the Conservator.

Says Mr Godwin: "The Duchess, who is the Show President, displayed a keen interest in and not a little knowledge of forestry. Before she left I presented her with a section of European larch which started life in Yorkshire in 1933, which was the year she herself started life in Yorkshire."

On the same afternoon Mr Prior, Minister of Agriculture, spent 20 minutes at the exhibit, which was as usual a joint venture between the Commission and the RFS.

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The National Chain Saw Competition was again held at the show. In the novice class appeared Head Forester Alick Sharp recently retired after 45 years with the Commission. Although he had been an official at various competitions he was eligible to compete as he had never entered a competition before. Novice competition was keen as the winner of each of the five competitions went forward to the masters' event.

Overall winner was Alick's son, G R Sharp, followed by another son, D A Sharp; both now work on their own account as timber merchants. A Hutchinson, a Commission employee at Wark, came third --- with Alick fourth. Truly a Sharp contest!

### FAREWELL AT DALBY

Representatives of foresters, forest workers, estates and mechanical staff all gathered at Dalby Mechanical Workshops to say farewell to Steve Simpson, retiring after 15 years as Grade 1 mechanic at Dalby.

He was presented with a transistor radio by foreman John Parker.

Mr Simpson, a native of this part of Yorkshire, spent six years in the Army, mostly abroad, leaving as corporal, and then worked with a local firm, before joining the Commission in 1957.

He is retiring to Wem, Shropshire, where he has bought a house. Commission colleagues, he says, will be welcome for a cup of tea and a chat, although, he adds, during six weeks next summer he'll be in Italy --- renewing wartime memories.

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### East England

#### 45 YEARS' SERVICE

Mr H V McIntyre, a stalwart of Harvesting and Marketing Section at Cambridge, has retired after some 45 years' public service.

After working with the Post Office and Ministry of Food, and wartime service with the Royal Signals, he joined the Commission as a CO in 1950. Promoted EO in 1959, he served with Finance Branch, Savile Row, then in 1961 returned to his home town of Cambridge where he has been ever since.

A colleague writes: "Mac will be missed not only by his colleagues for his cheerfulness and enthusiasm, but also by the many timber merchants who always asked for him by name because they knew he would always either know the answer or do something about their particular problem."

Conservator Mr M J Penistan presented Mr McIntyre with a set of power tools on behalf of colleagues and friends. He is spending his retirement in Cambridge, of course!

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### South-East England

#### BILL WILKINS, 'KING OF POMs'

Bill Wilkins, once the Commission's only lorry driver, and more recently a champion dahlia grower, has retired after 29 years' service.

He joined in 1943 and in his unique lorry-driving role roamed the South remaining at each forest for as long as required. After a spell in hospital in 1957 he ceased driving and was promoted ganger at Bramshill where he has remained.

Mr Wilkins occupied Clapper Oak Cottage at the start of his career --- and will remain there in retirement.

His interest in dahlias began in 1955. In that year and the two subsequent years he won the seedling class cup at the London Show and thus the right to retain it. Since 1957 he has been Dahlia Pom champion nine times at the same show and has won the Pom class cup at Birmingham Show for the past five years.

He is rightly acknowledged as "King of Poms", with an international reputation, and one of his proudest possessions is a gold medal presented to him by the British Dahlia Growers' Association.

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