



SLASHER

NEWSPAPER OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION



No. 297 SUMMER 1978

SURVIVAL PLAN FOR NEW FOREST

THE New Forest Technical Review Group has proposed that no new car parks, campsites or sporting facilities should be provided in the forest for the next few years.

In its Statement of Future Strategy recently approved by Commissioners, the Group said it was aware that many of those consulted believed that the forest was receiving, at times, more visitors than it was capable of accommodating without serious destruction.

"It shares these misgivings but it is not at present able to make a firm judgement on the extent of the excessive pressure until there is some objective measure of the forest's capacity to absorb more visitors and the facilities they need. This assessment must take into account the quality of both the biological and wilderness resources and the well-being of those who work and live in the forest. Efforts to establish these criteria should be pursued vigorously.

"For the present, proposals for additional visitor facilities should be accepted only following vigorous scrutiny under the established consultative procedures and provided that they are essential for the future protection of the forest."

The Group now sees the forest entering a period of consolidation and strengthening of the measures which the Forestry Commission, in co-operation with interested bodies, has been implementing over the last six years. The conservation programme is regarded as the largest of its kind in this country and possibly the most ambitious to be attempted in Europe.

Unique

A unique national heritage, the New Forest has been described as "a miraculous survival of pre-Norman England". Extending over 145 square miles of rolling Hampshire countryside the New Forest contains historic and commercial woodlands, open heath, grassland, bogs, agricultural land, villages and ponds. Of this, 105 square miles originally belonged to the Crown and have been managed by the Forestry Commission since 1924. With its Timber Inclosures, Open Forest Waste and Ancient and



Holland's Wood Campsite where New Forest ponies are pleased to share their surroundings with holidaymakers. Photo: Douglas Green

Ornamental Woodlands — the finest relics of undisturbed deciduous forest in Britain and probably in the lowlands of Western Europe, the forest has become an international tourist attraction. By the late 1960's when annual visitors were approaching five and a half million, it was apparent that the forest was seriously threatened by increased recreation pressures and that action must be taken before it was virtually trampled to death.

Examine

A Joint Steering Committee was set up in 1969 to examine the conflicts and pressures and to draw up a conservation strategy. In 1971 its recommendations were accepted by the Minister of Agriculture and the bodies represented on the Steering Committee formed themselves into a Technical Review Group to monitor progress and consider future strategy. The statutory authorities of the New Forest represented on the Group consisted of the Forestry Commission as the implementing authority, Hampshire County Council, The New Forest District Council, the Nature Conservancy Council and the Verderers of the New Forest.

Mr Donn Small OBE, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest and Chairman of the Technical Review Group must take much of the credit for leading the group through the very sensitive and often controversial

proposals which have resulted in the subtle transformation and rehabilitation of the forest.

Visitors to the forest today will find it hard to recall the former sight of cars, caravans and tents which used to park at will all over the open spaces of the Open Forest causing extensive damage to the precious heath and grass land vegetation and creating an eyesore in a traditional natural wilderness. The key to the successful conservation measures has been the control, not of the visitors, but of their vehicles and tents. The establishment of Car Free Zones and the abolition of wild camping has given the forest a chance to recover yet at the same time it has been capable of absorbing some six million visitors in areas which are best suited to do so with the least disturbance to the overall character of the forest.

Today, it is with difficulty that one observes a car, caravan or tent on the Open Forest. These are carefully concealed in specially sited, landscaped car parks and camping areas.

Conservancy Civil Engineer and Recreation Officer, Mr Roy Hughes was responsible for the engineering works which have been considerable. In the six year period over 138 miles of protective roadside measures have been completed. These are actual physical barriers to prevent vehicles from driving on to the forest itself.

In the main they are very sensitively constructed graded

banks or ditches which have gradually become overgrown so as hardly to be noticeable. In certain areas the verges are protected by inobtrusive short posts or log rails. The Commission has constructed 139 car parks with a total capacity for 5,273 cars and improved existing campsites and provided others to make a total provision of 13 permanent campsites with a normal forest capacity of 5,000 pitches and five overflow areas with a total additional 1,000 pitches to deal with Bank Holiday peak pressures only. Great care was taken in the design of the car parks. Sites were carefully selected to ensure the car parks were as inobtrusive as possible. Natural depressions and hollows were favoured with adequate screening, durability under pressure and attractive shape. The siting of the parks was also linked to the behaviour of visitor arrival and where they had tended to park hitherto. Because the car parks are in use all year round they were protected with local forest gravel which blends with the natural surroundings.

Access

In the original survey of public access from the network of public roads that criss-cross the forest it was estimated that over twelve hundred different access points were available. These have now been reduced to some one hundred and forty as accesses to car parks arranged like a necklace sur-

rounding the car free zones. An important part of the strategy of dispersed facilities was to channel visitors where pressures can be absorbed in more stable surroundings.

Despite having a "forest full" situation over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend and camping pressures reaching a peak level for the first time at the last weekend in July — all 5,000 pitches filled — the forest coped.

"The key to success" said Mr George Stewart, Commissioner for Forest and Estate Management "has been careful planning and good management, meaningful consultation and co-operation with the other statutory bodies involved."

The public themselves have on the whole co-operated and have accepted the conservation measures as a means to ensure the forest's protection. Many of the former scars caused by vehicles driving on the Open Forest have already healed, grazings have improved and the New Forest ponies have returned to former popular picnicking grounds to graze undisturbed.

"Today it is hard to believe that only in the passage of six years has the naturalness and wild character of the forest returned" said Mr Small. "Constant vigilance and prompt action by management will still be necessary."

"I am confident, however that when the Forest comes to celebrate another century of history, it will have been given an opportunity to survive even longer."



Picnicking at Longslade Bottom now a car free zone. The unsightly mass of cars, caravans and tents has now given way to animals, grazing undisturbed. Photo: Douglas Green

Axeman's **Log** **LOYAL MEN**

SIX forest workers who between them have clocked up an amazing total of more than 260 years service in forests in Scotland had a special day out at the Royal Highland Show at Inverlorn.

Highlight of the day was when Mr John Mackie, Chairman of the Forestry Commission, presented them with their long service certificates.

The ceremony took place in front of the log cabin in the popular outdoor area of the forestry exhibit — and wives, friends, press and members of the public gathered round to watch the presentation.

Afterwards the six men toured the showground — but for one of them the limelight was not yet over.

Sandy Walker, from Huntley, Aberdeenshire, had an important date with Scottish Television and was seen live throughout Scotland chatting to interviewer Tom Weir about the changes he had seen in the forest over 46 years.

Receiving certificates were:

Mr James Wallace (65) who joined the Forestry Commission in 1927 as a lad of 14 and who retired 51 years later after service mostly at Tulliallan Forest (now called Devilla Forest) in Clackmannanshire.

Mr John Jones (65) who joined the Forestry Commission at Edgarrhoe (now Lammermuir) in South Scotland in February 1928, and retired in January this year (1978). He was one of the first five men at Edgarrhoe when it was started in 1928 and is one of the few forest workers to cut down mature Spruce trees which he himself had planted.

Mr William Thomson (62) who retires in September this year, joined the Forestry Commission at Glentworth Forest, near Peebles, in 1929 when he was a lad of 14. He moved to Eshildshope in 1938 when he married and in 1945 transferred to Elibank, South Scotland.

Mr Duncan MacDonald

retired in February after 40 years of service to forestry and the timber industry. He joined the Forestry Commission at Inverlorn Forest in Argyll in 1937. During the war he served at the Home Grown Timber Production Department and returned to Inverlorn in 1945. Seven years later he went to nearby Eredine Forest, also in Argyll, as a horseman and in 1970 became a skilled forest worker in the same forest.

Mr Frank Forrest Thomson retires after 37 years service to forestry and the timber industry. He joined the war-time Home Grown Timber Production Department in the Bal-later area in 1941 and served there for four years. In 1945 he transferred to the Forestry Commission at Alltcaileach Forest, Aberdeenshire, and was given the job of horseman — a position he held until the last horse was sold there in 1963. Since then he has been involved in general forest work.

Mr Alexander Walker of Huntley Forest, Aberdeenshire, who in 1932 was involved in planting the Kemps Hills area of Clashindarroch Forest (now part of Huntly Forest) with European Larch. This was subsequently clear felled and in 1971 at the same spot Mr Walker was involved in planting Sitka Spruce. In 1939 he joined the "Timber Control" and was involved in felling at Bin, Dufftown, and Archiestown (now Craigellachie Forest). He worked with the Commission at Ballyward Nursery at Clashindarroch and saw the amalgamation of Gartly Moor, Clashindarroch and Bin to make what is now known as Huntly Forest.

Research on show

AT the recent Royal Meteorological Society Exhibition at Bracknell College, Berkshire, opened and attended by Her Majesty the Queen, the Northern Research Station Silviculture Section arranged and displayed the Commission exhibit.

Divided into two parts, the exhibit demonstrated the use of tatter flags and the application of their results, using actual flags which had been exposed under field conditions, and also a topographic wind tunnel model which showed how models of forests subjected to wind tunnel testing facilitated relative exposure mapping, which enabled management to assess areas for subsequent windthrow management decisions.

The Commission stand was organised by Research Head Forester, J. Hunt, from the Northern Research Station, Roslin, and Geoff Brunson from the New Zealand Forest Research Institute at Rotarua.

Open days

Three successful Open Days were held in July at the Forest Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge. Parties of schoolchildren visited on Thursday 6th, invited guests on Friday 7th, and the general public on Sunday 9th. The total number of visitors amounted to approximately 5,000.

In dry and sunny weather all aspects of the research work were on display with demonstrations and exhibits featured in all parts of the buildings and in the grounds. The high quality of presentation and the friendliness of the staff was commented on by many of the visitors, who found much to interest them in methods of plant rearing, control of wildlife, diseases and insects, and environmental studies. They saw how data on forest crops is collected, how seed is stored and tested, how the environmental features of the forest are studied, how the computer is used to analyse experiments, and bought nearly £500 worth of publications!

HUNDREDTH WHITLEY COUNCIL MEETING



MEMBERS of the 100th meeting of the Forestry Commission Whitley Council which was held at Headquarters on Thursday, 29 June 1978.

A commemorative copy of the minutes of the very first meeting of the Forestry Commission Whitley Council was presented to all members, who celebrated the occasion with a buffet lunch.

The first meeting of the Forestry Commission Whitley Council was held on 1 December 1920 under the Chairmanship of Lord Lovat. The Staff Side Chairman was Mr Cleland of the Executive Officers' Association and in addition to Staff Side representatives from the Civil Service Union, the Society of Civil Servants, the Clerical Officers' Association and the Civil Service Typist Association there was a representative of the Irish Foresters' Association (this was, of course, before partition in Ireland).

The idea of Whitleyism came from the report of a Committee set up in 1916 during the first world war, at the

time of serious and widespread industrial unrest, to devise a way of improving industrial relations. The Committee was chaired by Mr J. H. Whitley, Liberal MP for Halifax, and as a consequence of his Committee's report the Civil Service National Whitley Council was set up and held its first meeting in July 1919. Similar developments did not follow generally throughout private industry and for a long time the Civil Service was a leader in this form of joint consultation between management and employees.

The general objects of the Council are to "secure the greatest measure of co-operation between the Commission, in its capacity as employer, and the general body of the staff in matters affecting the Commission with a view to increasing efficiency of the staff; to provide machinery for dealing with

grievances and generally to bring together the experience and different points of view respecting conditions of service."

Because of the Commission's widespread activities Whitley Committees were set up locally in Headquarters and Conservancy Offices to deal with matters directly affecting staff in each of their respective areas.

On the Whitley Council matters which have been discussed since 1919 have ranged widely, from the status of Forestry Commission staff, in the 20s, to the reservation of Technical posts to men only, in the 30s, to the multiplication of bacteria in the Savile Row (Headquarters) water supply, in the 50s, to the dispersal of Headquarters London to Basingstoke in the 60s, its reunification in Edinburgh in the 70s, and the present day topics on Devolution and Industrial Democracy.



Photo: Courtesy of Coventry Evening Telegraph

AUTHORITY Bashing? No. Just a light-hearted and somewhat unusual ceremony to celebrate the restoration of the stocks in the grounds of Wroxhall Parish School. The oak supplied by Arden Forest was dressed up by forest workers. In the picture Mr C. Evans, Chairman of Wroxhall Parish Council tests the effectiveness of the restoration, aided and abetted by Forester J. Hill (fourth from left) and Arden Forest staff. Miss Morris of Warwick County Museum looks on. "I asked Forester J. Hill to write a few notes on the Forestry Commission in these parts and these were put in a sealed bottle and buried beneath the stocks," writes Jack Wilson, Chief Forester. "I thought it would be nice for future generations to know there had been a Forestry Commission in the area."



William Thomson receives his long service certificate from Forestry Commission chairman Mr John Mackie. Pictured are (left to right) Mr Sandy Walker, Mr Frank Thomson, Mr Duncan MacDonald, Mr Mackie, Mr William Thomson, Mr John Jones and Mr James Wallace.

APOLOGIES TO SIR RICHARD

EVENTS caught us on the hop in our story on the opening of the new Westonbirt visitor pavilion in the last "Slasher".

To meet our publication deadline the story was prepared in advance of the opening. At that time it had been hoped that Sir Richard Cot-

terrell, chairman of the Westonbirt Advisory Committee, would welcome the Duke of Beaufort at the opening.

Unfortunately, Sir Richard was ill and unable to attend and the Duke was welcomed by Mr David Johnston, the Commission's director of

research and development.

And in our list of mentions of people particularly involved in the project we overlooked David Moir and Estates Management Division who played a key role in the development. We hope they can forgive us.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

AT Grizedale Forest they're rather proud of their aptly named forest staff with a Head Forester Dean and Foresters Birch and Wood. "Can any other branch (groan) within the organisation top this?" asks Forester Birch.

How about Information Branch with its Head David Rooke, Deputy Hazel Pottinger and Press Officer Nige Hawk-ins!

New Commissioners

THE Queen has approved the appointment of John Denton Pollock, and Denis Raymond Hicklin, OBE, as part-time Forestry Commissioners in succession to The Lord Donnet of Balgay, CBE, JP, and Christopher George Arnot Latham, FCA, who will be retiring on the expiry of their terms of office in September.

Her Majesty has also approved the re-appointment of Sir Ralph Verney, Bt, KBE, JP, and David Stewart Bowser, Esquire, JP, as part-time Forestry Commissioners.

Mr Pollock, who is 51, is General Secretary of the Edu-

cational Institute of Scotland and a member of the General Council of the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Mr Hicklin, aged 60, is retiring this month as Chairman and Managing Director of St Anne's Board Mill Company Ltd of Bristol.

The day thirteen hundred schoolchildren visited Coed Taf



Forester Nick Voye, St Gwynno Forest leads a school party through the forest.



Time for a breather between demonstrations for Chainsawyers Des Hopkins (left) and Ieuan Probert, Talybont Forest.



Forester Dave Williams, Mynydd Du explaining the thinning competition to pupils.

FOR thirteen hundred schoolchildren from as far afield as St Clears in Dyfed, Tredegar in Gwent, St Albans in Hertfordshire and even East London, Friday the 14th of July was a day to remember.

Away from the desks and concrete playground it was off to the forest and the Brecon Beacons National Park. And for District Officer David Evans, Head Forester Eric Treweeks, Forester Dave Corner and staff at Coed Taf Forest in South Wales it was the culmination of six months of planning. The plan was to hold three Forest Open Days, the first open to schools and the following two to the public. The response was overwhelming — an estimated 3,000 visitors with almost half of them schoolchildren descending on the forest by the coach load on the first day.

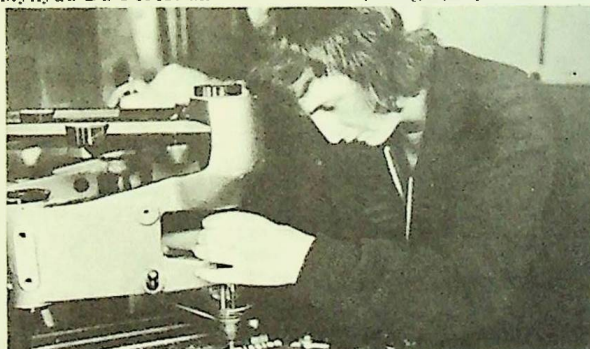
With excellent organisation and assistance from helpers from Conservancy and District Office and neighbouring forests Coed Taf coped with allcomers.

The schoolchildren in 35 parties were divided into smaller groups and taken on a guided tour of the forest to see for themselves some of the machinery and men engaged in forestry. Tours left the Information Tent every hour, taking in felling and extraction, crosscutting, loading, peeling and pointing stakes. A Thinning Competition was a great success with the kids. Foresters Dave Williams from Mynydd Du Forest and Brian

Jones from Brycheiniog Forest ran the competition.

There were displays by the Conservancy, the Research Branch, Brechfa Sign Unit, the Brecknock Naturalists' Trust, and the Wales Tourist Board, a film show run by Garwnant Centre Warden Stuart Griffiths who had his busiest day of the year. Stuart who has been warden of the centre since it opened three years ago is well used to handling school parties — over 100 usually between March and mid-July. His wife, Pat who is Forest clerkess at Coed Taf was also kept very busy, as was Eric Treweeks' wife, Betty who organised the refreshment kiosk.

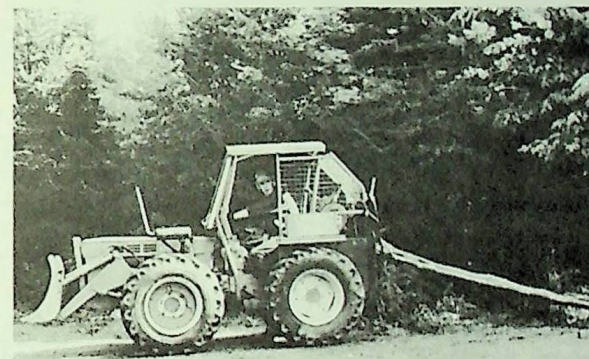
The production display was run by Forester Peter Charlesworth of Talybont and the twelve hardworking guides for the day were: Gordon Williams, Ganger, Coed Taf, Stewart Neal, ganger, Mynydd Du, Bert Fisher, Forester Brycheiniog, Gil Davies, Head Forester, Glasfynydd, Keith Harris, CO Conservancy, Neville Danby, Research Head Forester, Brecon, Mike Blud, Work Study Forester, Brecon, David Parsons, Recreation Planning Officer, Gwyn Owen, HEO, Conservancy, Roger Wills, and Nick Voyle, Foresters, St Gwynno and Don Jones, Ranger, Crychan.



Egwad Davies of the Brechfa Sign Unit shows his skill.



Judging by their expressions these children found plenty to wonder at in the forest.



Caer Preece, Coed Taf Forest puts his Holder tractor through its paces.



Never stuck for an answer! Don Jones, Ranger, Crychan Forest, coping with questions from Ystradfellte Primary School.

AERIAL ATTACK ON PINE BEAUTY MOTHS

INITIAL indications are that the recent aerial spraying of pine beauty infested plantations in North Scotland — the biggest operation of its kind ever undertaken in Britain — has been a success.

Entomologists have calculated that the percentage of Pine Beauty larvae killed is as high as 97%.

The area which was sprayed with the insecticide Fenitrothion totalled 4,800 hectares of Lodgepole pine plantations, mainly in Naver and Helmsdale Forests, but also including blocks in Shin and Rumster and some private estates.

The area at risk was so large and the infestation so great that the Commission's whole planting policy in North Scotland is threatened. Lodgepole pine is by far the most significant tree species in North Scotland's planting programme at present accounting for about 80% of all new planting. It has gained importance in recent years with acquisitions of very poor quality land. "Lodgepole pine is so far the only tree species found able to grow successfully in these northern conditions of high exposure and poor acid peats. The Pine Beauty Moth caterpillars are indigenous to Scots pine but have never been present in such numbers as the recent infestations of Lodgepole pine" said Mr Dermot Bevan,

Principal Entomologist. "The caterpillars feed on the needles and after one complete defoliation, the trees die. This insect represents the most important entomological event in the history of the Forestry Commission."

Already the insect has been responsible for the complete destruction of 240 hectares (600 acres) in the Rimsdale section of Naver Forest. Last year the Commission sprayed some 500 hectares (1,300 acres) with a bacterial preparation specific to the caterpillars of moths, but because of the feeding behaviour of this new pest, this was unsuccessful. Today the whole of the older part of the Rimsdale block is completely dead, the plantation of young pines, devoid of needles, adding a gruesome brown blot to the Sutherland landscape.

The decision to spray using an organophosphorus insecticide — considered to be more effective than a bacillus — was taken after a series of meetings involving the Conservancy, Research Division and Headquarters. Pupal and egg surveys were carried out to determine the plantations to

be sprayed. All blocks showing at least one set of samples with a count of 15 pupae per square metre were to be sprayed.

"The adult moth can lay up to 200 eggs so in the most seriously affected areas there could have been up to five million caterpillars per hectare," said Mr John Stoakley, Entomologist (North).

After tests to show the minimal amount of insecticide to be effective, entomologists recommended the use of Fenitrothion. Dr Vernon Joyce, Professor of Bio-Aeronautics at the Cranfield College of Technology was employed as consultant for the operation and recommended the application technique using a fixed wing aircraft fitted with the necessary spraying equipment and incorporating a radio beacon track guidance system which eliminated the need for ground markers and ensured accuracy.

Fenitrothion is widely used in agriculture and has commercial clearance as a garden insecticide although this was the first time it was used in forestry in Britain. The Pesticides Safety Precautions Scheme granted the necessary



This aerial picture of the spraying in progress gives some idea of the extent of the infested area.

Photo: Tony Anderson

clearance for the spraying of 1,148 hectares by Ultra Low Volume method and 3,641 hectares by Low Volume method. "Initially we had hoped to spray the whole area in a matter of two or three days using the ULV technique which involved applying only one litre of solution per hectare" said Mr Stoakley. "However the PSPS stipulated that the ULV technique could only be used in areas further than two miles from a public road or dwelling house and these only amounted to about one third of the total. The alternative Low Volume method involved the application of 20 litres of solution per hectare involving a much greater workload, flying time and expense."

Both techniques applied the same minimal amounts of insecticide — less than 4 oz per

acre. Strong winds and squally conditions hampered the operation but after a delayed start the spraying was completed in over 80 flights in ten days.

"The organisation went extremely well," said Mr Arthur "Chris" Christie, Assistant Conservator North Scotland "thanks to all the preliminary work done by local staff to ensure that everyone knew exactly what we intended to do and why. During the operation itself it was sheer hard work. For instance those manning the beacons operating the track guidance system for the aircraft were often at the beacon from 3 am until midnight."

Operation control was Naver Forest Office where Geoff Reid, Head Forester, had the

task of maintaining wireless contact with the flying field, a road control at the flying area, the Agrifix Mast Station, the Agrifix Slave Station and Mobile Control, the Radio Technician, Mobile Mechanic and by no means least all the monitoring bodies in the spraying area.

Although Fenitrothion is considered one of the most environmentally acceptable insecticides of low toxicity to mammals, birds and fish, the Commission maintained the closest liaison and consultation with interested bodies and welcomed their requests to monitor the operation. Monitoring exercises were carried out by no less than seven outside bodies, namely Agricultural Scientific Services, DAFS, Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, DAFS,

Nature Conservancy Council, Plant Pathology Laboratory, MAFF, Scottish Home and Health Department, Highland River Purification Board, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

"The support and co-operation of neighbouring tenants, householders, farmers etc was very encouraging," said Mr Christie, "and was due in no small way to the effort seen to have been made by the Commission to ensure that all the facts about the pesticide were known in advance and that efficient monitoring was being carried out by responsible bodies other than the Commission."

The Forestry Commission intend to produce a comprehensive report of the whole operation and monitoring activities.



The early larval stages showing the caterpillars feeding on newly developing pine shoots.

Photo: Dr Raymond Parks

ARE THESE AT RISK?

Areas of Lodgepole Pine planted by the Forestry Commission

North (S)	35,000 hectares
East (S)	15,000 hectares
South (S)	12,500 hectares
West (S)	6,500 hectares
NE (E)	8,000 hectares



The adult Pine Beauty Moth (Panolis flammea)

Photo: Dr Raymond Parks

FC TEAM

- FC Personnel involved in the operation were:
- "Chris" Christie Asst. Conservator N(S)
 - Ernie Michie District Officer
 - Geoff Reid H/F Naver Forest
 - Hamish MacDonald Forester, Naver
 - Dermot Bevan Principal Entomologist, AH
 - John Stoakley Entomologist (North)
 - Stuart Heritage Entomologist
 - David Barbour Entomologist
 - Ray Harrison Mech. Engineer
 - Jock Bain Mobile Mechanic
 - Brian Pirie Radio Technician

Forest workers from Naver Forest: Willie Robert McKenzie, Angus A. MacKay, Adam Henderson, Robert Anderson, Alastair Tait, Murdo MacKay, Robert Rowan-tree, Archie MacFarlane, Moir Longmuir, Ronald Mackay.



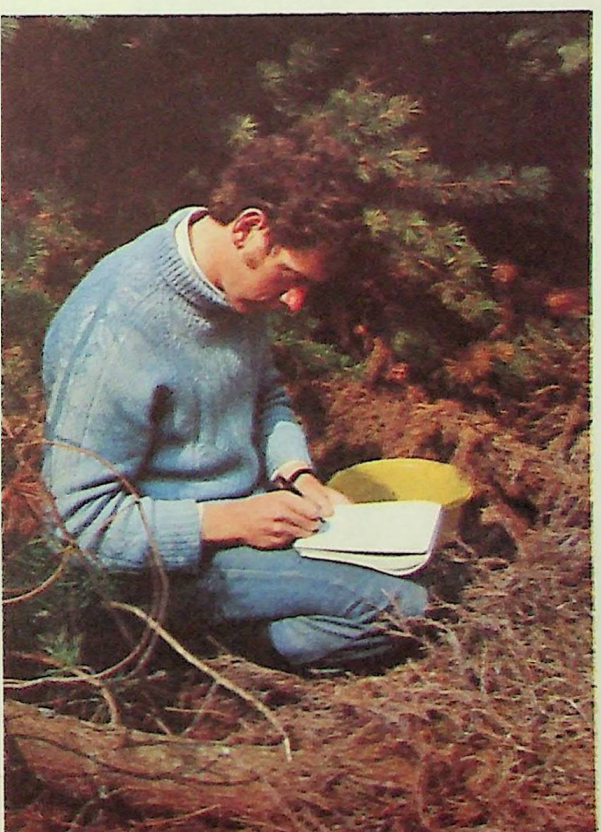
Head Forester Geoff Reid under pressure in Operation Control Room at Naver Forest Office.

Photo: Douglas Green



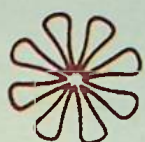
The dead plantations of the Rimsdale block — "a gruesome brown blot on the Sutherland landscape."

Photo: Douglas Green



Entomologist David Barbour examines dead larvae which have dropped from trees after spraying.

Photo: Douglas Green



Nature News

CAPERCAILZIE GOES TO SCHOOL

One of the most regular visitors to the Commission's forest holiday village of Dalavich on Loch Awe side is a hen capercaillie which has taken up residence in the primary school playground for three weeks in May every year since 1973.



Photo Courtesy of Oban Times

Eleven year old Gordon Gauld making friends with the capercaillie in Dalavich school playground.

"The bird arrives in early May and provides ready-made nature study lessons for the village school" writes George Francey, Chief Forester, Inverliever Forest.

"As it has a slight limp we are in no doubt that it is the

same bird. On its first visit there was some fear that it would become the prey of the village dog and it was taken into protective custody in a forester's hen run.

"A good store of poultry grain put it on its feet 'and

wings' and it rallied.

"All the signs of 'clocking' are present and the bird quietly retires to the forest to nest but as no cock bird has appeared that is the end of the story until the following May."

HERRING GULL GOES TO OFFICE

IT has been announced from the Conservancy Office at Inverness that MacTavish is the father of three and that parents and young are doing well. MacTavish, however, is a large herring gull.

The two parent birds have nested on a ledge of the office building and nobody knew of their presence till news of the chicks was conveyed to office staff by shop assistants next door. Although herring gulls normally nest along the coast on cliffs and in sand dunes, it is not unknown for them to choose buildings as a nesting

site. However, the Conservancy Office in Inverness town centre does seem to be an extreme case.

It is a pity to dismiss herring gulls as uninteresting birds just because they are common. They are hardy, omnivorous birds, determined to survive by adjusting to man's environ-

ment, and therefore deserve respect. Common, however, is exactly what herring gulls are around the Inverness office. So noisy is their calling that one person telephoning the office recently, when all the windows were open, believed he had a wrong number and was speaking to the Harbour Master's office at Mallaig!

AROUND & ABOUT

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NORTH EAST ENGLAND

Lady ganger Eunice calls it a day



Forester D. Brown presents Eunice with her necklace and bracelet.

... and still with the ladies

EUNICE, the Commission's first lady Ganger, has retired.

Eunice came up the North Tyne in 1947 to work as a Land Girl, and married Harry Gallon a tractor man with the road squad at Kielder. She returned to work with the part time brashing gang. As brashing became less common the onus changed onto production, and Eunice became more involved with harvesting side, with marking and measuring being her main job.

When Adam Steele retired in 1969 Eunice was made up to Ganger and took over the charge of the marking team which she kept up to her recent ill health. Eunice's fitness and walking speed is still noted at Kielder and it was not unusual when checking

marked compartments, to be shown a very clean pair of heels.

Looking back, Eunice has been a trail blazer for women's lib for 10 years before it became fashionable in a hitherto male preserve. It has been a job she has done with tact, accuracy and unfailing good humour under sometimes trying conditions.

Her friends gathered to show their affection for her at the Kielder Working Men's Club, and presented her with a silver ingot style necklace and filigree silver bracelet. In her retirement she will be keeping her greenhouse, and Harry blooming, and taking her new Yorkshire Terrier pup Dandy for the many walks she knows and loves.

Jack leaves for Trust

A PARTY was held in Rothbury to say goodbye to Jack Tarran, Head Forester.

Jack had served the Forestry Commission for 30 years, the last six of which were at Rothbury. During the course of the evening which was attended by many of his friends from throughout the Conservancy Jack was presented with a propagator for his greenhouse and his wife Helen with a small piece of jewellery to mark the occasion.

Jack has now taken up a post with the National Trust and is responsible for the management of the Trust's woodlands on Craggside. We wish him well in this new venture.

WEST SCOTLAND

Glencoe's commando has retired

TONY Cunningham trained as a commando at Glencoe — and later became head forester there!

And now he has retired after 31 years' service with the Forestry Commission.

Following service in the Royal Navy from 1937, Tony joined the Army in 1940 and trained as a Commando at Achnacarry and Glencoe. It was at Glencoe that he met local girl Anne Frew whom he married in 1945. After service in many lands he ended his war service as a Captain, and continued his military career in the Territorials where he reached the rank of Major before leaving the Army in 1968.

Commission service started in 1946, and Tony left Benmore Forester Training

School in 1949 to take up his first post at Barcaldine. Service followed at Loch Ard, Loch Eck, Leapmoor, Corlarach, Benmore and Glencoe.

Forestry friends entertained Tony and Anne at the Duror Hotel. Chief Forester Alan Henderson and clerkess Mary Forsyth presented them with a clock and a box of chocolates. After a buffet meal the evening was spent in song and story, with music from the accordion of James Forsyth.

The couple are planning to remain in the Glencoe area.

NORTH SCOTLAND

Three retire in North

ANDY Birrell, EO in the private woodlands section of N(S) Conservancy has retired. He had been with the Forestry Commission for 28 years. He was taken out to dinner by his colleagues and presented with a cheque for £55. In his retirement Andy is going to spend his time in the garden.

AFTER 41 years with the Forestry Commission, Murdo Shaw, head ranger for N(S) retired at the age of 65. He was well known for his considerable expertise, not least the

shooting of 98 deer with 98 bullets during the early years of change to a 22 rifle. Friends gathered at the Blackstand nursery to wish Murdo a happy retirement and to present him with a pair of Pentax binoculars.

OFFICE colleagues at Inverness gathered in May to wish a fond farewell to Winnie MacDonald, EO for the supply and engineering section, who retired after 29 years' service with the Forestry Commission. She was presented with a cheque for £60. Winnie intends to visit her twin brother in New Zealand.

SOUTH SCOTLAND

Lawn mower for Arthur

A VERY pleasant evening was spent in the Hart Manor Hotel, Eskdalemuir, on March 24, when friends and staff of Castle O'er Forest gathered at a farewell dinner, where Arthur Thomas was presented with an electric lawn mower and a sun lounger by ganger Allan Irving, and his wife Barbara received a magnificent box of chocolates presented by her friend Johan Crossan.

Again, on March 31, his last day at the forest, the industrial staff gathered to present Arthur with a beautiful crystal fruit set, which was handed over by William Irving, and toasts were drunk to a long and happy retirement.

Arthur has always been a keen sportsman. A schoolboy cricket cap, who later played representative Army football, he commenced his career at the Border forests of Kershope and Newcastleton, playing for four seasons for local team Hearts of Liddesdale, who in this period won Carlisle and District Division I and the Hospital Cup.

A gold medal student at Benmore in 1953 with further service at Carrick, Cairn Edward and for the last nine years at Castle O'er, he was also a member of the S(S) Curling Club.

Barbara and Arthur are now retired at Ecclefechan, where it is hoped that Arthur can enjoy his many pursuits for many years.

NORTH WALES

Dora operated a Crawler tractor

DORA Littlewood, District Clerk/Typist in the Gwydyr District of N(W) Conservancy, has retired after 36 years' service in forestry (the last 30 being with the Forestry Commission).

Her career is quite unique. For over four years during the war (1942-46), she served with the Women's Timber Corps, Ministry of Supply, and was engaged on felling and extracting trees, mostly privately-owned, in South Wales. She even learnt to drive and operate a crawler tractor.

After the war, for about 18 months, she was a member of the Women's Land Army working mostly in the Commission's nursery at Tair Onen.

Her FC career started in June 1948 when she was engaged by the Research and

Development Division as a Surveyor to assist in the post-war census of private woodlands. On completion of that task, she joined the staff of SW(E) Conservancy and became a Forest Clerk at Neroche Forest near Taunton, where she served for 14 years.

At her own request, she was then transferred to N(W) and, on passing a typing test, became the District Clerk/Typist in the Gwydyr District Office at Llanrwst. For 15 years, she has worked for a succession of District Officers.

At a farewell party District Officer, David Foot, handed over a large Greetings Card

which had been signed by dozens of colleagues and then, the A & FO, Mr Geoff Bowers, on behalf of all Dora's friends in N(W) Conservancy (and beyond), presented her with a gilded anniversary clock. Miss Littlewood was almost overwhelmed by her colleagues' kindness and generosity, and expressed her gratitude.

Ralph was 'best man of the year'

HEAD Forester Ralph Wainwright retired this month after a long career in the Forestry Commission. He joined the Commission, at Clocaenog Forest after serving in the Army from 1939 until 1946, under the post-war forest workers Training Scheme.

In October 1946 he went to the Foresters' Training School in Gwydyr for a two year course. During this time he was awarded the title "Best man of his year".

He commenced his career, being promoted to Head Forester in 1965, and served in several forests in North Wales, arriving at Ceiriog in September 1976.

Mr Roger Bradley, Conservator N(W) presented Ralph with a cheque and passed on the good wishes of all his colleagues. This took place at the exact centre of Ceiriog forest, in the middle of a crossroads!

Ralph intends buying some fishing tackle and chemistry books with his gift.

We all wish him a very long and prosperous retirement.

AND KITTY MAKES THREE

CONSERVANCY office staff were delighted to gather at the Boar's Head for a lunch time drink with Kitty (Miss C. M. Edwards) on the occasion of her retirement.

Kitty has retired after spending over 31 years with the Civil Service. She joined the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in Aberystwyth, in December 1946 and transferred to the Forestry Commission in June 1974. These past four years have been spent in the Establishment section handling Industrial Sick Pay and consequently she was well known and well-liked throughout the Conservancy. Kitty feels sure she will miss the friendly office atmosphere here and we hope she will visit us often, but she looks forward to a busy time ahead.

Kitty has always spent much of her 'spare time' giving voluntary service to the community. She trained with the

Red Cross during the war and now hopes to give more time to this organisation. She also expects to become active in many other community services — meals on wheels, visiting the sick and aged, chapel activities — the list is endless.

We all wish her a long and happy retirement.

BEM FOR TREVOR

TREVOR Owen Williams was the proud recipient of a British Empire Medal recently.

Mr Williams was a forest Craftsman at Coed y Brenin when he retired after an incredible 51 years' service to the Commission.

Mr Williams received a long service medal in 1953 and a

long service certificate in 1977.

In addition to his busy retirement managing a small holding and production garden, Trevor is also the treasurer of Llanfachreth Eisteddfod.

Congratulations to him from all his colleagues.

SHOW UNITS

TOM MEETS THE DUKE



IT was a big moment for Chief Forester E. J. D. (Tom) Wilkins when he met the Duke of Wellington, this year's chairman of the Royal Bath and West Show.

The Duke presented Tom with a copy of the history of the show to mark Tom's last attendance at the show as head of our travelling units.

Tom, who holds the BEM, has been attending the show — and many other major shows throughout the country — for the past 21 years. He retires this winter.

From the nursery to retirement

HARRY Armstrong, Chief Forester at Devilla, retired after 43 years with the Forestry Commission.

The occasion was marked by a lunch attended by friends and colleagues from as far afield as Carradale, Bredine and Kirroughtree, at which Assistant Conservator D. B. Paterson presented him with a cheque subscribed for by a wider circle of friends.

Harry gave an amusing account of his early days in Kielder and other Border forests but modestly drew a veil over his achievements as a nurseryman. It is in this capacity that he is probably best known.

Although he has reached the age of retirement it has been said truly that he approached nursery problems and new techniques with the active mind of a much younger man.

GAZETTEER FOR FORESTER VIC

FORESTER Victor Masson of Craigellachie has regrettably had to retire on the grounds of ill-health.

Of his 32 years in the Commission, Victor spent four years in Research at Fort Augustus, Allerstan and Mobie, and four years in Training Branch. Most of his service, however, was spent in forests in East (Scotland).

Over the years Victor has acquired an encyclopaedic knowledge of Scotland's places

and people, so it was appropriate that amongst his retirement presents was a gazetteer to criticise!

The Commission's loss must be a gain to the world of dog shows, for Victor and Mrs Betty Masson will now have more time to devote to their lifelong, absorbing and successful hobby.

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

From sleugh boy to craftsman

BILL Wright, forest craftsman at Challock, has retired after 32 years continuous service with the Forestry Commission.

Bill originally joined the Commission in 1928 as a "sleugh" boy at Inverlael Forest, near Ullapool. He came south to Kent in 1929 in private service until the war and then joined the Commission at Lyminge Forest in 1946, where he remained until his retirement.

At a small ceremony at

Lyminge Forest Office, District Officer Kent presented Bill with his long service certificate and an engraved pewter tankard from his workmates.

Bill and his wife are retiring to his daughter's farm near Chepstow, and we wish them both all the best.

RESEARCH

FAREWELL TO KIELDER'S COMMUNITY KING

GORDON Forbes, whose career started as an RAF regular before the last war and who survived a crash in the Atlantic when a Coastal Command pilot, retired after 30 years with the Forestry Commission, 28 of which he spent at Kielder with the R&D Division.

Gordon was trained at Glentworth Forester Training School. As Research Head Forester at Kielder he was concerned in the development of the huge Border forest complex which more than tripled in size to almost 50,000 hectares of plantation in his time there.

Not only did he contribute to the development of the forest but he and his wife devoted much time and effort to the well-being of the Kielder community over a considerable time. Gordon was chairman of the Parish Council and was also a district councillor. He

and his wife were also investigators of the successful Scottish Country Dance Club at Kielder and Gordon continued his RAF interests by long service in the Royal Observer Corps.

To mark the occasion of his retirement and to wish him well for the future, his friends and colleagues took him to dinner at Otterburn Hall, where he was presented with an executive attache case and a cheque by the Chief Research Officer (North), Mr D. T. Seal.

Local friends and staff also gathered in Gordon's office

WALTER'S FAREWELL

WALTER Legg, a ganger at Banchory Forest, has retired after 31 years' service, at the age of 58 on medical grounds. Unfortunately he has been afflicted with arthritis and he was no longer able to carry on.

At a gathering at the Forest Office, he was presented with a Long Service Certificate by Mr George Taylor, Assistant Conservator, and with a watch by his worker colleagues.

Walter was the only one still working of four brothers who all worked at the Durris Section of the forest.

N.W. ENGLAND

Steel hoe for Tom

AFTER 31 years' unbroken service as a forest worker at Mortimer Forest, Tom Gurney has had to retire early because of ill-health.

Conservator John James presented Tom with his long-service certificate and final cheque, watched by several of Tom's colleagues. Chief Forester John Waite then handed over to Tom a splendid stainless steel hoe, to which local staff had contributed.

John James spoke of how Tom had worked on all sections of this very attractive and highly productive forest. Tom had worked on most jobs and must have seen many changes.

Tom talked about his keen interest in gardening and conducted a technical discussion on darts, another of his skills.

and an appropriately inscribed goblet of Cumbria Crystal was presented to him by Leading Research Worker Jim Robson who, as a member of his team for the past 25 years, went on to recall numerous happy memories of their long association. Tributes to Gordon's helpfulness and work and his service to the local communities were paid by Athole Whayman of the Border Work Study Team and Jim Brown of Kielder Estates. Also, a large box of chocolates for Mrs Forbes was handed to Gordon by Audrey Cook, a member of the unit for over 20 years.

Strathyre opens with a chop!



Very much a Scottish flavour at the Strathyre opening... A kilted Mr McLellan ready to chop the tape. And behind him, also wearing a kilt, is Mr William Wolfe, chairman of the Scottish National Party and chairman of our West of Scotland Regional Advisory Committee.

SCOTTISH Tourist Board chairman Robin McLellan "swung the axe" to open the new forest information centre at Strathyre — the tourist gateway to the Scottish Highlands.

Instead of the usual tape cutting ceremony with a pair of scissors, Mr McLellan used the axe to chop the tape barring the entrance to the centre.

And then there was a rumble and a "thump" as the tape released a log weight behind the door. The log fell to the floor at the same time swishing aside a curtain across the doorway to reveal a lit-up interior of the centre.

The opening ceremony with a difference "took a trick" with

the television people and tea-time viewers to both BBC and ITV were able to watch recordings of the event.

The centre, made of European larch from the forest, is sited on the main A84 road eight miles north of Cullinstown. This scenic route goes right through Strathyre Forest and the centre will introduce people to the forest and, it is hoped, prompt them to visit other forests during their holidays in Scotland.

The opening on May 24 coincided with national "See Your Forest Week", which created a lot of interest throughout the country in the newspapers and on radio and television.

Mr McLellan was welcomed

by Mr David Robertson, the Conservator for West Scotland.

The unusual illustrations in the centre were by artist Donna Muir, and show the many forms of recreation and leisure which can be enjoyed in the forest. Designer was Bill Ball from Forest Design Branch.

Involved in the Strathyre project were team leader DO Ian MacIver; Chief Forester Donny MacCaskill; Forester Alan Hansford; area land agents Richard Hennings, David Wilson and Eric Box; clerks of work Ian Alexander and Des Wilson; area engineers Bill Stark and Andrew Thomson, assisted by Bob Watson.

What will we do with the drunken wood ants?

DR Eric Lucey's appeal in the last edition of "Slasher" for information about the whereabouts of wood ants has provoked considerable interest and response from throughout the country.

But in this article, Jack Davies, head forester at Ringwood Forest (SE England), throws a new light on the lifestyle of the wood ant and tells how he found a colony DRUNK from a mixture of honey and pollen, a natural mead.

Mr Davies wonders whether the ants suffered from hangovers...

With ants there is a constant rule that reads: the hotter the day, the faster the scurrying. When the sun is fierce the hustle and bustle of an anthill is tremendous, especially a hill of the WOOD ANT.

On such a day, I was making a comparison between two plants of the Figwort family and found ants. It is of interest to botanists and entomologists that the ants were only to be found on the figwort and not on the water betony which was growing alongside it.

The interest of my find to philosophers and politicians would be in the condition that the ants were in. They were DRUNK. Yes, DRUNK.

It had to be seen to be believed. What price now the Book Of Proverbs, or the Fables of Aesop. Now who were the sluggards living for the enjoyment of the present and not caring a jot about the future. It was very evident

that the past had been forgotten and, if what was going on at that moment was anything to go by, very little of the present would be remembered; if ants suffered from hangovers, that is.

In fact they were drunk on a mixture of honey and pollen, a natural mead. When I first saw the stream of ants making their way up the stem I thought that there were aphids around the flowers, but I soon saw that there were no aphids, and that the ants were going into the flowers. It puzzled me, too, to see that very few ants were making their way down the stem and it didn't take long to see that those ants leaving the flowers were leaving by the most direct route — simply by falling to the ground.

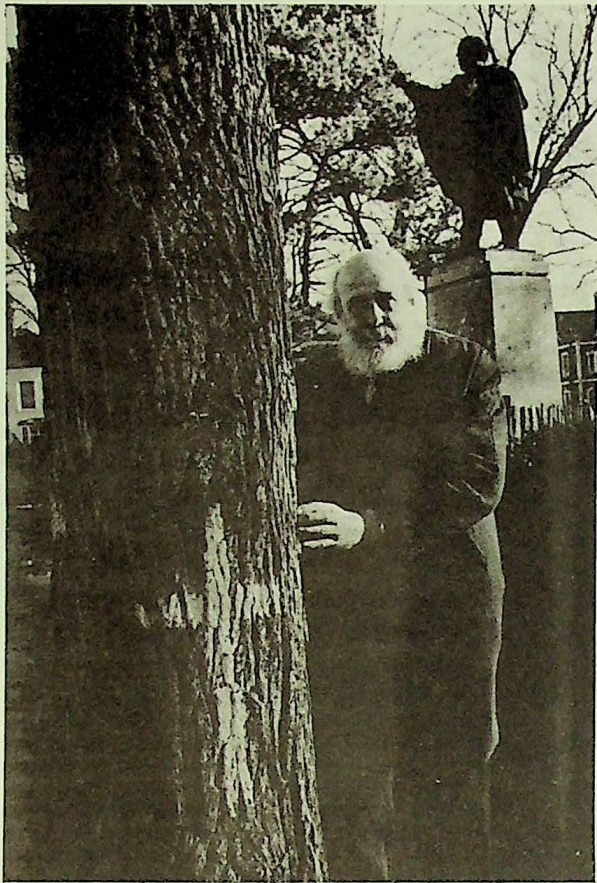
The ants climbed the stem of the figwort and went deep into the mouth of the flower searching for the honey. Coming out on to the edge of the

flower, they leaned indolently back and very leisurely proceeded to clean off any pollen that had stuck to the body while the honey was being sampled. Once the pollen was dispatched, the ants remained on the flower, rearing in a drunken fury when another ant approached or when I threatened them with my piece of grass.

I appreciate that no ant likes being prodded by grass, but it is not natural for an ant to rear at another ant from the same nest, and I checked that all the ants involved were from the same nest. It is also unnatural for an ant to sit back on a flower on a day when the sun pours down.

Was there a moral to be drawn? Was it a sign of decadence in a totalitarian state? Or was it the ants' day off? I don't know, but something wasn't quite right that day.

focus



AS Dutch elm disease continues to ravage the country's elms one Welshman believes he has put a finger — or rather his whole hand — on the answer to the problem.

For faith-healer Dewi Turton of Cardiff claims he can cure elms by simply "laying on of hands" on the trunk of a diseased tree.

He flexed his powers on several elms believed to be suffering from the disease outside Cardiff's city museum three years ago.

The trees — which were then condemned because of the disease — are still standing and Mr. Turton is confident that their green foliage is due to what he calls "my third power".

But Cardiff Parks Director Mr. William Nemes is not so sure. "We do not think the trees were affected by the implosive strain of the disease", he said.

"They are still alive though not looking particularly healthy. They are also of a variety which is not so sus-

ceptible to the disease".

But Mr. Turton is quite sure of his success.

"The elms are in good colour this year. There is a third power and this is physic energy. Some people have the gift to pass this on to a patient. I cannot explain it — I just pass it on".

Mr. Turton has been busy healing other trees, including some in Kent, and is experimenting in healing trees at Harvard in Massachusetts by telepathy.

Mr. Turton's work has come to the notice of our experts at Alice Holt Lodge research station.

"If he is meeting with success we would encourage him to carry on his work — and to lay his hands on a few million of the other elms threatened by the disease", said pathologist Dr. John Gibbs.

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

THREE senior staff attended three separate Royal Garden Parties held by the Queen in the grounds of Buckingham Palace last month. Mr Arthur Damerell, Principal, London Office sipped Royal tea on July 18, Mr. John James, Conservator, N. Wales, on July 20 and Dr. Don Phillips, Senior Principal Scientific Officer, Research on July 25. Mr Damerell and Mr James were accompanied by their wives and Dr. Phillips by his wife and daughter.

Hundredth HGTAC meeting

THE July meeting of the Home Grown Timber Advisory Committee was its 100th and to mark the occasion the Chairman, Sir Goronwy Daniel, was presented with a gavel. The gavel which has been suitably inscribed will be used at future meetings of the Committee.

The gavel was carved out of 100 year old walnut wood from Elversley churchyard where Charles Kingsley is buried. The craftsman was Brian Leemans a forester on our staff at Bramshill.

MR FRED COLEMAN

Mr Fred Coleman, ex-ganger of Bedgebury Forest, has died.

Mr Coleman commenced in 1926 as a Forest Worker, and retired as a ganger in April 1970.

He is survived by a daughter.

MR D. EDWIN DAVIES

Mr D. Edwin Davies, ex-Head Forester in the Brechfa Forest, has died at the age of 80.

Mr Davies had served the Forestry Commission for over 40 years in the Brechfa Forest. During the war he was released to the Timber Supply Department when he carried out the duties of Instructor to the Women's Timber Corps. He lived his entire life at Abergorlech apart from serving his country in the First World War in the Pembrokehire Yeomanry and the Royal Flying Corps. He saw service in France and Germany.

His great pride during his retirement was to see fruits of his early labours of the '20s coming into fruition with the transportation away of the valuable timbers from the Brechfa Forest.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law.

MR LESLIE A. W. JENKINS

Mr Leslie Jenkins, Chairman of the Forestry Commission from 1965 to 1970 has died at the age of 68.

Mr Jenkins was appointed Chairman of the Forestry Commission in line with the Government statement that the composition of the Commission was to be changed in view of its role as a timber seller.

Mr Jenkins had been associated with the timber trade for many years. On leaving school he joined John Wright (Ven-

eers) Ltd and was Chairman of the Company from 1956 to 1959. He subsequently became in turn Managing Director of I. and R. Morley and of the Rank Organisation.

Mr Jenkins, a past President of the National Association of British Manufacturers, was also Vice-President of the Confederation of British Industry and served on the British National Export Council and the Commonwealth Export Council.

Early in the war Mr Jenkins organised the whole of the Canadian supply of birch logs required for the Mosquito aircraft programme.

Mr Jenkins succeeded the Earl Waldegrave, who was chairman of the Commission for almost two years.

MR B. H. KING

The death has occurred of Mr B. H. King ex-Head Forester in South East England Conservancy.

Mr King commenced work with the Commission in 1926 as a Forest Worker. He worked for some time in South Wales but most of his career was spent in South East England. He also served in Silviculture at Micheldever.

Mr Stuart retired in 1968 and is survived by his widow Mrs Eleanor Vaughan King.

MR DAVID GRIFFITH PIERCE

Mr David Griffith Pierce, a Forest Craftsman in Gwydyr Forest, has died in Llandudno Hospital, he was 57 years of age.

Mr Pierce started work for the Forestry Commission in April 1936 and had worked at Gwydyr since then, except during the war, part of which he spent as a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese.

Mr Pierce was the son of the

late Mr Griffith Pierce who also worked for the Commission.

Mr Pierce is survived by his wife, Ellen, and two brothers, Llew and Wally.

MR ALISTAIR STUART

Mr Alistair Stuart, formerly of Inverliever Forest, has died suddenly after only 18 months' retirement from the Forestry Commission.

Mr Stuart started with the Forestry Commission in 1932 at Eridine. When war broke out Mr Stuart had just been promoted to Ganger at a very early age, his name was placed at the head of a list of "indispensable" men for exemption from war service. Nevertheless he saw military service in the Far East.

Post-war he was the first Isachsen winch operator in West Scotland, demonstrating his skill at more than one Highland Show. He also headed the Inverliever team in the larger 500 ha planting programmes.

He is survived by his widow, his son, a conservancy plough operator, and his daughter, a nurse in Switzerland.

MR GEORGE BODLEY RYLE

The Commission's last Deputy Director General, Mr George B. Ryle, has died at the age of 75. Long serving members of staff will remember "G.B.R." as he was known who served forestry for a period of 53 years. He joined the Commission in 1924 his early career being spent as a District Officer in South Wales. In 1937 he set up the new Divisional office in South Wales with a staff of two and after serving with the Home Grown Timber Production Department for some ten years he was appointed Conservator South Wales. He was Director,

Wales from 1954-58, Director England from 1958 to 1963 and Deputy Director General from 1963 to 1965 and when he officially retired, and went to live in the New Forest. The following year he became the Commissions' Appointed Verderer of the New Forest, a position he held until March of last year. He was the author of the book "Forest Service" which was a history of the Forestry Commission from 1919 until 1965. He is survived by his widow and family.

MR GEORGE TAYLOR

Mr George Taylor, an ex-Forester at Dean, died recently after a considerable period of illness, he was 77 years of age.

People who know the Dean and in particular the magnificent Douglas Fir in Parkhill Inclosure may not know that a lot of the high pruning of these fine trees was carried out under the control of George Taylor.

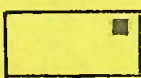
He was born at Wigmore — the son of a Forester and had lived in nearly every Forester's Lodge in the Dean before his retirement in 1966.

MR HAROLD W. J. SWINYARD

The death has occurred of Mr Harold W. J. Swinyard, former Conservancy Mechanical Engineer in East Scotland.

Mr Swinyard was formerly employed as a Mechanical Engineer with the Admiralty from 1944 until 1962. He came to the Commission in October 1962 and brought with him a fund of stories concerning his Admiralty employment, and an impressive knowledge of Estacode.

He retired in 1973, and is survived by a widow and a grown-up family.



postbag

RADIO ACTIVE WASTE

MICHAEL James King's letter on "Nuclear Waste in Forests?", published in your Spring issue, is highly imaginative and fairly amusing. Unfortunately, however, some of your readers may have taken it seriously as, indeed, the more sensationalist newspapers did. For that reason, I suppose, BNFL must take it seriously too.

You may recall that Mr King claims to have seen multi-coloured spiders and giant blackberries while working in the Drigg area of Cumbria, claiming that the phenomena were due to the disposal of radioactive waste.

Low-level radioactive waste is indeed disposed of at Drigg. It takes place on a site which is licensed for such disposal by the Government and not on Forestry Commission property. There is no secret about it.

The volume of waste sent to the Drigg site for disposal, and the monitoring services carried out on the material are clearly detailed in a series of documents entitled "Radioactive Waste Disposals and Associated Environmental Monitoring Data", produced by BNFL.

As a licensed site, Drigg forms part of a national disposal service for low-level solid radioactive waste. Regular monitoring of the site and its surrounding area is carried out by independent Government Departments and the site is subject to inspection by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. These monitoring surveys, which are in addition to monitoring work carried out by BNFL, have shown that the radiation levels at the site are indistinguishable from the normal background levels of the area.

Despite all of this activity nobody else has seen Mr King's hideously mutilated (sic) and multi-coloured spiders whose "webs are like steel". It seems a great pity that Mr King did not take samples of these phenomena for examination by the Forestry Commission's own scientists. The industrial and commercial possibilities of spiders spinning webs like steel and blackberries the size of golf balls might prove a worthwhile financial sideline for the Forestry Commission!

Finally, might I mention that BNFL also has a Company

Newspaper.

I can promise you that if we ever get a letter suggesting that your activities are leading to things going bump in the night we will check with you first before publishing it. Yours faithfully A H Denny, Information Services Directorate.

British Nuclear Fuel Ltd.

Dear Editor,

In the Forestry Commission Journal No. 16 circulated in 1937 the late James MacDonald wrote an article headed: "Deer, Foxes and Badgers in Div 5" which was the old name for the E(E) Conservancy. He was at the time Divisional Officer.

One paragraph states: "There are no deer at Swaffha, Sherwood, Bawtry, Dunwich, Swanton, Clipstone 1, Laughton or Barney."

It would be interesting to know how the deer have spread themselves and what is the population of the creatures in the same forests forty years after.

Jack Jennings, Retired Chief Forester.

Dear Editor, I should like to thank all those colleagues, particularly those in Secretariat who did so much behind the scenes, who made my farewell dinner on 30 June such a memorable occasion. Among the many thoughtful touches were the flowers for my wife which awaited us in the hotel room on our arrival; the present of the lovely wood carving, the effort that went

into finding a genuine solar topee and a pair of 8th Army long shorts for our trip to Trinidad.

E. G. Richards, London.

Dear Editor, Firstly, let me congratulate you upon the present day version of the "Slasher". My claim to fame is that I printed it for Denis Healey during the period 1963-1966. We used to have a running game to see who could find the greatest number of spelling mistakes before printing. (Unfortunately it was one of my typists who typed the master).

Don Tyre, (Exiled 1967 to Computing in foreign parts).

Slasher

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