



# SLASHER

NEWSPAPER OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION



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## DUKE BACKS FORESTERS

**FORESTERS and farmers should be left to get on with their jobs because "they will do their best for the landscapes they know and live with and love", the Duke of Edinburgh told the annual conference of the Tree Council.**

"We should leave the people who live by the land to exercise their own taste and judgement," said the Duke.

"They are, after all, no less responsible or intelligent than urban members of committees and commissions, although of course they are much more sensitive to economic pressures.

"Foresters and farmers have looked after the land for a thousand years and I can see no reason why they should not be trusted to go on doing so within the contemporary social and economic restraints".

Opening the conference in London recently the Duke said that conservation was for nature and wildlife and for that part of the environment which we admire.

"But there is no way of protecting a living landscape from change", he declared.

"A new landscape is inevitable and in my opinion we should be concentrating on those parts which we have

practical control over: such things as public land, Forestry Commission, parks, open spaces, motorways and railways, inner cities, rivers, rubbish tips, various sites, recreation areas, power lines, coastline and above all the urban-rural interface".

More people are exposed more frequently to the neglected areas of the urban-rural interface than have ever seen the beauty spots, he said.

"There is so much we can do and the resources are so limited that it makes better sense to me to attack the black-spots and the eye-sores and to leave the people who live by the land to exercise their own taste and judgement".

The Duke said that in the last 120 years or so — a lifetime of many trees — conditions had changed completely with the growth of cities, the decline of villages, the mechanisation and chemicalisation of agriculture.

"A hundred years ago, I

think it was 12 per cent of the population who were engaged in forestry and agriculture, it is now down to 2.2 per cent.

"The reformers and the innovators have been in fact extremely successful and predictably all sorts of organisations, voluntary and statutory, have sprung up to try to preserve the landscape and to prevent the inevitable consequences that are taking place.

"It cannot succeed. You cannot stop the clock, let alone put it back but just in case I am misunderstood, that is not to say that we should not try to prevent wanton destruction and inconsiderate exploitation.

"What we can do is look to the future and to do what is possible within the constraints of contemporary social and economic conditions.

"There are a whole lot of things which are within our power to make the most of our environment both urban and rural and particularly in that derelict planners' no-man's-land where the two meet and in the important but blighted green belt".

The Duke spoke about what he called "the harsh facts of natural life" — "facts which do not seem to be fully appreci-

ated by some well meaning and perhaps rather sentimental urban dwellers".

Trees were living things, subject to diseases and natural disasters, and when they got old they died. The best way to protect trees was to plant young trees to replace old ones — but this sounded a great deal easier in theory than in practice.

"Each species of tree may be beautiful in itself but that does not mean they are equally appropriate in all circumstances.

"Apart from being able to do well in the soil and climatic conditions, they also have to be right for the purpose. I think there is nothing worse than those well meant efforts called screenings which turn out to be as much a blot on the landscape as the things being screened.

"Almost as naive as the sentimentalist or the people who believe that the landscape can be controlled by statute as if legislation was like some sort of magic wand".

The Duke added that the Tree Council could make a vital contribution to the improvement of the human environment in those parts where it had suffered from abuse and neglect.



The Duke of Edinburgh

## Fire takes a toll in Shin and Glentool

**TWO of the worst forest fires in the Commission's history occurred within a few hours of each other on the fateful night of Monday, 8th May. Fire destroyed a total of 1,500 acres at Shin and Glentool Forests with an estimated replacement value of over half a million pounds.**

First reports from the fire at Glentool Forest, Galloway indicated the fire may have destroyed some 1200 acres but a later inspection revealed that although the fire had spread over that area, there were several pockets within the plantation which had escaped damage. The final estimate was of 800 acres of 15 year old Sitka spruce destroyed. The fire started near the Martyr's Tomb monument near the Commission's Caldons campsite and raged all night, finally being brought under control at dawn.

At Shin Forest the fire claimed 750 acres of the Fiag section — one of the most valuable research blocks in North Scotland in that it contained a wide collection of provenances of Lodgepole pine. A further tragedy was that the plantations which were destroyed were infested with Pine Beauty Moth and were to have been included in the massive aerial insecticide operation being mounted in June in order to save some 12,000 acres of Lodgepole pine plantations which are at risk.

## Commission beats target

**THE Forestry Commission has exceeded its target of a three per cent rate of return in real terms after taking account of planting and restocking subsidies.**

This was disclosed by the

Chairman, Mr John Mackie, at a press conference for the publication of the 1976-77 annual report which also gave the results of the Commission's performance over the last five year period from 1972.

Mr Mackie said he was "very

happy to be able to say" that for this five year period the Commission had achieved a return of 3.1 per cent.

A return of about three per cent on good sites within a reasonable distance of markets was as high a rate of return as forestry was likely to

earn anywhere in the temperate part of the northern hemisphere.

Mr Mackie said: "There will come a time when our production will be such that the Forestry Enterprise should become self supporting and therefore the Commission should cease to require to draw funds from the public purse for this part of its task.

"The present prediction is about the end of the century but that is a long way ahead and you cannot expect an exact forecast".

Other results from the five year period:

**PLANTING.** About 93,000 hectares were planted during the five years increasing the public forest estate by six per cent.

**TIMBER.** The annual production of timber has increased from 1.6 million cubic metres to over 2 million. Sales of small roundwood to pulp paper and paperboard mills increased by an average of 18 per cent per annum and constituted 40 per cent of our

sales. Sales of sawlogs and mining timber increased by 10 per cent and made up 39 per cent of the total. Other markets were for telegraph and other selected poles, posts, stakes, firewood and other items.

**INCOME.** Our annual receipts over the period from timber sales, disposals of surplus assets, recreation and sporting facilities increased from £12.4 million to £29.6 million.

Mr MACKIE ADDED: "These are all very material gains and ones of which we may be proud".

The Chairman also said it would be wrong to overlook our "very real achievements" in the fields of recreation and amenity.

**RECREATION.** There were 12 new camp sites bringing the total at the end of the five year period to 28. Use of camp sites increased last year by 18 per cent to the highest ever total of 1.5 million camper nights. There were 172 new scenically sited picnic sites bringing the total to 426. A further 151 for-

est walks had been opened.

**LANDSCAPE.** Our expertise in forest landscape design had increased.

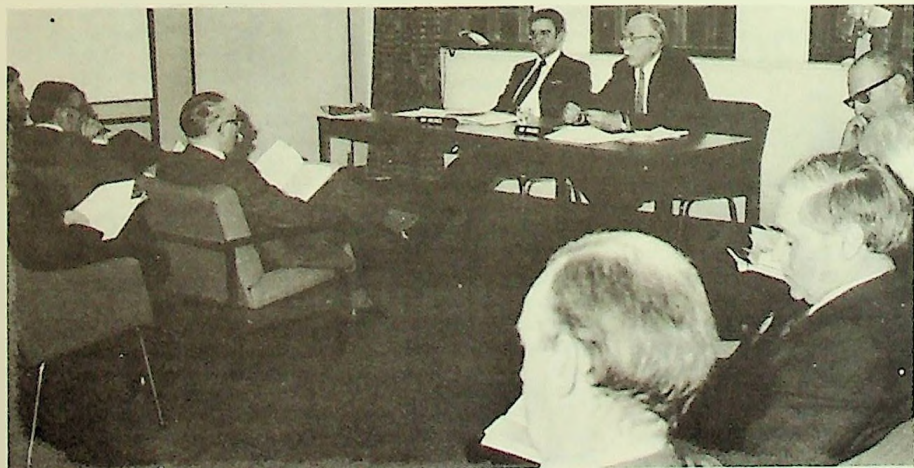
A forest design branch has been created with Landscape/Architect Duncan Campbell working very closely with our Landscape Consultant Clifford Tandy.

Looking to the future Mr Mackie said that although no targets were set if we could get along with the private sector a new planting rate of around 30,000 hectares a year, this would give the country about 2.4 million hectares (6 million acres) by the turn of the century.

"Because of the various constraints on land use, this figure may not be too easy to attain but it can be done without much, if any, inroads into food production".

The chairman said our operations in raising young trees, planting, managing and harvesting would bear examination by any standard.

Annual Report Highlights — See page 8



Chairman John Mackie speaking at the press conference. He is accompanied by Director General George Holmes.



## Axeman's Log

### Winning suggestions



Three S(S) staff won awards under the Staff Suggestion Scheme. From left to right they are: David Murray — Head Forester at Fleet Nursery. His suggestions dealt with the adaptation of existing rotovators to remove the need to re-shape seed-beds and re-drill alleyways; and adjusting the spreading width of top dressing spreaders, thereby making a saving of 30% in fertiliser costs. He was awarded £40 by the Local Committee and £150 by the Central Committee. Beverley Graham — CO, Conservancy Office. Beverley's suggestion of office procedures for widows' and children's pension scheme has helped to increase the efficiency of office recording. She received awards of £14 from the Local Committee and £10 from the Central Committee. Jim Scott — Forest Craftsman, Ae Forest. An almost doubled load capacity for a forwarder and fewer delays resulted from the suggestion of equipping the forwarders' trailer with a quick-fit frame. This suggestion earned Jim a Local Committee award of £20 and an interim award of £50 from the Central Committee. The presentation was made by Conservator Mr John Davies.

### Pensioners address service

WE are pleased to announce a scheme which will provide a service to all our retired staff who wish to maintain or establish contact with their former colleagues. Any pensioner who would like to have the address of a retired colleague can request this information through Joe Russell, the Welfare Officer at Headquarters. The enquirer should provide the Welfare Officer with the

name and initials of the former colleague or colleagues he or she wishes to contact, and where possible their grade or status on retirement with last known location.

It is hoped that this service will facilitate those pensioners who may have lost touch with their former colleagues, and who would like to renew their association.

### First sighting of Loch Ness Monster

A FORESTRY Commission driver was the first to spot the Loch Ness monster this year.

Mr John Thomson, of Invermoriston, was at the front of his house in Primrose Bay in March with his son William (12) when he saw a commotion on the surface of the loch.

"It was 6.20 pm and the light was falling," he said. "We saw this thing splashing about, sending up high white waves. I got the bino-

culars and could not make out the object but it was at least 10ft long.

"It crossed the loch at speed, leaving a white wave about 20ft long. It reached the other side and disappeared.

"I have lived here for 18 years and that is the first time I have seen anything like that. Now I believe there is something in the loch — without a doubt."



The pole being manoeuvred through Tintern Village.

### Mast for schooner from Tintern Forest

RECENTLY a 21 metre (69ft) long Douglas fir pole of 61cm (24in) butt and 43cm (17in) top diameter was shipped from Tintern Forest in South Wales to St Lucia in the West Indies to be used as the mast for a schooner being built there.

The tree was 75 years old, having been planted in 1902 by the Office of Woods, who managed Tintern Forest prior to the setting up of the Forestry Commission. It had reached a height of 35 metres

(115ft) and contained some 6 cubic metres of timber.

The tree was felled and the pole peeled by Forestry Commission staff at Tintern.

L. S. Richards & Son, Brockweir, local timber contractors, were called in with their crane to load the pole on to the lorry of Messrs Hills Transport (Cardiff) Ltd who were responsible for its haulage from the forest to the dockside at Barry Docks for shipment to St Lucia by the Geest Line.

## RETIREMENT OF 'DICK' RICHARDS

DICK RICHARDS, who retires this month as Director of Land Use Planning, and Sandy Morrison, the man who replaces him, share some remarkable coincidences in their careers with the Forestry Commission.

Both obtained forestry degrees at Aberdeen; both served with the Royal Engineers; both were involved in census work in Scotland; both were stationed at Inverness; and finally, and perhaps most amazingly of all, both were Conservators for East Scotland at Aberdeen before taking up the directorship.

E. G. Richards — known throughout the Commission as "Dick" Richards — retires at the end of June after 40 years' service (including war service). Many friends were planning to attend a special dinner and dance at an Edinburgh hotel at the end of the month to mark his retirement.

He has been director of Land Use Planning, based in

London, since 1974.

Mr Richards was born at Midmar in Aberdeenshire and took a degree in forestry at Aberdeen University. He joined the Forestry Commission in North Wales in 1938 as a temporary surveyor and then became a census surveyor in different parts of the country. After war service with the Royal Engineers he returned to the Commission as a District Officer at Inverness and he was also stationed at Beaulieu.

In 1951 he was transferred to the Directorate of Research in London as Utilisation Development Officer and later the same year was promoted to Divisional Officer. In 1960 he was promoted Conservator

and took charge of the newly created Harvesting and Marketing Division in London. Ten years later he was appointed Conservator of Forests for East Scotland based at Aberdeen and was there for four years before becoming Director of Land Use Planning in London.

Dick Richards is well known throughout industry for his work in spearheading the promotion of pulp mills and wood processing plants throughout the country — particularly at Fort William.

He was also involved in European matters and was chairman of a Joint FAO/EEC/ILO Committee on forest working techniques and the training of forest workers.

### SANDY MORRISON

SANDY MORRISON is to combine both land use planning and private forestry matters when he succeeds Dick Richards to the directorship at the end of June.

He will be the first man to hold the title "Director of Private Forestry and Land Use Planning" — an appointment underlining the importance of private forestry in the supply of vital timber of Britain.

Director General George Holmes said: "The responsibilities of the Director of Land Use Planning have been enlarged to include aspects of



Sandy Morrison

private forestry in order to ensure a high calibre professional forestry input to our work at Headquarters in this field.

"Collaboration with and assistance to private forestry is an increasingly important part of the Forestry Commission's work and I am confident that this change will help discharge that task more effectively.

"The Director will continue his predecessor's responsibility for land use planning questions, including the transfer of land from agriculture and other uses to forestry, which are very closely linked with our work on private forestry matters and with our own afforestation programme.

"The problems in this area are more complex than ever before and demand an increasing depth of understanding and experience which these changes will help to provide."

Mr Morrison (47) has been Conservator of Forests for East Scotland since January

1976. He was born in Glasgow and obtained a degree in forestry from Aberdeen University in 1951.

After military service with the Royal Engineers he joined the Forestry Commission in 1953 as a forest worker on research sample plots in Scotland, and a year later worked as a ganger on the census of woodlands in Angus and Ross and Cromarty.

He then served as a District Officer at Fort William and was involved in land acquisition duties based at Inverness and Edinburgh. In 1963 he returned to take charge at Fort William and six years later was appointed Assistant Conservator for the Scotland West Conservancy based in Glasgow. After seven years he became Conservator of Forests at Aberdeen.

Mr Ian Grant (54) has been appointed as Conservator of Forests for East Scotland in succession to Mr Morrison. Mr Grant is presently Assistant Conservator for West Scotland based in Glasgow.

He was born in Dover but was brought up in Morayshire. His father was Head Forester of the private Altyre Estate in Morayshire. Mr Grant took a degree in forestry from Edinburgh University in 1953 and served the Commission as a District Officer stationed at Dingwall, Dornoch, Inverness, and Kielder (North East England).

In 1971 he was promoted Assistant Conservator and transferred to Alice Holt Lodge Research Station in Surrey as Chief Work Study Officer. He became Assistant Conservator at Glasgow in 1975. He is married with a son.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

GORDON SIMPSON, Head Forester Cleveland Forest, is to be congratulated on being awarded a BA degree by the Open University after six years of effort.

The degree is considered a BA in science terminating in Ecology and it is worth noting that Gordon obtained a distinction in Genetics.

Graham Wilson, Senior Superintendent of Works, Llandovery has been successful in the Institute of Explosives Engineers recent examination. He has been appointed a Member of the Institute and is entitled to the letters MIXE after his name. He is mainly responsible for FC quarrying in South Wales.



# QUEEN'S HOUSE EVACUATED

The Queen's House Lyndhurst has a history going back seven centuries writes John Ward, Slasher correspondent, SE(E). The oldest visible portion is the Verderers' Hall, which has ground floor walls of late Tudor date, 1530. Other relics of Tudor days are the two remarkable "grouped stacks" of chimneys on the north side, both visible from the High Street. The main building was constructed in the Stuart period, during the reigns of Charles I and Charles II between 1634 and 1672. For many years it has housed South East England Conservancy staff.

It now looks as if its days, at least as we have known it in the past, are numbered.

The first sign of serious trouble was an ominous bulge in the ceiling of the Accounts Room which was beneath the Typing Pool. Experts were called in and reported that some of the main beams of the floor of the Typing Pool were unsafe. The Typists were moved out and to make room for them — Len Bowman, then A & F O — set a noble example by handing over his room & settling, like a migrant bird on a passing ship, on any room that happened to fall vacant. Worse was to come — as the experts probed and prodded they issued increasingly

alarming reports until, just before Christmas we learned that virtually the whole of the Queen's House was unsafe.

The staff was dispersed to various parts of the New Forest. Most of the Sections fortunately, could be housed in the Verderers' Hall: this included Accounts, Forest Management and Harvesting and Marketing along with a number of senior officers.

The Verderers' Hall is far from satisfactory for the staff and a number of temporary measures have had to be taken to enable the work of the office to continue. Normally an im-

posing hall with something of the air of the magistrate's court, it is today draped with wires for temporary lighting and telephone services, strips of old carpet covering the stone floors and sellotape blocking out the many draughts from the small painted leaded windows. All taking on the look of an emergency war-time operations HQ.

Meanwhile hopes of this temporary expedient coming to an end rise as work progresses on the construction of a terrapin type building on land to the rear of the Annexe building on the eastern edge of

Lyndhurst village.

At one time in the mid 70's, over a period of 3 years, the Annexe garden was put to another good purpose when a squad of staff, including Brenda Smith (CO Private Woodlands), Dick Murray (now HEO at HQ), Liz Broadley (EO Estates), Mike Wheeler (CO Accounts), Ivy Sims (CO Civil Engineering), John Ward (HEO) and Nora Vigour (CO — now retired) set to in the lunch hours to bring the land back into production. The area was completely overgrown and the group fought

their way in to progressively clear and bramble and ground elder in order to plant potatoes, peas, runner beans and onions. A commune spirit existed and the produce was shared out between the group members. Surpluses were sold to other staff at give away prices and helped to purchase additional bean poles.

However, now the bulldozers have moved in and other preliminaries to be move are taking place with the out-buildings being made ready to accept stationery and files. Under the accommodation

plan it will be possible to house all Conservancy Office based staff in both the Annexe and the terrapin and perhaps the two joined by a covered walk.

The staff have put up with their uncomfortable accommodation stoically but are looking forward to some improvement when they come together in their 'new' office. They wonder quite what the future has in store for them whilst they wait to hear the fate of Queen's House. Whatever happens to it, it will never be quite the same again.

courage farmers to reclaim rough pasture to arable, particularly for carrots.

By the early sixties Bob had fixed and planted the whole area, as well as more 'conventional' land elsewhere in Anglesey. However there was no opportunity for him to draw breath, the forest was just becoming a very popular recreation area. Bob has responded to this new challenge with characteristic flexibility and enthusiasm so that the forest is now a benefit to, and appreciated by many people beyond the immediate community. His idea of excavating one of the original village houses led to a Prince of Wales award.

Today Newborough Forest is in production, the forest and every load of timber sent out is a tribute to Bob's ingenuity, resourcefulness and hard work.

## Newborough is a credit to Bob

Bob Griffiths, Head Forester, Newborough, who received the M.B.E. in the New Year 'Honours List' must be one of the few men to have planted a forest in a desert.

Newborough Warren was acquired by the Forestry Commission in 1939 but was immediately taken over for military training. In 1946 it was handed back, 1700 acres of mobile sand dunes strewn, literally, with high explosives. In September of that year Bob Griffiths arrived in Newborough with a load of fencing material!

There was no tradition of forestry in Anglesey, nor was Newborough Warren comparable to any other Commission acquisition. Its position in the south-west corner of the island is extremely exposed, there was not a single tree on the land nor any vegetation higher than 3ft; the first men recruited didn't really think they were entering permanent employment.

Bob was faced with two major problems: Stabilizing the dunes and preventing further sand encroachment from the foreshore. The latter

was achieved by developing littoral dunes, as has been done elsewhere; to fix the dunes Bob made an important innovation. This was to spread roadside cuttings on the dunes.

By the early fifties it was apparent that the Commission was here to stay, and by providing employment for 35-40 men was making a significant contribution to the local economy. In 1951 Bob married a local girl.

As well as establishing the forest Bob was actively engaged with nature conser-

vation and was treasurer of Newborough Football Club for some years, a period when the team was very successful in cup and league competitions.

Apart from employment opportunity the local community was beginning to benefit from the forest in another way. Sand accretion had been taking place for over six hundred years, indeed the original village had been overwhelmed in the late middle-ages and agricultural land was still being lost. The sand was now stopped and the surrounding land sheltered enough to en-

## Shelter in the wilderness

The Forestry Commission are to provide a wilderness shelter for long distance ramblers going into a remote part of the Galloway Hills in South Scotland.

The shelter will be of simple, timber construction and will provide the same basic facilities as mountain bothies which already exist in some isolated glens in the Highlands and Southern Uplands of Scotland.

And if the shelter is a success, the Commission will consider constructing shelters at suitable locations on their land in other parts of the country.

Second-year students at the Department of Architecture at Edinburgh University have been working on a project designing a suitable shelter — and the selected prototype was chosen from among 22 different design proposals from the students.

The selected design by Nicola Foot (22) is of a wigwam appearance and will be of timber construction with central stove and downstairs living quarters with sleeping space for about a dozen people upstairs. Only the most basic facilities will be provided with water collected from a stream

or river nearby.

The prototype shelter will be constructed later this year and conveyed in prefabricated sections — possibly by helicopter — to the remote spot chosen in the Galloway Forest Park.

Mr John Davies, the Forestry Commission's Conservator of Forests for South Scotland, said: "The idea is that these shelters will be for long distance walkers going into remote, lonely, and often beautiful, parts of the countryside.

"We are not going to publicise the location of the shelter. Those people who are experienced long distance walkers and who are able to take care of themselves in these remote places, will discover for themselves where the shelters are located. They will find them on their travels and the news will spread by word or mouth.

"We do not, of course, wish to attract inexperienced wal-



kers into these wild places."

Mr Roger Larsen, Head of Recreation Branch said: "The shelters had to be designed for locations such as in woodland, in a clearing, on an open hill-

side, or perhaps under a crag or on rocky ground.

"Nicola's design was ideal for Galloway and so we decided to go ahead with its construction."

## PEERAGE FOR COMMISSIONER

MR ALEC DONNET, part-time Forestry Commissioner was created a Life Peer in March. Last month he was introduced into the House of Lords as Baron Donnet of Balgay.

Lord Donnet was until March Scottish Regional Secretary of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. He was elected national Chairman of the Union in 1970 after six years as Vice Chairman, was a member and President of the General Council of the Scottish TUC in 1970-71 and is a former member of the General

Council of the British TUC. A JP, his other appointments include: Government Director, Scottish Transport Group; member, Scottish Economic Council; Assistant Commissioner to the Royal Commission on the Constitution and a member of the Price Commission.

Lord Donnet has been a Commissioner since 1973.

## MOTOR AUCTION

The Motor Auctions Group who handle the sale of surplus Forestry Commission vehicles, machinery and equipment have opened a new site at Newmains, Wishaw, Lanark, trading as Motor Auctions (Scotland).

The first Commission sale at the new premises will be held on Thursday, July 20, 1978.

Normally about 500 lots are sold in one day ranging from chainsaws to bulldozers.

Chainsaws are sold in lots of 3.

At the last Commission sale at Kilburn, near Derby, the gross receipts exceeded £250,000.

## FC DRIVERS PLEASE NOTE

DOUG PETTY, Conservancy Mechanical Engineer NE(E) sent the following memo to FC drivers.

Forestry Commission Vehicles and How to Recognise them: they have the following features rarely found in private vehicles.

1. They travel faster in ALL gears, especially reverse.
2. They accelerate at a phenomenal rate.
3. They enjoy a much shorter braking distance.
4. They have a much tighter turning circle.
5. They can take ramps at twice the speed of private cars.
6. Battery, water, oil and tyre pressures do not need to be checked nearly so often.
7. The floor is shaped just like an ashtray.
8. They only burn the petrol with the highest Green Shield Stamp rate.
9. They do not require to be garaged at night.
10. Can be driven for up to 100 miles with oil warning light flashing.
11. They need cleaning less often, especially inside.
12. The suspension is reinforced to allow carriage of concrete slabs and other heavy building materials.
13. They are adapted to allow reverse gear to be engaged while the car is still moving forwards.
14. The tyre walls are designed to allow bumping into and over kerbstones.
15. Unusual and alarming engine noises are easily eliminated by the adjustment of the fitted radio volume control.
16. No security needed. May be left anywhere, unlocked, with the keys in the ignition.
17. They have an aversion to any form of maintenance.
18. They tend to multiply at an alarming rate.



# THE GLORIES OF WESTONBIRT

A MAGNIFICENT new pavilion and visitor centre was opened by the Duke of Beaufort at England's finest tree garden — the Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire.

The Forestry Commission decided to provide the new pavilion to let the public get the most out of their visits to see the "Glories of Westonbirt", the 2,000 trees of 550 species covering 250 acres of land.

The arboretum is reputed to contain the best collection of temperate trees in the world and draws 140,000 visitors each year.

The pavilion and visitor centre complex has been built at a cost of about £85,000.

The pavilion and centre are aimed at making sure members of the public receive the best information and enjoyment from their visit to the arboretum. A fascinating display of information about the history of the tree garden and the trees it contains — some of them over 150 years of age — will be complemented by a special "Things to See Today" map highlighting the best spots in the garden for colourful displays of flowers and leaves. The information on the map will be updated each day, reflecting the changing kaleidoscope of colour in the garden during the seasons.

The pavilion is of timber

and fir trees and blends perfectly with the sylvan setting.

Large windows allow visitors to look out into the woodland. As well as information displays the pavilion also has a counter where members of the public can chat to foresters about the trees in the garden. A full range of guide books and other publications will be available.

Beside the pavilion is a wood-built cafeteria selling refreshments, snacks and sweets and timber seats have been laid out in a special area under the trees.

And then it's out to the glories of Westonbirt — more than 2,000 trees of 550 species covering 250 acres of land. Spring flowering trees and shrubs and the spectacular autumn leaf colour are major attractions but there is always plenty to interest

the visitor at every time of the year.

## Labelled

"Here at Westonbirt we encourage the public NOT to keep to the footpaths but to walk among the trees," said Mr Des Cousins, Chief Forester at the tree garden.

"Many of the trees are labelled and people can see at a glance what kind of species they are looking at. We welcome visitors every day of the year."

Westonbirt Arboretum was started by Robert Holford in 1829 on open agricultural land and the main area was planted around 1855. Three of the major avenues were aligned with a view to Westonbirt House (now a school) but there were no other natural or artificial features to help the design, the land being mostly flat. The beautiful landscaping relies entirely on the trees and their placing. The arboretum also includes part of an ancient

woodland known as Silk Wood.

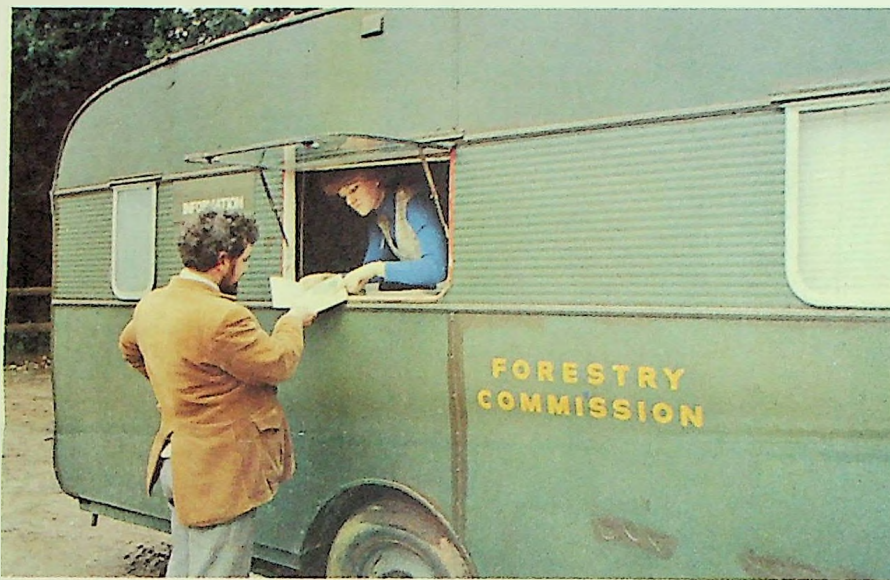
The arboretum was taken over by the Forestry Commission in 1956 and work of maintaining the tree garden has continued and there has been new planting, cataloguing and labelling. Westonbirt is as comprehensive in its tree varieties as a single arboretum can be but it is particularly notable for its collection of maple, birch, oak, mountain ash and whitebeams, and conifers in general, including giant redwoods, Douglas and Noble firs. The collection is of considerable scientific and educational value. Youngsters are especially

welcome and school parties often tour the arboretum.

## Surviving elms

Of special interest nowadays are the arboretum's surviving elms, which have been treated several times in an effort to save them from Dutch elm disease, which has virtually destroyed the elm population in this part of the country.

The official opening of the new pavilion and visitor centre was carried out by the Duke of Beaufort, who lives nearby and who is a member of the Westonbirt Consultative Committee appointed by the Forestry Commission.



The green caravan which served as the old information centre at Westonbirt. Changed days indeed!

AT the opening ceremony, the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort were welcomed by Sir Richard Cotterell, who served as chairman of the Westonbirt Consultative Committee.

The new pavilion is a tribute to the work of many people in the Commission, including Alan Mitchell and Dick Crowther, from Alice Holt; David Johnston, director of research; designer Bob Jones and Design branch; and last, but certainly not least, Chief Forester Des Cousins, Foresters Peter Webb and John White and their staff at Westonbirt.



The ornamental entrance to the visitor pavilion at Westonbirt with the glass dome of the pavilion just showing above the trees.



Amongst the "Glories of Westonbirt" — the new visitor pavilion nestles beside some of the 2,000 trees which have become so popular with the public. Because of the excellence of the design and construction, the pavilion appears to have been there for some time with the trees having grown up round about it.



Visitors relaxing in the refreshment area, which has been laid out with timber seats. A smaller pavilion houses the cafeteria (right), which lies a short distance from the main pavilion.





# Nature News

## The wood ant — a 'forester's friend'

**WANTED** — information about the whereabouts of the wood ant — a "forester's friend". That's the appeal which has gone out to foresters and forest workers from Dr Eric Lucey of Edinburgh University's Department of Animal Genetics, who is carrying out a survey on this insect.



A thriving wood ants nest in Dr Lucey's laboratory at Edinburgh University

And Dr Lucey hopes to make a film about the life of the wood ant.

"We have observed that the ant is often found in areas of Caledonian Pine and we know there is a link between this kind of tree, the kind of area where it grows, and the insect," said Dr Lucey.

"But we believe there may also be other areas of woodland where the ant lives and I was hoping that foresters who know of particular locations of the ant could let me know about it."

The ant is thought to be a "forester's friend" — for it has an enormous appetite for insect pests that can attack trees.

The ant can play an important part in the ecology of forest plantations and recent awareness of this has led to moves being made to protect the species.

Easiest way of finding them is through spotting their nests — which are usually between one and three feet high conical piles of pine needles and other detritus. Often nearby colonies are found linked to the main nest sites by quite clear communications pathways.

If nests are found Dr Lucey would like

the following information:

- 1) Six-figure map reference and date.
- 2) Rough height of main nest.
- 3) Note of any closely associated minor nest possibly sketches of foraging tracks.
- 4) Type of woodland.
- 5) Position — i.e. deep in wood or on sunny open bank, etc.
- 6) What type of materials the nest is made of. (They will mostly be pine needles but other materials have been noted).

And this is the best time of year for finding the ants. Their activity is low during the winter but it builds up again in the spring and the nests are very noticeable by June.

Information should be sent to Dr Lucey at:

**Research Film Unit,  
Department of Animal Genetics,  
Edinburgh University,  
West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9  
3JN.**

**Tel: 031 667 1081, Ext 3526.**



# JACK JONES VISITS THETFORD

The latest forestry techniques, as being developed and used by the Forestry Commission at Thetford, could play a vital part in the fight to restore the country's economy to full health.

That was the feeling of Mr Jack Jones, retiring secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, when he saw the work of the commission at Santon Downham and Brandon Depot during his recent visit.

The growth of the forestry industry and production of more home-grown wood for industry could save millions of pounds on the unnecessary

importation of foreign timber.

"As a union we are pressing for the expansion of the forestry industry," said Mr Jones. "If we are really serious about import substitution, forestry is one of the areas we must stress."

Mr Jones met staff and workers in the South Downham Office and nursery, the Brandon Depot and King's Forest. He saw work in the forest nursery and later watched a tree processor at work.



Jack Jones meets King's Chainsawyer, Dave Allen. Also in picture Mr Ken Buswell, District Officer and half hidden Mr Stan Cator, Union Representative Brandon Depot.



Viewing first thinning operations at King's with Mr Jones, left to right: Mr Stan Cator, Union Representative Brandon Depot, Mr Ken Buswell, District Officer, Mr Ron Todd, Regional Organiser TGWU.

## SEE YOUR FORESTS WEEK

THE Forestry Commission's national "See Your Forests Week" 20 May to 27 May captured the public's imagination. The invitation to the forests coincided with the publication of a new series of comprehensive guides with maps covering the many recreational facilities which now exist in forests all over Britain.

The aim of "See Your Forests Week" was to make the public aware of what is available to see and do on a forest visit and, although over two hundred forests are, in fact, open to visitors every week of the year there was a special welcome to those making a point of visiting a forest during "See Your Forests Week".

The guides, aptly named "See Your Forests - 1978" come in four versions—Scotland, North England, South England and Wales. They fold into a handy glove-box size and are designed to be unfolded in sections with quick and easy cross reference between the text and the map.

In addition to describing the already popular forest walks, trails, campsites, car parks and picnic places for which the Commission is well known, the guides also include details of newer and lesser known facilities like wayfaring courses, wildlife observation hides, forest drives, visitors centres, and forests where fishing and horseriding are permitted.

Several new facilities were opened just before and during

the week. The Chairman of the Scottish Tourist Board opened an exciting new log cabin information centre at Strathyre, the "Gateway to the Highlands" on 24 May. A new woodland walk at Snake Pass in the Peak National Park will be opened on 19 May. A new recreation complex on the Caldon Canal in Staffordshire will be opened on 25 May. A joint project with the British Waterways Board it consists of a new landing stage, picnic place and waymarked forest walk in Ruelow Wood.

The most exciting major new facility to be added to the list will undoubtedly be the new pavilion and visitor centre at England's finest tree garden — the Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire. This was officially opened by the Duke of Beaufort on 17 May. The timber built visitor centre uses fascinating displays to introduce the visitor to the glories of Westonbirt which contains more than 2,000 rare and exotic trees of 550 species in the best collection of temperate trees in the world. (See centre pages).

In all the Commission has provided recreational facilities at 183 of its forests in 73 Scottish forests, 70 English forests and 40 Welsh forests. It has created 7 Forest Parks in areas of great tourist attraction like Argyll, Glenmore in the Cairngorms, Galloway, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, the Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley and Snowdonia. In addition the New Forest with

its unique woodlands and heaths offers tremendous opportunities for the public's enjoyment.

Although the provision of facilities has greatly increased to meet public demand in recent years the Commission has long been conscious of the potential of forests for recreation. It created its first Forest Park in Argyll in 1935 and opened its first campsite at Ardgartan at the head of Loch Long in 1936!

Except in forests where legal restraints prevent access (where for instance the sporting rights are not managed by the Commission) the majority of forests are open to the public on foot. The policy of barring private cars from forest roads is in tune with the Commission's aim of preserving the peace and tranquility of the forest environment. It has relaxed this policy only in exceptional cases where a particularly scenic forest road has been designated a forest drive. Otherwise most of the 10,000 miles of forest roads are available to the walkers only.

"See Your Forests - '78" is designed and compiled by the Forestry Commission, illustrated by John Thirk and printed by Bartholomews. Much credit for the new publication must go to Bill Ball of Forest Design Branch, Graham Bull and Keith Ball of HQ Drawing Office and the all CRPO's district officers and foresters who made such a great effort to produce the maps and information.

## POTS FROM ALICE

DEEP in the Alice Holt Forest, near Farnham, lie the remains of an ancient pottery. Vast waster dumps of potsherds, bases and primitive kilns, clay workings and the foundations of huts and buildings indicate a rural industry of considerable size that reached its peak during the latter part of the Roman occupation of Britain.

In those days, pottery vessels were used in every home and to contain exports to other parts of the Roman empire. The Romans considered efficient pottery industries essential to the economy of this remote province.

Part-time archaeologist Malcolm Lyne and his colleague, Rosemary Jefferies, have been trying to determine the importance of the pottery at Alice Holt. For almost five years they travelled throughout England and Wales, gleaned information from dusty backrooms in museums. They surveyed the site and started an excavation.

Now they believe that beneath a few inches of leaf mould in Alice Holt lie the remains of the 'Stoke-on-Trent' of Roman Britain. While in nearby Farnham today, an old established firm making earthenware pots and crocks in a 19th century kiln is the last survivor of an industrial tradition that has supported local potters since just after the birth of Christ.

But many mysteries still remain unsolved. Not least among them is how the Roman pots were fired.

During the last half of 1977 a small group of scientists, archaeologists and potters, led by Mr. Lyne, excavated the site of a number of these kilns. They built an experimental replica nearby, filled it with 80 Roman style pots made by the West Surrey College of Art and heated it with wood from the surrounding forest. Results are encouraging — many of the pots produced being almost indistinguishable from the few that remain from firings 1700 years ago.

## A look at Chiltern Forest

by Simon Leatherdale,  
forest worker, Chiltern

SITUATED on the Chiltern hills to the north west of London, bounded on the north west by the Chiltern escarpment, on the south by the river Thames and on the east by the M1 motorway, the Commission's forest-on-the-hills had its beginnings in the 1950's (although certain woods were held prior to this). It now runs to approximately 2,480 ha. (6,200 acres) comprising over 100 separate woods spread over a total area in excess of 400 square miles.

Briefly, its history begins with 1066 (and all that!) at which time the hills were cloaked in scrub, mostly Oak and Beech (in that order).

Gradually the Oak was exploited for fuel, charcoal and tannin until by the coming of the Industrial Revolution the woods were almost pure beech. At about this time the furniture industry — based as it is today, in High Wycombe — underwent a dramatic expansion, a result of which was that the untended beechwoods were brought under proper management. The industry continued to prosper until cheaper timber from abroad, killed the incentive to replant and tend the woods. The decline has continued to the present day, save for a brief revival during World War Two, when there was a demand for pit props, rifle butts and wood for 'Mosquito' planes. In fact it's fair to say that the woods had seen their heyday before the Great War.

The Commission started planting in earnest in the late 1950's — mainly Larch, Norway Spruce, Scots and Corsican Pine and also Beech and Oak. Consequently the new woods were generally coniferous — a policy much criticised by Amenity Societies and the general public. The outcome of this was the 'Chiltern Standing Conference' (formed in 1967). This concluded in the publication of the 'Chiltern Plan' (in 1971). This basically means that the hills will be perpetuated as they are now. The effect on forestry here is that all planting must incorporate a minimum of 500 Beech or other broadleaved species per hectare (200 per acre) and that all clear felling is limited to 2.8 ha. (7 acre) plots. Incidentally it has been calculated that amenity pressure can reduce production by as much as 50%. It would be appropriate here to mention that the whole area, ever at its extremities, is now influenced by the London 'commuter belt'. It is however still comparatively rural and (particularly in Oxfordshire) in some places even remote.

## CHILTERN NOW

The present state of the forest is that of an original seven forests at the inception, namely Latimer, Wendover, Beechwood, Wilton Park, Watlington, Marlow and Crowsley Park, only one remains — Chiltern North and South. The majority of the woods (64%) are covered by the north beat.

The total workforce consists of 19 forest staff, 4 supervisory staff and 1 office clerk. The forest staff is split up as follows: Chiltern North 9, Chiltern North 9, Chiltern South 5, also there is a 'mobile gang' of 2 who work on both beats — wherever work demands, and a 'motorway gang' of 3 who are based at Chiltern South and tend trees on all the motorways and certain 'A' roads in the area eg. M40, A41 (M), M25 and a section of the M1.

As for the actual state of the woods at present — the majority are now emerging from the thicket stage but there is also a small thinning, planting and weeding programme with a very small amount of clear felling: (the planting and weeding programme will remain small because no new land is being acquired). The production for 1978-9 is expected to be 2,315m<sup>3</sup> and all production at present, and for the foreseeable future, is undertaken by contractors.

As for pests — we've got our share of them. With a disproportionately long fence line due to so large a number of small woods coupled with a virtual standstill in new fencing, rabbits are the largest problem, but they are ably assisted by hares, squirrels, glis, mice, voles, deer (mainly fallow and muntjac) and 'Sheffield blight'. One can add to these the inevitable problem of Homo Sapiens (Var. Vandalus). Dutch elm disease is quite a problem, having taken a heavy toll in the area — in fact its rare, to see a healthy mature elm these days. Beech Bark 'disease' is also in evidence but its early days yet.

In the conclusion it can be said that as the woods pass the cleaning stage they will be more and more attractive to look at and (dare I say it?) to work in and, although the forest will never attain a high rank among production forests, it will be of increasing relevance from an amenity point of view.

NOTE: Perhaps Simon Leatherdale's article will prompt readers to produce descriptions of other forests. The Editor will be happy to receive about 600 words on the forest of your choice.



## AROUND &amp; ABOUT

## AROUND &amp; ABOUT

## NORTH SCOTLAND

## BOB HANDS OVER TO BOB!



AT a crowded dinner in Inverness, friends and colleagues of Mr Robert Innes who has retired as Conservator North (Scotland), gathered to give him an enthusiastic send off.

In the presence of Mr John Mackie, Chairman, Mr George Stewart, Commissioner, Mr John Dickson, former Director General, and many other colleagues from Headquarters and other Conservancies, Mr George Holmes, Director General, presented Mr Innes with a power drill, a camera tripod and a cheque for £300.

Mr Innes graduated from Aberdeen University and joined the Commission in 1947 in the North Conservancy as a District Officer. Promotion to Assistant Conservator followed in 1956 and to Conservator in 1970.

Mr Innes' successor is another "Bob" — Mr Robert Cathie, on promotion from Assistant Conservator, South Wales.

## SOUTH WALES

## DAVID KEEPS ON PLOUGHING . . .

DAVID John Price, forest craftsman at Caer, has certainly "ploughed his way" round South Wales Conservancy!

For he was of the conservancy's original team of mobile ploughmen and between 1948 and 1966 ploughed many thousands of acres visiting every forest in the conservancy.

Dquid who has now retired on health grounds, had many amusing stories to tell about his days with the Commission. One of his favourites was when he was ordered by a farmer's wife to abandon his tractor, plough and food bag, and was marched off the land by the good lady who was armed with a 12 bore shotgun! He doesn't know to this day whether or not it was loaded — but he didn't want to find out at the time!

David intends spending his retirement at Cilicwm where he runs a small holding — so he will keep on ploughing!

## Pocket watch for Albert

ALBERT Parker retired as a Forest Craftsman at Tintern forest just before his 65th birthday after 16 years' service. Albert started work on the former Chepstow Forest in December 1961. A pocket watch was presented to Albert at a "Beer and Skittles" evening held at the Anchor Hotel, Tintern, attended by colleagues, families and friends.

## Rugby Club send-off

A WELL attended gathering of colleagues was held at Llandovery Rugby Club recently to mark the occasion of Mr D. T. L Davies' retirement.

Llew, who unfortunately has not been in the best of health over the past few years, started his career with the Commission some 28 years ago in Caer Forest S(W) where he progressed to become shotman for the Forest Area.

In 1954, Llew joined the newly formed Llandovery Civil Engineering Department as a shotman and during the next ten years became proficient in the operation of a number of machines and in 1965 became the tanker driver for the area.

During this time Llew was tenant of a Commission small-holding until he was able to buy the farm in 1972.

## SOUTH SCOTLAND

## 81 YEARS AT SOLWAY

DURING the past year three men, with a total service of 81 years, have retired at Solway Forest.

Davy Walker (ganger) joined us in 1947 after considerable experience with timber merchants and was an expert in felling large trees. He retired in March, 1977 after 29½ years' service and still

## EAST ENGLAND

## Brian's on the map

BRIAN Holtam received an unusual — and beautiful — gift when he retired as Conservator for East England.

It was an inscribed map showing the parts of the country where Mr Holtam worked during almost 30 years with the Forestry Commission. The map was prepared by Winnie Chubb and Ann Howlett, of the East-England drawing office, and was presented to Mr Holtam along with a cheque by the Director

## John's love for roses

JOHN Foote, Senior Clerk of Works at Thetford has retired on reaching age 65. He had served 27 years in E(E) Conservancy.

A retirement ceremony was arranged at the Thetford District Office. Presentations to him included a cheque, six glass goblets suitably engraved by Ken Snook, ex Chief Land Agent and enclosed in a presentation case made by Bob Allen, a carpenter in the Estate gang. It was appropriate that the engravings were of roses, one of John's passions.

takes a keen interest in the forest, supplying rarer trees and shrubs for planting in amenity areas.

Paul Elliot (handyman) retired in February, 1978 after 21 years' service. Paul had a knowledge of joinery, cabinet making and various other jobs and was a handyman in the true sense of the word. There

## Andy hangs up his saw

GANAGER Andy Watt's stock phrase was "I'm nae a professional woodcutter ye ken". But his colleagues thought that if he wasn't then he was indeed a very gifted amateur for Andy took great pride in maintaining his power saw and kept the chain like a veritable razor.

Andy of Laigh of Moray has now retired after 32 years' service with the Commission.

His first forest was Monaughty and then he moved to Dallas where he was involved in the establishment of the Wangie Hill plantations. He also worked at Glendevon and then Newtyle which became part of Laigh of Moray.

## Fruit bowl for Lewis

A HAND-ENGRAVED Caithness glass fruit bowl bearing the Robertson crest and the dates 1935-77 was presented to Mr Lewis Robertson on his retirement from Glenmore Forest.

The dates mark his service with the Forestry Commission. About 80 colleagues gathered at the Norwegian Hostel at Glenmore for the presentation by Alistair Morison, head forester at Glenmore.

General, Mr George Holmes.

Other unusual gifts were a wood carving "Corsican Woman" in local Corsican Pine made and presented by Mick Dinning, assistant conservator H&M, and a desk set made from scrap metal presented by Wal Roshier, workshop manager in the absence through illness of Graham Cook.

## EAST SCOTLAND

## WILLIE THE TRAPPER

WILLIE Gerrie served as a ranger come Forest Craftsman for 27 years and is locally acknowledged as an expert rabbit trapper, particularly with the snare.

At a ceremony in the Ben-narchie Forest Office, presided over by Chief Forester Mr R. G. Aitken, the staff presented Willie with suitable gifts — a watch "to help him get up early"; some wire "to make snares"; and a packet of salt "to put on the rabbits' tails — a recognised sure-fire method of capture".

are many fine examples of his work throughout the forest.

Bert Graham (ganger) joined the Commission from the Army in 1947, within a month of Davy Walker. He had been a shop manager in his pre-army days but fancied the outdoor life so much that he remained with us for 30½ years eventually becoming the expert in conversion of fencing material.

## SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

## George — a master of work!

GEORGE MASTERS, superintendent of works at the New Forest, has retired after 30 years with the Commission.

Following a lunch at a Lyndhurst Hotel a presentation was made in the Verderers' Hall by Don Small—Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest; and Roy Hughes — Conservancy Civil Engineer. George received a pewter tankard, a polaroid camera and a wall clock with sunburst frame representing the badge of the Coldstream Guards in which George served as a Sergeant.

George started life with the Commission in 1946 as a lorry driver, later to become a carpenter, civil engineering craftsman, road foreman and in 1971 appointed as Superintendent of Works.

A real character, George was liked and respected throughout the New Forest and very much concerned in the last few years with the New Forest Conservation Project.

## Len's farewell

AFTER 30 years in the Commission, Len Bowman, Administration and Finance Officer for the South East England Conservancy at Lyndhurst has retired.

Following a small luncheon at a Lyndhurst Hotel, staff wished Len a farewell in the Verderers' Hall where Mr Begley presented him with a cheque from his many friends and colleagues.

On many occasions Len has said that the office would fall to pieces if he left — no one thought it would actually come true!

## NORTH WALES

## SAFE DRIVING MEDAL FOR BLEDDYN

BLEDDYN Lloyd, Bronaber, Trawsfynydd, a lorry driver at Coed y Brenin forest in North Wales has retired after 29 years' service. He started with the Forestry Commission in November 1948 after a period in farming. He was later regraded to lorry driver.

To mark his retirement a ceremony was held at Maesgwm recently when Mr Nem Evans, on behalf of his

colleagues, presented him with a battery operated clock. Mr Alan Rix, Assistant Conservator North Wales conservancy presented him with a Gold Medal, with oak leaf, an award made under the National Safe Driving Campaign and Chief Forester Jim Hamilton recounted some of the numerous events which have punctuated Bloddyn's employment.



Bloddyn with his medal.

## ALICE HOLT

## Percy's role at Covent Garden

PERCY Mayne, executive officer in our publications section at Alice Holt, once worked at Covent Garden market in London as a salesman and cashier. "No I didn't balance baskets on my head!" he said. On Percy was with the Post Office Savings Bank. His stint at Covent Garden was before the last war.

## TREVOR'S 30 YEARS

AFTER completing almost 30 years' service with the Forestry Commission, Trevor Owen has retired.

He started his service at Dyfnant Forest in April 1947 as a forest worker and later became a lorry driver. During this period he came in contact with many of the forests of North Wales. At his own request he transferred to Mathrafal Forest in 1962 and became Forest Craftsman, and has resided since then at Llan-santffraid.

## CHAPEL HALL

## NEVER LATE FOR WORK

JOHN McLean clocked up a good record while working as a fitters mate at the central engineering workshops at Chapelhall — he was never late for work.

And when he retired he was presented with a music centre and cheque by Mr Jim Christie, assistant plant transport manager (north), on behalf of his colleagues.



# focus



Picture shows Nigel finishing winter gully climb near summit of Stob Coire Nan Lochain (3,657 ft) in Glencoe.

**NIGEL HAWKINS**, Information Branch's new Press Officer and Assistant Editor of *Slasher* has become one of the few mountaineers to climb all Scotland's 280 distinct mountains over 3,000 feet. These mountains are known as "Munros" after Sir Hugh Munro. Nigel's first Munro was Beinn Ime at Arrochar in the Argyll Forest Park which he completed on April 20, 1975. He completed his 280th — A'Mhaighdean, near Poolewe in western Ross (regarded as the most remote of the Munros) on April 15, 1978.

This meant the amazing achievement of topping all the summits in less than three years. Only a small handful have managed them in this kind of time-scale!

How did he do it? "Well, it was mainly done in hectic weekend dashes from Edinburgh to all parts of the Highlands (Skye and Mull too) with some concentrated week-long holidays as well.

"Half of the Munros were done in winter and I'm now going to try to do the other half in winter," said Nigel.

He didn't carry the traditional bottle of champagne for the 280th ascent — instead it was a bottle of port (Cockburn's Special Reserve!) — although we had a few sips to help on the way up! "Don't usually drink alcohol on the hills," he said.

After the final ascent Nigel planted a Scots Pine near the foot of the mountain. "It is on the top of a huge boulder so the deer don't nibble it! I don't

know if it will grow OK but the last I heard it seemed to be doing fine," he said.

As well as Munro-bagging he also goes rock, and snow and ice climbing where gaining the summit is secondary to ascending by an interesting, sometimes technically difficult, route. "I sometimes get scared and occasionally fall off!"

In fact he was avalanched 500 feet on the north face of Ben Nevis and broke his arm in December, 1976.

He climbed in the Austrian Alps last summer and is going back again this summer.

Because of mountaineering interests, Nigel is on the Council of the National Trust for Scotland and takes a special interest in their extensive mountain properties.

requisite number of legs, but they are all very brightly coloured, blue, red and yellow on a creamy background being predominate! Their webs are like steel and one could feel them pull tight against one's legs. One had to force through to break them.

And now to cap all that I have read in today's "The Sun", that UK Atomic Energy Authority want to hide their radioactive waste under our forests, and although they say it will not be radioactive, who knows? How many promises have been made by high ranking officials, throughout the world, on various issues, only to be broken? I for one would not like to trust them!

Besides who want's 1,000 foot boreholes all over our forests, especially if the effects of dumping such waste is going to mutilate our natural environment.

**Michael James King**  
Forest Craftsman  
Dunnerdale Forest  
Cumbria

## postbag

### Nuclear waste in forests?

Dear Editor

I feel that after being a reader of *Slasher* for some time now, I should write and express one of my own pet opinions!

I have worked in forestry for about 4½ years now, both in the private sector and in the Forestry Commission. The places of work have been as varied as the work I have been doing. From deepest Yorkshire, Lancashire, Scotland and now Cumbria, and on the way back to Cumbria, I happened to be working at Drigg, in Cumbria, weeding Scots Pine. The site in question is the Windscale site for tipping waste and I don't care what the authorities from Windscale say about no radioactive waste

being tipped there, I have seen with my own eyes containers, like huge dustbins, with "Radioactive Waste" printed on them, being dumped in pits.

In my own view, the plant and insect life there, were being slowly mutilated by the presence of what I feel sure, was radioactivity higher than what is encountered in the atmosphere and earth's crust, etc. The blackberries were huge things, about the size of golf balls, and the spiders, well, Alfred Hitchcock could make a better box office, record breaking film, than any other film made, simply by using these hideously mutilated spiders as the stars!!

The spiders are large bodied with small heads and the

## Slasher correspondents

EDITOR Hazel Pottinger. ASST. EDITOR Nigel Hawkins  
EDITORIAL ADDRESS Headquarters: 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT  
CORRESPONDENTS (Based in Conservancy offices)

**ENGLAND**  
North West: Bill Wardrop  
North East: Eric Cuerden  
East: Neville Pauley  
South East: John Ward  
South West: Bernard Cutcliffe

**WALES**  
South: Gwyn Owen  
North: Caroline Jones  
**SCOTLAND**  
North: Richard Westlake  
East: Douglas Furneaux

West: Archie Cameron  
South: Les Warmington

**RESEARCH**  
Alice Holt, Noel Blachford  
NRS: Fred McLauchlan

## OBITUARY

### MR JACK GUNNING

A 100% attendance by his fellow workers at the funeral of this popular member of the Carrick Forest work force, who died recently at his home in Stainton. Jack completed 30 years' loyal service with the F.C. In 1948 he planted some of the first trees at Tairlaw, now part of Carrick Forest.

Always a cheerful character, Jack tackled his work with skill and enthusiasm.

He was very proud of his attractive cottage in the conservation village of Straiton, which he shared with his mother.

His interests included gardening, breeding terriers and his flock of sheep.

Within the community he was respected, being known to be always willing to do that little extra without fuss or thought of reward.

### MR J. N. JUDGE

Head Forester Norman Judge has died.

Since 1969 Norman has been Head Forester on private woodlands work in Hereford and Worcester and has done fine work and made many friends in the area, especially in connection with the Three Counties Show, and in the R.F.S.

He had a few months on sick leave in 1975, but since then has worked until a few weeks ago in his normal efficient, patient and cheerful manner.

Norman was with the Territorials and served in the Royal Engineers throughout the war, he was in France and Dunkirk and for several years in India and Burma.

Afterwards he went to Forestry School at New Park, Brockenhurst and Gwydr. Then followed service in Wales, the New Forest, Byrness, Bristol Forest and Wareham before coming to Malvern.

He is sadly missed by all of us in the local forestry scene.

### MR A. LESLIE LARGE

Mr A Leslie Large, Forester at Ceri has died, aged 52 years. Les as he was known to his friends, joined the Forestry Commission as a Forest worker at Walcot Forest NW(E) in March 1948. He went to Gwydyr Forester Training School for 2 years and in 1952 was appointed to Carno Forest as an Ex-School Ganger, where he was later Foreman and Assistant Forester. In 1960 he was seconded to

Flintshire Woodlands Ltd for a short period, and at the end of his secondment was posted to Ceri, and was promoted to Forester in March 1961. All the years he worked with the Forestry Commission were spent in the Newtown area, where he was held in high esteem. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow, daughter and two sons.

### MR FRANK SHINN

Frank Shinn, ex-Forester has died of a heart attack at the age of 77. Frank retired on age limit in 1969, having served in E(E) for the whole of his service. The greater part was spent in the Thetford area and in 1960 he was transferred to the then Tunstall Forest. He then transferred to Waveney (now Wensum) and retired to that area. Since retirement he continued to give valuable service to the Commission as a warden on a contract basis in the isolated Waveney area and as such maintained close contact with local staff.

He leaves a widow, daughter and grandchildren to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

### MISS MARGARET SMART

Staff of West Conservancy, Scotland received a shock when they learned of the untimely death of Miss Margaret Smart, their long-serving telephonist, who died in hospital on 26 January 1978 at the age of 57.

Although Margaret had been on sick leave for a few months, no one suspected that her illness was so serious.

She was one of the few remaining staff members who served in the old Conservancy office at Bothwell Street, Glasgow, where she started as a typist in 1949, prior to service in West George Street, Renfrew Street and India Street.

All who came in contact with Margaret Smart will remember her patient, courteous and efficient operation of the switchboard.

The funeral took place at Baldowie Crematorium, and a large contingent of Conservancy friends and colleagues joined her relatives in paying their last respects.

### MR CYRIL SPENCER

It is with regret that we announce the death of Cyril Spencer, a retired skilled forest worker, aged 66 of Kesteven Forest, East England.

Cyril retired in May '75 due

to poor health after 17 years service, but it was a great shock to all when he collapsed suddenly in the street near his home in Bourne, Lincolnshire.

Cyril was a true forest craftsman, and a tree feller of the old school, he was a very quiet man, hard working and greatly respected by all who worked with him.

### MR FRANK WATSON SMITH

Forest Craftsman, Mr Frank Watson Smith of Wark Forest died in hospital aged 47 years. Mr Watson had worked with The Commission for 29 years. He leaves a widow to whom we extend our sympathy.

### MR JOE WESTACOTT

Joe Westacott came to Dartmoor Forest as Head Forester in charge of production in 1972, by so doing he was returning to his native county.

Joe was "a character" in his own right who never hesitated to speak his mind and at the same time show loyalty to his colleagues. He had a great sense of humour and was a fine "teller of tales", these tales mostly concerned the folks he had known and worked with and were embellished with comments which were very much his own.

Joe will be greatly missed on Dartmoor and also by his much wider circle of friends particularly in the Forest of Dean where he worked for 18 years.

The degree to which he was liked and respected was made very clear by the large number of colleagues, friends and local people who attended his funeral.

It is perhaps some small consolation to his wife and family and friends that he was laid to rest in the soil of Dartmoor, a place for which he had a great affection.

### MR LESLIE WHITE

It is with regret that we announce the death of Leslie White, retired forest worker from Kesteven Forest, East England.

Leslie finally retired in March 73 at the age of 73 after doing his last 8 years as part time.

He had suffered rather poor health but his final illness only lasted less than 2 days.

Leslie will best be remembered for his ability, helpfulness and willingness to assist anyone who asked for his help, even after his final official retirement.

## Highlights from 1976-1977 Annual Report

**LAND ACQUISITION.** A total of 17,698 hectares (44,245 acres) of plantable land was acquired during the year. Distribution was Scotland 16,305 hectares; Wales 802 hectares; England 591 hectares. Average cost of plantable land was £149 per hectare, an increase of 14 per cent over the previous year.

**COMMISSION PLANTING.** new planting and restocking together amounted to 18,703 hectares. This was less than the general level

of recent years because of the cold and wet spring of 1977 which resulted in a smaller area being planted than had been planned.

**PRIVATE PLANTING.** The decline in private planting continued with only 9,156 hectares of planting grant-aided under the Commission's schemes with 7,232 of this being new planting. The figure for new planting was a drop of 62 per cent compared with the average annual rate during 1970-75.

**ACCOUNTS.** The Grant in aid of the Forestry Fund voted by Parliament for 1976/77 was £30.142 million of which £27 million was drawn into the Forestry Fund — the remainder being surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. Receipts by the FC from sale of timber, etc totalled £29.6 million, an increase of £5.7 million over 1975/76.

Total expenditure on land acquisition salaries, materials etc was £55.9 million, an increase of £4.9 million over the previous year.