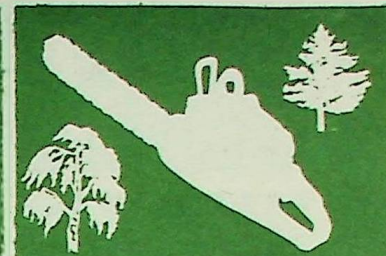




No. 300

SLASHER

NEWSPAPER OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION



SPRING 1979

As the Pine Beauty Moth advances . . .

FIVE FORESTS TO BE SPRAYED

No Oak Wilt

THE Forestry Commission has issued a statement about Oak Wilt disease — and has made it clear that no evidence of the disease has been found in Britain.

The statement followed recent publicity, including Parliamentary Questions, about Oak Wilt.

Dr John Gibbs, from Alice Holt, has recently returned after spending a year in America studying Oak Wilt.

No evidence of the disease has been found in Britain, despite the fact that imports of oak wood from the United States have continued since the disease was first discovered there nearly 40 years ago. Oaks in this country sometimes show die-back and symptoms of "stag-headedness" (ends of branches dead and defoliated), but this is not due to Oak Wilt.

Britain imports substantial quantities of oak wood from North America, notably for furniture and for the whisky trade for the manufacture of barrels (leading subsequently to a £660 million a year whisky export trade). Stringent conditions, however, are laid down in the Importation of Wood and Bark (Prohibition) (Great Britain) Order 1977.

AN aerial spraying operation is to be carried out this summer at five Scottish forests seriously threatened by infestations of Pine Beauty Moth (*Panolis flammea*).

The Government's Pesticides Safety Precaution Scheme has given limited clearance to the Forestry Commission to go ahead with the spraying of threatened plantations of Lodgepole Pine.

It was the caterpillars of the Pine Beauty Moth which led to the Commission mounting an aerial spraying operation to save 5,000 hectares of Lodgepole pine in forests in Sutherland and Caithness last year.

Now, extremely high pupal counts have been recorded in five forests in North, South and East Scotland. It is planned to use an aerial application of the insecticide Fenitrothion, which was used for the first time by the Forestry Commission last year, and which resulted in a 97 per cent mortality rate.

The total area of plantations at risk in North Scotland amounts to some 1,836 hectares of which 1,000 hectares lie in Torrachilly Forest, Ross-shire, almost 600 hectares in Shin Forest, Sutherland and 236 hectares in Naver Forest, Sutherland.

In East Scotland the out-

break threatens 770 hectares in Craigellachie Forest, Morayshire, and in the south, Bareagle Forest in Galloway has some 193 hectares which are seriously infested.

The Commission is undertaking additional egg counts to confirm whether a further 603 hectares need to be included in the spraying programme.

Epidemic

The Pine Beauty Moth caterpillars are indigenous to Scots pine, but have never posed a serious threat to the Commission's Scots pine plantations. However their appearance on Lodgepole pine in epidemic proportions could lead to devastating results. The caterpillars feed on the needles of the trees and after one complete defoliation the trees die.

The report by the bodies

who monitored last year's operation is in its final stages of preparation. The report which is to be published shortly by the Forestry Commission outlines findings by all the interested bodies who monitored the exercise — the Nature Conservancy Council, RSPB, Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, the Highland River Purification Board, Agricultural Scientific Services of DAFS, Operator Protection Research Group (Plant Pathology Laboratory), Health and Safety Executive and the Institute of Occupational Medicine.

The Summary and main conclusions of the report indicate that there were no serious effects on any section of the environment studied.

15 million Elms lost . . .

IN the light of the latest Dutch elm disease survey and reports from local authorities which show that the disease has spread in most areas, the Forestry Commission has recommended a national strategy against the disease for the coming year.

In the "heavily affected" area (that part of England roughly south of a line from the Mersey to the Wash and parts of eastern Wales) the emphasis should be on the selective removal of dead and diseased elms.

In the "lightly affected" area (northern England, the greater part of Wales and the whole of Scotland) sanitation felling should be concentrated in specified areas where the disease levels are low.

In both heavily and lightly affected areas planned replacement of elms with other tree species is of paramount importance.

In the "heavily affected" area it is estimated from the sample survey undertaken in 1978 that some 15.5 million elms have now died, out of an original population of 23 million.

What has Finlay to blow about?

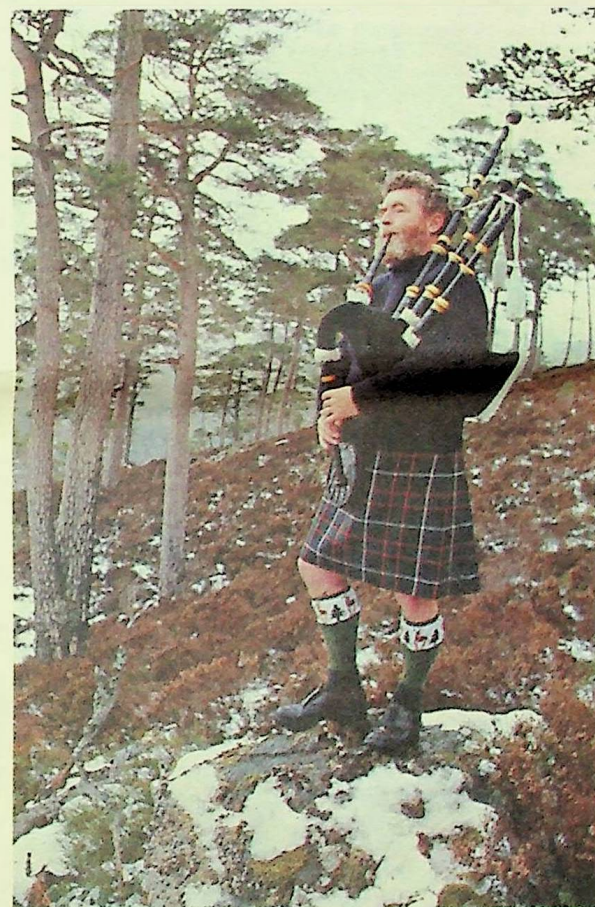


Photo by Douglas Green

North Scotland's Finlay MacRae playing "Flowers of the Forest" on his bagpipes among his beloved Caledonian Pinewoods at Glen Affric. Finlay has been very much in the news recently — for the reason turn to Page 7.

Queen visits New Forest



Photo by Douglas Green

It was a big day for Forestry Commission staff and their families when the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visited the New Forest.

The Queen is pictured being escorted by Mr Donn Small, the Deputy Surveyor. The Director General, Mr George Holmes, is accompanying the Duke of Edinburgh.

More pictures — and story — are on Page 3.

New pay deal for forest workers

A NEW pay award for forest workers has been agreed between the Trade Union and Official sides of the Forestry Commission Industrial Trade Council.

The basic adult rate of £43.50 per week will be increased to £48.75 as from January 22, 1979.

The lead of a forest craftsman is increased from 10 to 12½ per cent above the new basic adult rate. The incentive

level remains at 126 per cent which, if multiplied by the rate of pay of a Forest Craftsman (£54.85 per week) and then divided by the weekly conditioned minutes (2,400) gives a new price per Standard Minute of 2.89 pence.

Axeman's Log

New President of Institute

Richard leaves FC to cure horses, dogs – and humans

RICHARD Arthur, area land agent for the south of North East England Conservancy, has left the Forestry Commission to take up an unusual occupation – curing humans, horses and dogs with back trouble.

He practises chiropractic—a means of restoring health by spinal manipulation and dealing primarily with the nervous system.

We tracked him down to his home near Hexham in Northumberland to hear more about his unusual occupation.

He said: "Originally I became interested in chiropractic when I had a horse with a very bad back which the local veterinary surgeon said I should have put down. After manipulation however the horse recovered and survived for many more years without trouble.

of my work being on horses and the remaining 25 per cent on humans and dogs. However, I have worked on a variety of animals from a Pyrenean Mountain dog to a lamb and even a Hereford bull! Horses I have treated have varied from Grand National runners, International show jumpers to Morgan horses and show ponies. This work has taken me to Ireland and from Perthshire as far south as Leicestershire."

RICHARD Steele was elected President of the Institute of Foresters of Great Britain at the Institute's AGM in Cambridge.

Mr Steel was formerly with the Nature Conservancy Council and is at present head of the Division of Scientific Services, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.

In his presidential address Mr Steele said that the Institute must play its part in the far-reaching debate which was now underway on the future of forests and forestry in this country.

"Forestry interests alone cannot decide the future of our countryside, of our industries, or of our way of life. Any decisions taken, however, must be made with a full understanding of the contribution that forests, forestry and foresters can make to our national well-being."

As a professional body, Mr Steel said that the Institute intended developing its professionalism, both in the service it provided to its members and for the benefit of the public.

At the Bonspiel...

Horses

"I later had a fall off a different horse which was unable to jump well because of back pain. The fall resulted in back injuries to myself which were subsequently put right by chiropractic and shortly prior to this my sister's facial paralysis was cured by chiropractic treatment.

"The practice is now building up well; about 75 per cent

Congratulations to...

Mrs Eileen Empson, who was presented with the BEM by Lord Malmsbury, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, on behalf of the Queen at Winchester.

Mrs Empson has worked at the Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, since 1948 and, as senior telephonist for the past 20 years, she is known throughout the Forestry Commission for her efficiency and courtesy.

Mrs Empson is the wife of the resident caretaker at Alice Holt Lodge and lives on the premises.



Mrs Eileen Empson

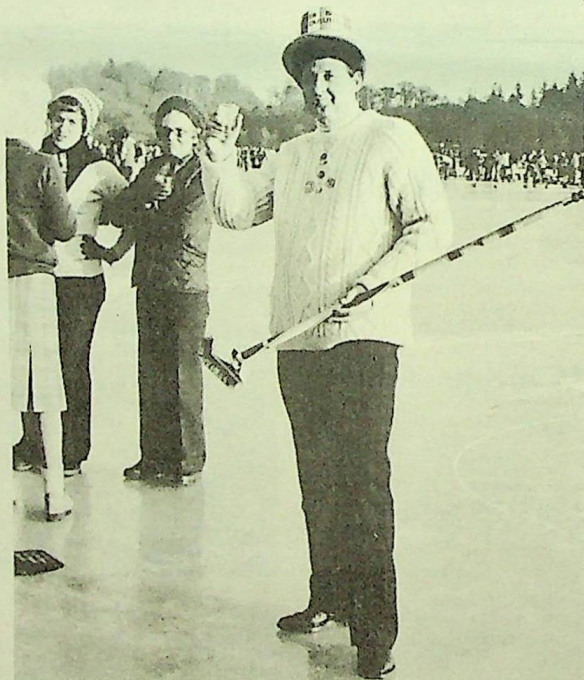


Photo by courtesy Dundee Courier

JIMMY Wilson, Chief Forester at Ochil in East Scotland, donned a different hat when he joined curlers on the ice at Lake of Menteith for the "Grand Match" – Scotland's greatest bonspiel.

It would have been hard to miss Jimmy – or rather his hat!

Jimmy, who curls with Kenmore, was sporting an eye-catching star-spangled topper in red, white and blue.

"It was a present from curlers from Duluth, Minnesota, who came over here for the Silver Broom in 1975," he explained. "It's just lain about the house ever since. In spite of various suggestions, I've

never known quite what to do with it."

In honour of Menteith, however, he finally plucked up the courage to wear it.

Jimmy has been curling for 40 years. "And you learn a trick or two in that time," he said.

Certainly Jimmy has learned a few. The handle of his broom unscrews to reveal a hollow shaft – which Jimmy keeps topped up with whisky.

New Editor

Nigel Hawkins has taken over as Editor of Slasher from Hazel Pottinger who has carried out the task for the past few years.

MIKE'S BIG DAY



Photo by courtesy Feature Press Photo Agency

Mike with his wife Margaret, son Robin and daughter Sally outside the Palace.

THE award of an MBE to Mike Long who retires in November this year was welcomed by everyone in South Scotland and by his many friends in forestry throughout the country.

He is a man of wide interests, and after a distinguished war record – he won a Military Cross in the Commandos – he devoted his life to the development of forestry in Scotland and has

served in West Scotland, North Scotland and South Scotland.

His enthusiasm has known no bounds and he is still wonderfully fit and "a hard man on the hill". Blessed with tremendous drive and imagination, he has started many things which have been taken up and developed by others later.

He was a pioneer of aerial

photography, and has greatly influenced plough design. An acknowledged expert on drainage, his early work on respacement and "topping" trees has been reassessed recently and has proved very valuable to present-day managers. As Chairman of the thriving Border Group of the Institute of Foresters, he has presided over and stimulated useful meetings and discussions.

IT'S BULLSEYE FOR WENDY!

WENDY Lister is the Dyfed County Ladies Darts Champion for 1978. Wendy, who has been playing darts for two years, came through two heats to win the championship.

She is competing in the 1979 championships and we wish her the best of luck.

Wendy, who is 23 years old, joined the Forestry Commission in October 1978 as a typist in the N(W) Conservancy Office in Aberystwyth and can be seen in the photograph, at her desk, with her trophy.



Anyone for sailing?

An invitation to FC staff to go sailing in the Solway or Irish Sea has come from Mike Scutt, head forester at Douglas, South Scotland.

Mike sails a 28ft trimaran called *Trio* – not "Tree-O!" emphasises Mike. "I am willing to take any interested member of staff sailing with the possibility of crewing in some races," says Mike.

Mike can be contacted at Douglas Forest Tel: 0555 2112.

Bob's long journey

BOB Orrell, Recreation Ranger in charge of Whinlatter Visitor Centre, Thornthwaite Forest, Cumbria, has resigned his job to set off on a two-month journey round the Scottish Highlands.

Riding a Fell pony and taking another pony to carry his camping equipment, his route will take him through the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, Glencoe, Morvern, Knoydart, Skye, and Glen Affric to Glenmoriston where he worked for some years as a forest worker and deer ranger. He will also cross the Coireyairick Pass and the Lairig Ghru to Braemar.

Bob Orrell ready for his long journey.



IT'S A ROYAL YEAR



● The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh accompanied by the Director General Mr. George Holmes, arrive at Knightwood in an open carriage.



● Members of staff involved in recreation meet the Royal Couple at Bolton's Bench, Lyndhurst. From left to right: Miss Berry Stone, Cartographic Assistant; Mr John Ward, HEO; Mr John Gulliver, New Forest Keeper; Mr Jack Ealing, Head Keeper (South); Mr Ralph Hodgson, H/F - Recreation; Mr Peter Lewis, C/F - Recreation; Mr David Gardiner, Area Land Agent; Mr Roy Hughes, Conservancy Recreation Planning Officer (behind D.G.) The Duke is accompanied by Mr Charles Begley, Conservator, SE Eng.



● At the end of the visit to the New Forest, the Director General, Mr. George Holmes, presents a book about the forest to the Queen.



● Recreation forester Roy Dean meets Prince Charles to receive the Prince of Wales Award to Bwlch Nant yr Arian Visitor Centre.

The Forestry Commission's Diamond Jubilee Year has got off to a Right Royal start with visits by three members of the Royal Family in the first months of the year.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh received a splendid welcome to the New Forest where the Queen planted a young oak, "The Queen's Oak", near the ancient Knightwood Oak to mark the ninth centenary of the New Forest.

Many Forestry Commission members of staff were introduced to the Royal Couple during the visit — and it was an especially exciting day for the many families present.

The Queen, the Duke, and DG, Mr George Holmes, travelled in an open carriage along the Bolderwood Ornamental Drive to Knightwood. At Bolton's Bench, the Queen declared open the new car park — the first time she has opened a car park.

During a tour of South West Scotland Prince Charles "dropped in" by helicopter to see steep ploughing and cross-draining at Eucharhead in Upper Nithsdale Forest.

The Prince met Conservator John Davies, DO Mike Long, H/F Alan McBurnie, and Ploughing Manager Jimmy Paterson. Rab Nichol demonstrated his skill ploughing — and then met the Prince.

Prince Charles also met Jimmy Hall and Billy Nichol who teamed up for a cross-draining display.

The Bwlch Nant yr Arian Visitor Centre in Rheidol Forest at the end of its first year of operation has gained a Prince of Wales Award. Forester Roy Dean received the award from Prince Charles at a Ceremony held in Ebbw Vale.

The Centre is a purpose built building discreetly perched above a mid-Wales Valley and forms a focal point for recreation and interpretation of a dramatic landscape.

Meeting the Queen and the Duke during the Royal Visit to the New Forest were:

Mr G. D. Holmes, Director General; Mr Charles Begley, Conservator SE Eng, Mr Donn Small, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest; Assistant Conservator, H and M, Mr J. R. Skinner, Regional Mechanical Engineer, Mr R. West, C/FH and M, Mr R. A. Kemp, H/F Tree-Inspection, Mr R. Newborough; Forester-in-charge of Harvesting Teams, Mr S. R. Maunder; Head Keeper, North of Forest, Mr M. P. G. Clarke; Forest Clerk with 37 years' service, Miss A. J. O'Brien; Forest Craftsman with 38 years' service, Mr W. C. Fennell; Tractor Driver with 45 years' service, Mr S. Warwick; Forest Mechanic with 38 years' service, Mr L. Judd.

DFO Mr A. Ray, C/F-FM Mr R. V. Watkinson; H/F-FM Mr A. Devine; Forester in charge of Knightwood area, Mr M. D. Wiggs; Tree Surgeon of Knightwood and others, Mr G. C. Cutler; Keeper in charge of the Knightwood Beat, Mr D. H. Thomson; Forest Craftswoman with 37 years' service, Ms G. I. Jeffrey; Estate Craftsman with 39 years' service, Mr E. Rutherford.

Recreation Planning Officer, Mr R. Hughes; Assistant Land Agent, New Forest, Mr A. D. F. Gardiner; C/F Recreation and Conservation, Mr W. P. Lewis, H/F Recreation, Mr R. S. Hodgson; Head Keeper, South of New Forest, Mr J. Ealing; The Keeper in charge of Bolton's Bench Beat, Mr J. Gulliver, Forest office staff, Mr J. R. Ward (Slasher Correspondent), Ms B. M. Stone, Mrs H. Kosandak; Forest Clerk with 38 years' service, Ms D. Goddard; Forest Craftsman with 36 years' service, Mr D. Griggs.

Diamond Jubilee

"Slasher" are publishing a special Diamond Jubilee edition in the Autumn to commemorate 60 years of the Forestry Commission.

We will be looking back to the early days of the Commission and would be most pleased to receive old photographs showing work in those days. Please send them to: Editor, Slasher, Information Branch, Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT.



● Watched by Mr. Donn Small, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, the Queen plants the young "Queen's Oak" at Knightwood.



● Prince Charles and Conservator John Davies "stepping it out" over plough lines at Upper Nithsdale.

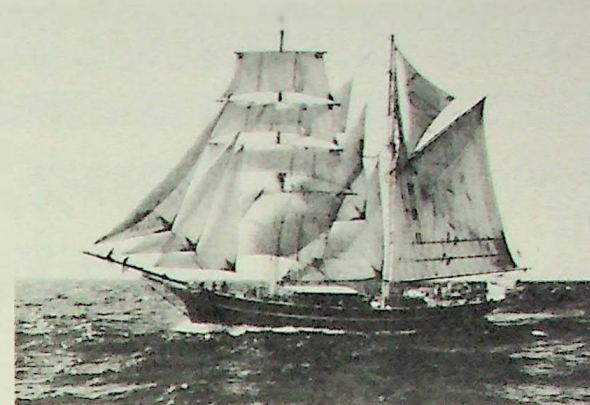


Cima menfolk out in the bay fishing.

Deep in the heart of Central America a group of young people are exploring the equatorial rain forest in a unique adventure.

They are taking part in "Operation Drake" — a two year round-the-world expedition aimed at giving them the most demanding, and rewarding, experience of their lives.

Among them is Desmond Dugan, our young Ranger from Fearnoch Forest, West Scotland. Here is his despatch



The brigantine The Eye Of The Wind — floating base for the round-the-world expedition "Operation Drake".

LIFE IN THE RAIN FOREST

*From Desmond Dugan
Forest Camp, Darien*



Large bird-eating spiders which were frequently found near base-camp.



A bothy used as a base for scientific collections and general lab work.



A small tree snake typical of those found in Darien.

Across our palm roofed bothy falls a soft glow from a hissing tilley. Outside all is black save the neon lights of fireflies as they wing their way through the night. All around stands the eternal forest, tall and silent since the dawn of time.

Tropical rain-forest occupies almost half the world's forest area. Until recently man has had little effect upon them; large areas have either been unpopulated or occupied only by food gathering people who have had little more influence than any other animal inhabitants.

Not much is known of the rain-forest but they have almost certainly existed unchanged since the remotest times. In the last hundred years however there has been a dramatic change and widespread felling and clearing has occurred. The rate of destruction is so rapid that unless efforts are made the tropical rain-forest may well disappear in a generation.

In an effort to understand more about the possible consequences one of the main projects on this phase of OPERATION DRAKE is the rain-forest research programme.

Much of the coastal areas around Caledonia Bay have been cleared for plantations so in order to find an area of untouched primary forest we have had to go well into the Darien hills.

In the wake of Drake . . .

In the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth, a galleon sailed out from Plymouth. Abroad were Sir Francis Drake and his crew embarking upon a historic round-the-world voyage.

Four hundred years later, in the reign of the second Queen Elizabeth, another sailing ship, the

150 ton brigantine, The Eye Of The Wind, set off on another classic round-the-world voyage.

Under the leadership of world-famous explorer, Lt. Col John Blashford - Snell, the expedition has nine separate phases each with a fresh team of 24 youngsters.

On the San Blas border we have our camp. A small team of scientists and their back-up. In order to get up into the forest canopy we have erected a series of aerial walkways from which the botanists and zoologists study the complex eco-systems therein.

For most people the word jungle conjures up all sorts of fearful ideas. Perhaps this is because they either know little or because they cannot understand it. Spend a period living in the forest and one becomes part of it; in tune with its ecology. The "darkness" lifts gradually and everywhere is alive with miracles of evolutionary adaptation. No environment on earth displays such a diversity of inter-relationships that can be found in the tropical evergreen seasonal rain-forest.

Scots colony

From base camp a team of archaeologists are excavating the site of the ill-fated Scots colony, Fort St Andrew. While in the Bay our diving team are working on a sunken wreck, probably one of the ships



which sailed from Leith in 1699 and never returned.

Soon we set off on the most adventurous and challenging part of the expedition. A hand-picked team of 15 plus 5 Guardia Nacional will set off to cross the isthmus from Acla to La Palma.

History

We will follow as closely as possible the historical route which Balboa used in the winter of 1515 and Spring of the following year. With him on the expedition were 190 Spaniards and some porters and guides. They made it across but many perished.

In 1853 a Dutch botanical expedition attempted the crossing, all perished. Ten years later a man named Trevos led an expedition. After 11 days he reported the jungle so thick that they could scarcely see the sky above. They abandoned the attempt.

Eight years ago an American team made an attempt, six men lost their lives.

No joy ride

We are next! With what in store?

This will be no joy ride, that is certain. Even after a period of almost three months

acclimatisation the going will be tough, mentally as well as physically. There are 12 young explorers making the trip and it will be perhaps the toughest experience of their lives. On route we will live off dehydrated rations supplemented by what we kill, catch or collect on the way.

Captain George Thurstan ex-Marine Commando will lead the party. I, amongst

other duties, will be photographer and diarist.

Tomorrow we will have another full medical and a final briefing in readiness for our departure. In all we will have a month and so will be able to collect specimens and do minor medical projects on our way.

I hope all is well with you in Britain.

Joy be with you all.

A view from the trees of base-camp in Darien (above).

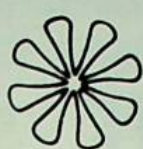
Insect life in the rain forest is very diverse — the Praying Mantis (below) is one of the most elegant.



All photographs by Desmond Dugan



Cima women on a coconut gathering outing by canoe.



Nature News

The tree-top songster of the coniferous forest



Photo by John Markham

Crossbills — those delightful members of the Finch family with the distinctive crossed beak — are going from strength to strength in many of the new conifer forests.

For Crossbills are ideally suited to this environment with their beak designed to allow them to feed on the seeds of cones.

Forests provide natural habitat for a wide range of birds and animals but Crossbills have been spectacularly on the increase in some areas in line with increased afforestation.

At close range — and it is possible to get very close to them before they fly away — the birds are unmistakable.

They are between six and seven inches long — a little longer, and much stouter than a chaffinch and nearly two inches shorter than a starling.

"The short tail with the big head and bill and strong neck give Crossbills a top-heavy appearance," says Dr Bruce Campbell in his Forestry Commission Forest Record 86 on Crossbills.

The crossed mandibles make Crossbills unique among British birds.

The resident Scottish crossbills which inhabit ancient pinewoods — and now the new plantations — were regarded as a race of European Parrot Crossbill,

long isolated from the main stock.

But now they are thought of as a race of the common Crossbill which periodically invades Britain from the north-east and sets up breeding colonies which persist.

The presence of Crossbills in an area is often detected by spotting dropped cones in which the scales have been wrenched back and split vertically. Crossbills do not tear the scales off in the way squirrels do.

Crossbills are found in many parts of Britain, from Caledonian Pinewoods, and plantations to lines of Scots Pines along East Anglian roads and between breckland fields — the typical habitat of the Crossbill in England.

Song Perch

Crossbills feed on the seeds of pine, larch, spruce and silver fir — and nest sometimes only inches away from a food supply!

The song period of the bird

is between January and August — and they are most likely to be heard in Spring, sometimes at night.

Their song perch is very prominent — sometimes on the very top of a conifer — and song in flight has also been recorded.

At the beginning of the year Crossbills take part in unusual "mass meetings" as a prelude to courtship and nesting. Two to five eggs are laid.

Dr Campbell says that it is clear that Crossbills do not cause the slightest alarm to foresters, although they eat seeds. Only in seed orchards could they be regarded as a possible economic pest.

Which is nice to know — for these delightful birds are one of the many welcome wildlife residents in our forests.

For more information about these birds: Crossbills, Forest Record 86 by Dr Bruce Campbell. HMSO Price 14p.

NORTH WALES

ERIC AND VI CELEBRATE DOUBLE RETIREMENT



It's not often we hear of a husband and wife retiring at the same time from the Forestry Commission. But this is what happened at Coed y Brenin when Eric and Vi Jones decided to "call it a day".

B. S. M. Jones of the Honourable Artillery Company, joined the Commission in May 1946. He was a lorry driver for a time, upgraded to Ganger, and promoted to Forester in 1955. In January 1974 Eric retired from the Forester grade but was re-instated as a Senior Ranger with Recreational duties. He was well able to communicate his wide knowledge and experience to others and thoroughly enjoyed talking to school groups and other members of the public.

Violet Jones took up duties as a forest clerkess in 1954. She has a wonderful memory but it would take a computer to record all the changes in office procedures during her reign. She had all the qualities necessary for a forest clerkess — ability, confidence and initiative.

Eric and Vi have two sons working for the Commission — Peter is a Forester and Robbie a Ganger. In aggregate this family has given over 90 years' of service to the Forestry Commission.

Many colleagues and friends attended a farewell party at the Dolserau Hall Hotel, Dolgellau, when Mr Arthur Bramwell, Assistant Conservator, presented Eric with a cheque and a Long Service Certificate. Evelyn Edwards, our senior clerkess, presented Vi with a certificate produced by one of our local artists and Myfanwy Evans of Dyfi Forest presented a bouquet.

EAST ENGLAND

Retirals in the East

Bob Allen, a building trade craftsman with the Estate Department, Santon Downham has retired after 30 years service.

A forest craftsman at Santon Downham Forest, Percy Glaister has retired after over 40 years service all of which was spent in the Thetford area.

George Sutterby of Santon Downham Forest has retired after 32 years service. He was employed as a Tractor Driver and a Ranger, all in the Thetford area.

Fred Preston a forest craftsman at Santon Downham Forest, has retired. Fred worked for the Commission for 29 years in the Thetford area.

Leon Rapacewicz, forest craftsman at Santon Downham Forest, is another of the dwindling band of ex Polish Army workers who has retired. He served for 31 years in the same Forest area.

John Barrett, forest craftsman at the Brandon Central Produce Depot, has served for the whole of his service (27½ years) at the Depot.

Alf Roberts, forest craftsman at Wensum, has retired after serving with the Commission for over 30 years, all in the North Norfolk area.

Sidney Knights, a forest craftsman at Swaffham, has retired after 31 years service with the Commission, all of it at what is now Swaffham Forest.

Stephen Walton, a ganger at Kesteven Forest, has retired, unfortunately on ill health grounds, after 28 years service.

It's a long, long road . . .

Two lorry drivers who have each clocked up many thousands of miles, have retired in East England.

Bert Turner who is known to hundreds of forestry workers in Breckland and South West Norfolk, has retired after 39 years with the Commission.

He was presented with a long service certificate by the Conservator for East England, Mr R. M. Hewitt, who thanked him for his long, loyal and faithful service.

The presentation was made at the transport department of the Commission at the district headquarters at Santon Downham where Mr Turner lives. At the same time he received a pair of binoculars and a cheque subscribed for by his workmates. The presentation was made by fellow driver Mr Don Cator.

Grey skies and a cold wind did not affect the warmth of the farewell presentation to Mr L. G. (Lennie) Baker, on his retirement from Aldewood Forest. Lennie was given an inscribed barometer from staff and his colleagues and a certificate recording his 34 years service at Aldewood.

Although Lennie has lived and worked in Suffolk since the War, he still retains in his speech more than a hint of his South Wales origins. In clocking up many thousands of miles over forest roads and public highways, he has achieved a total of 18 years consecutive safe driving awards.

RESEARCH

ALAN'S WORK IN WALES

To mark his retirement, Head Forester Alan Bacon, R & D Division, was the guest of honour at a small dinner party held at The Lodge Hotel near Conwy.

Alan joined the FC in 1946 after air crew service with Coastal Command during the '39-'45 war. He reported to Alice Holt Lodge under the Forest Worker Trainee Scheme and eventually went to the FC's School at Lynford in 1948. He returned to Alice Holt, served briefly in Silv(S) and then joined the team investigating the problem of derelict woodlands. During

this time Alan was an enthusiastic member of the cricket club and became the team captain.

In 1948 Alan was posted to the Silv(S) — now Silv(N) — outstation at Betws y Coed, and there he remained until his retirement.

At the party Mr. Jim Atterson, Principal Silviculturist (N), presented Alan with field glasses and a cheque on behalf of his colleagues and wished him a long and happy retirement. Mrs Bacon was presented with a bouquet.

SOUTH SCOTLAND

BIG JOCK LEAVES UPPER NITHSDALE

JOHN Love, forest craftsman, usually known as "Big Jock", has retired from Upper Nithsdale.

Jock came to the forest after the mines closed in 1958, maintaining that he would only be temporarily there.

Jock is a very keen bowler and his colleagues clubbed together to buy him a bowling bag. This, together with a wallet of notes, was presented to him by his District Officer, Mike Long.

David's 31 years

DAVID Bennett, Area Civil Engineer in Moffat, has retired. All his 31 years of service had been spent in Scotland, the first 19 years in the West and the remainder in the South.

The Conservator, Mr Davies, presented him with a record and cassette player, and the Moffat Roads squad arranged a supper and social evening in Eskdalemuir during which Conservancy Engineer, Mr Coleman, presented a suitably inscribed silver salver and a pair of goblets.

Four farewells

Bert Little has retired after 39 years' service on the Dalbeattie section of Solway Forest — he was presented with glasses and a decanter.

Hugh McKnight, senior ranger at Kirroghtree Forest, was presented with a cheque when he retired after 29 years' service.

Andrew Paterson and Percy Graham have retired from Bareagle. Andrew — known as "Drewie" — joined the Commission in 1949. He was presented with a smoker's stand and a fireside table. Graham who worked at Bareagle for 12 years, was known for his "impish" sense of humour. Colleagues presented him with an occasional table and a china horse.

NORTH WEST ENGLAND



Joseph receives a "fistful" of tokens

CRAFTSMAN Joseph Rumsey has retired after an unbroken spell of 28 years' hard work and valuable service at Mortimer NW(E).

He had worked in big timber with Ministry of Supply and a merchant during and after the Second World War. But he had

first come from South Wales to a work camp at Mortimer in the 1930s.

Conservator John James and a large gathering of forest and district staff turned out to bid Joe a long and happy retirement.

Joe was presented with a

fistful of record tokens, a very life-like spade carved by Mortimer mechanics out of one piece of Douglas fir and a splendid silver-plated tankard for use in one of his hobbies. (See picture, above).

A large party followed in Joe's local the same evening.

Cannock trio

MORE than 30 friends and colleagues braved fog and snow to gather at the Gate Inn to say goodbye to three retiring members of Cannock Forest Staff.

Beryl Williscroft, who started in the nursery in 1955 and over the years became highly skilled at a variety of forest work, was presented with Wedgwood china.

Harry Simpson started in 1956 and acquired many safe driving awards during his excellent service as a lorry driver. Harry was presented with an inscribed tankard and a specially commissioned wood-carving.

Mrs Lil Simpson, who has kept the office highly polished for many years, was given some glassware.

On stage

FOREST craftsman Joseph Whalley, Grizedale, has retired after 32 years' service — during which his colleagues think he has felled about 25,000 tonnes of timber.

Joseph, who has been a leading light with the Hawkhead Stage Society and Flookburgh Operatic Society, was presented with Cumbria crystal glass candlesticks.

BRINGING TREES TO THE MOTORWAYS



Mervyn Maddocks and Conservator John Zehetmayr inspecting motorway planting.

Mr Mervyn Maddocks, Head Forester in charge of Wentwood Forest for the past 19 years, has retired after 44 years service with the Forestry Commission.

The trees planted under his guidance on some 60 miles of motorway and trunk road from Severn Bridge-Tredegar Park and Coldra to Monmouth during the past decade are already bringing colour and variety to the motorway scene and providing havens for many species of birds and small mammals.

Wentwood Forest is attracting many thousands of visitors each year and Mr Maddocks has been very active in encouraging schools and youth organisations through lectures, talks, visits and open days.

Mr David Parsons, District Officer, Gwent, presented Mr Maddocks with a Royal Doulton dinner service. Mr Ian Parrot, Forester at Wentwood, presented an oil painting of Wentwood Forest by Mrs M. Singleton of Shirenewton and Peter Churchill's book "A Colour World of Horses", on behalf of Wentwood Forest staff and friends. Mrs Maddocks received a bouquet from Mrs Parsons.

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

Double retiral at New Forest

HORACE James, Chief Forester in the New Forest SE(E), retired after 47 years' service with the Commission. Horace has spent 37 of these years in the New Forest which must surely qualify as a record for service at one station.

His father was a forester in the Dean and later at Pembrey in South Wales and an uncle who was a forester for many years in Suffolk and at Can-nock. Horace's brother, Awbery, is of course still serving as a Chief Forester in East England.

John Conduit, Forester, retired after 30 years' service, some 18 of which have been spent in the New Forest.

A buffet attended by about 60 was held at the Lyndhurst Community Centre and Mr Charles Begley, Conservator

SE(E), made presentations to both Horace and John.

Percy leaves

FOREST craftsman Percy Brett has retired after 20 years' service at Brighthing.

Percy has been one of the stalwarts of Bedgebury Forest, initiating many of the early plantations, many of which are now coming into full production.

He came to the Forestry Commission after working many years as a landscape gardener.

Retirals in South Wales

Jack Pryce, ganger, at Glas-fynydd Forest, retired after 24 years' service, 10 years as Ganger. He was presented with a Yew coffee table in recognition of his loyal service.

Sally Slight, clerical officer in personnel branch in the conservancy office retired after seven years' service. She was presented with a cheque with which she hoped to buy a painting for her home.

John Beaumont, forest craftsman at Brechfa, retired after 18 years' service. At a party held at Gwrdymawr, Llanybyther, he was presented with a cheque.

Geoff Viggers, forest craftsman at Coed Abertawe, retired after 23 years' service.

Michael Jones, forest craftsman, Irfon, retired (on health grounds) after 11 years' service.

Tommy Jones, forest craftsman, Crychan, retired after 32 years' service. He received the Long Service Certificate and a cheque from colleagues at a ceremony in the District Office.

Glyn Davies, lorry driver, Ebbw Vale, retired after 29 years' service.

Tom Brown, tractor driver at Crychan retired after 20 years' service.

Nicoli Kuzmin, forest craftsman at Tintern, retired after 17 years' service.

David Price, forest worker at Coed Deufor, has retired after 26 years' service.

Michael Jones, forest craftsman at Irfon Forest, has left following problems with his leg. He was wished every success in his endeavour to start a new career.

FINLAY WINS TOP AWARD

Finlay MacRae, District Officer at Dingwall, has won an international conservation award for his work in conserving the native Caledonian Pinewoods of Glen Affric — one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland.

The award was made by the Society of American Travel Writers and it was one of only a very few occasions that the award has gone outside North America.

Finlay travelled to Dublin to receive his award — a Phoenix Statuette symbolic of 'rising from the ashes' — at a special ceremony at the American Embassy.

Since 1964 he has been supervising the Forestry Commission's sustained campaign to conserve the native Caledonian pinewoods at Glen Affric. The woods — containing grand old windswept pines aged up to 300 years — are one of the last remnants of the great prehistoric Caledonian Forest, which once extended throughout the Highlands of Scotland.

Safeguard

The first call for action and planned conservation of the woodlands came through the Society of Foresters and particularly the late Professor H. M. Steven, Professor of Forestry at Aberdeen University. Following a visit to Glen Affric in 1959 Professor Steven urged the Forestry Commission, as the new owners, to safeguard this unique heritage.

The Commission responded to this call with positive action.

Five areas covering a total of 1,750 hectares (4,300 acres) have been declared Pinewood Reserves in Glen Affric.

Secure fencing to keep sheep and, particularly, deer away from the young trees has played a vital role in the regeneration campaign. In some areas seed from mature trees has been able to germinate without assistance from man. In other areas ground cultivation has assisted this process.

In other parts it has been necessary to assist the young trees with fertiliser to help them in the struggle through heather, bracken and sphagnum moss, which has become well-established during the missing generations of pines.

Success

And in another part of the pinewoods, young pines have been planted by man — but they are always grown from native pine seed from Glen Affric.

"As I look at the healthy young pines today I think we are succeeding with our objective. But we will have to be vigilant and continue to take action when necessary," said Finlay.



Finlay among the pines at Glen Affric.

"Although I have received the award, the work here has been very much a team effort," said Finlay.

The Forestry Commission is also taking action to conserve native pinewoods in other parts of Scotland. Notable among these are the Black Wood of Rannoch, Glenmore of Speyside and near Glen Orchy in the west. In addition many fine individual and small groups of naturally growing trees are being conserved as parts of newly-created forests.

The Forestry Commission in association with the Nature Conservancy Council actively encourages private landowners to undertake conservation of Caledonian Pinewoods on their land. Approved planting or successful natural regeneration of native pine of local origin in special areas of Scotland can qualify for grants of £225 per hectare.

Finlay is married with two grown-up daughters and his interests — apart from Caledonian Pine — include playing

and teaching the bagpipes.

Television

National and local newspapers, television and radio sent reporters and photographers to a Press Tour of Glen Affric to meet Finlay and see the conservation work. Furthest travelled was the reporter from the Chicago Tribune.

And on their way north, the BBC crew thought they had managed to film the Loch Ness monster — but it only turned out to be a duck!

Forestry Commissioner George Stewart and North Scotland Conservator Robert Cathie attended the Press Tour and valuable assistance was also given by Chief Forester Hugh Morris and his staff at Glen Affric.

The Press Tour was widely reported — and television viewers were treated to the evocative sight and sound of Finlay playing the bagpipes among the young pines on the hillside.

£1300 FOR OAK LOG!

EACH year the Forest of Dean saff under District Officer A. Joslin and Chief Forester G. Waygood tackle a programme of nearly 10,000m³ of hardwood logs.

Possibly up to 50 logs each year are in the veneer or best planking quality and are sold individually in small parcels.

In 1977 and 1978 we fell

short of £1,000 for one log by a few tens of pounds. This year, we passed this yardstick comprehensively, obtaining over £1,339 + VAT for one log. The total sale of 14 logs exceeded £7,000.

And, at Dalton...

A new record is claimed for Dalton Forest NW(E) where Head Forester D. W. Keens has produced a Project Cos-

ting (Form U11 to the cognoscenti) for a conifer thinning which reflected a surplus of £102.31/m³ (excluding labour cost) or £92.93/m³ (including L.O. cost).

All staff may claim credit for this noble achievement but it must be admitted that the product and price did play a small part, ie Yew Veneer Logs sold at £138.74³.

NORTH SCOTLAND

TWO LEAVE ARDROSS

TWO long-service awards were presented in Ardross Forest to Donald Ross and Douglas Swanson. The presentations were made by the Conservator for North Scotland, Mr Bob Cathie.

Donald Ross joined the Forestry Commission in 1937 and has served for 41 years. Donald has been a ganger since 1946, and was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal last year.

Douglas Swanson joined the Forestry Commission as a forest worker in 1948 and progressed to the rank of ganger

in 1959. He retired after 30 years' service.

Farewell to...

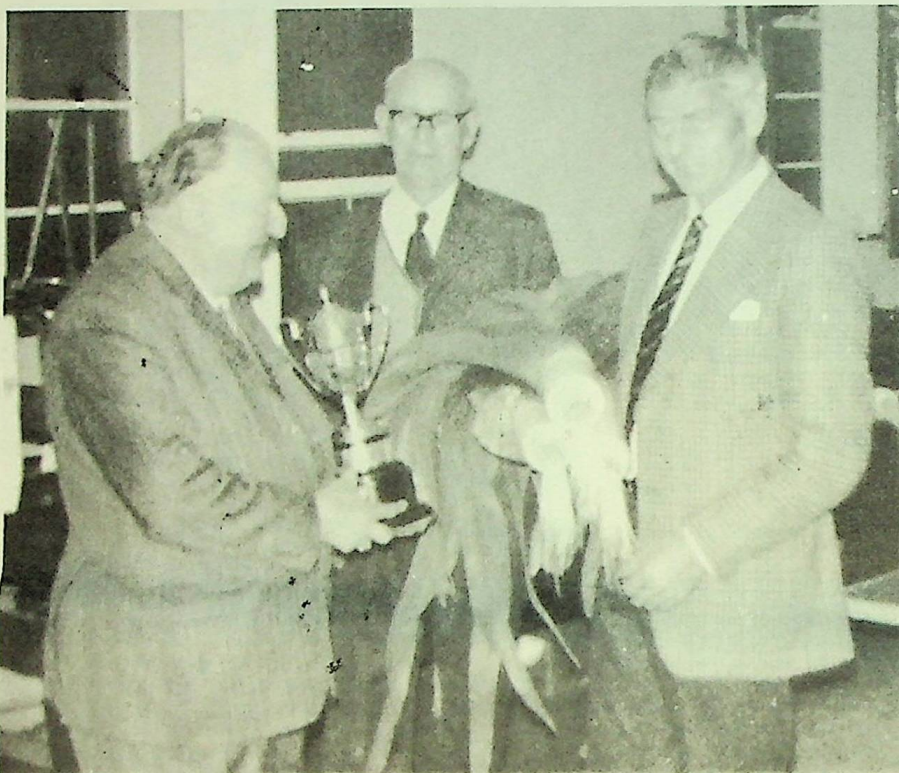
JAMES Hislop, Head Forester at Glenrigh, retired after 46 years' service. His colleagues presented him with a sum of money.

Charles Scott retired from the Blackstand Nursery, Black Isle, and was presented with a pair of binoculars.

Staff at Torrachillity bade a fond farewell to their office clerkess, Ann Mackintosh, when she left to get married.

focus

Michael keeps the secret of those prize leeks



MICHAEL Snaith of Thrunton Forest has an almost unbeatable record in an interest which has seized many Forestry Commission employees in Northumberland — the growing of leeks!

In local shows over the past few years he has won prizes such as a deep freeze, gold ingot, silver ingot, dinner set, table, rocking chair, vacuum cleaner and electric toaster.

And his wife also takes part in the leek shows — also with considerable success.

Michael grows his leeks by sowing his own strain of seed in a heated greenhouse in late January.

"The plants, when they are

about the thickness of your little finger, are replanted into prepared trenches towards the end of May," said Michael.

Secret

But here Michael refuses to tell the secret of what he puts into the trench.

The plants at this stage can sell for as much as £2 a plant. The leeks are watered and fed — again with secret ingredients — right through the

summer until the show time which is about October.

"The aim is to grow the leeks to a maximum length of about 15cm of white and some are as much as 30cm in circumference," said Michael.

"Three leeks are required to take part in a show."

● As well as winning prizes, Michael has also collected a number of trophies and he is pictured above receiving one for his prize-winning leeks.

OBITUARY

MR GEOFFREY BARTLETT THE sudden and untimely death of Geoff Bartlett came as a great blow to his family and his many friends in the Forestry Commission.

He was the Chief Forester in charge of Silviculture Research in north and north-east Scotland and died while assessing an experiment in Shin Forest in Sutherland.

His premature death has left a large gap in the field of Silviculture as he knew more of the forests of north Scotland and of their problems than any other person.

MR W. W. CAMPBELL RETIRED Forester W. W. (Willie) Campbell has died at his home in Gartmore. He retired from Loch Ard Forest in December 1970 after 38 years' service, almost all at Loch Ard except for a spell with Timber Control during the war.

He leaves a widow, son, and a daughter Wilma, who is a clerk and typist in the District Office at Aberfoyle.

MR LESLIE COKER DARTMOOR Forest suffered a severe blow by the death of Les Coker. Les had been ill for some months and bore his sickness with the courage and unselfishness that was entirely typical of him as a man.

Les started his service in April 1951 at Plym Forest moving subsequently to Erme Forest, later returning to Plym. He continued to serve as a Ganger and subsequently Leading Ganger when Plym became part of Dartmoor Forest.

He will be greatly missed not only by his wife and daughter, but also by all his colleagues.

MR LAWRENCE COLES FORESTER Lawrence Coles of Savernake has died aged 62.

His career started in 1938 when he came to Dean FTS.

May 1946 saw him back in the Dean for refresher training and then, after a spell as Ganger and Foreman in the New Forest, to Blandford in S.W.(E) as a Forester in 1949. In 1952 he moved to Collingbourne Forest.

MR IAN GILLESPIE IAN Gillespie, late District Officer in the West Conservancy (Scotland), died in Lochgilphead.

He was appointed District Officer in the Aberdeen area in January 1940. Following normal district duties, he was then transferred to the

Acquisition Branch and ultimately to the West Conservancy in May 1951, first to Aberfoyle and then in 1958 to Cairnbaan. Some 10 years ago he retired.

He is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

MR HENRY HALLETT THE death has occurred of Henry Hallett, aged 74. Henry was Forest Clerk at Slindon SE (E) 1956-66 and Forest Clerk at Abinger SE (E) 1966-72. He retired from the Commission in 1972.

MR CYRIL HOCKADAY THE death occurred suddenly at his home in Camborne at the age of 74 of Cyril Hockaday.

Cyril started with the Forestry Commission in Bodmin Forest in 1931, and worked as a foreman at Bodmin during the years of expansion in Cornwall.

In 1951 he became Forester i/c the newly-created Forest of "Lands End" where he remained until his retirement.

MR DEREK MORRIS IT is with deep regret we record the death of Ganger Derek Morris of Ceiriog Forest.

Derek Morris commenced at the then Goror Forest in November 1953 after service in the RAF and on Lord Harlech's Brogyntyn Estate. He was promoted Ganger in 1973.

Derek did not cease work until his entry into hospital in November. Mr Morris, who was 46, was a well-known darts player for several clubs in Oswestry.

MR JOHN TARRANT WITH regret we report the death of John Tarrant at the age of 48.

John had been an Executive Officer in North Wales Conservancy from 1951-54 and in South Wales from 1954 to 1967 when he transferred to the Land Commission. He later transferred to the Welsh Office where he was a Senior Executive Officer in the Planning Division. He leaves three children, Mrs Tarrant having died four years ago.

MR HYWEL MEIRION THOMAS

HYWEL Meirion Thomas, retired forest worker, died in the Cottage Hospital, Llangollen. He was 74 years old, a widower who is survived by his two sons.

Hywel Thomas was employed by the Forestry Commission for 18 years, from 1951 to 1969 when he retired.

Column 8

MONSTER CATCH

Frank Deriu, mechanic at St Hilary Workshop, bagged one of the biggest cod ever caught from a Welsh beach when he landed a 30lb monster with ragworm bait at Ogmore, Mid-Glamorgan.

MATRIMONIAL CATCH

Helen Murray, popular EO with West Scotland, went on holiday to Canada — and then decided to stay out there to get married! "As if that was an adequate reason for leaving the FC," said our West Scotland correspondent. "Some people have no sense of proportion!"

TOP-LEVEL CATCH

Forestry Commissioner George Stewart believes he has discovered woodworm in the DG's table at headquarters.

FLAMING CATCH

Rheola Forest staff had an eventful evening for their pre-fire season dinner at Neath. Firstly their mini-bus was overtaken by a fire engine on the way to a grass fire. And then at the end of the night as the party was about to board the bus to return home, the bus burst into flames and the Fire Brigade had to be called to quell the flames. The party finally returned home at 3am happy that for once not everything comes in threes!

GOLDEN CATCH

Dugald Campbell, of Port Ellen, Islay, who has worked with the Commission for the past four years as ganger on the islands, won the premier award, a gold medal, for solo singing at the last Gaelic Mod in Oban. Congratulations to Dugald.

DINNER CATCH

Forest worker Malcolm Barnes set off on horseback to take hot dinners to two pensioners marooned in the tiny village of Alwinton, Northumberland, during this winter's snowstorms. After ploughing through the drifts Malcolm told listeners to *Newsbeat* on BBC Radio 1: "I don't know if any of the dinners was spilled — but I don't think so."

CATCH 22

Some wag — who wishes to remain nameless — is fed up getting lost during visits to headquarters and has suggested a "forest walk trail guide" to 231 Corstorphine Road!

And finally...

PAPER CATCH

North Scotland Conservancy office became "bogged down" recently when a large consignment of toilet paper destined for the Glenmore campsite was inadvertently delivered there by HMSO. Aileen McCabe, EO in charge of stores, "flushed" with embarrassment when she saw the mountain of cardboard cases in the corridor — 60 in all — each containing 50 rolls. Fast mathematical brains soon worked out there was 227 miles of toilet paper — enough to run from Inverness to Kielder! An unidentified member of staff said as he passed by: "It's just another load of 'reorder' no. 13-21 from HQ to me!"

Slasher

EDITOR Nigel Hawkins

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South East: John Ward

South West: Audrey Child

WALES

North: Gwyn Owen

North: Caroline Jones

SCOTLAND

North: Richard Westlake

East: Douglas Furneaux

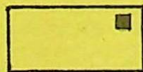
West: Archie Cameron

South: Ben Struthers

RESEARCH

Alice Holt: Noel Blatchford

NRS: Fred McLauchlan



postbag

"DISGUSTED" WARDEN

Dear Sir,

As an FC Camp Warden, I am disgusted at the way wardens are paid.

I have been in contact with all the Commission camp site wardens of the "A" class sites in Scotland and find we all do about 12 hours a day on average, seven days a week for the period of the season. There is no day off and we are on call 24 hours. We are paid £47.85 plus 1 grade, a small commission, and unsocial element of only 1/5th of overtime rate.

I feel we handle an FC asset as valuable as any piece of machinery which earns the operator sometimes over £70 for a 40-hour week.

Would camp wardens who are union members please discuss this with their shop stewards and let me have their feelings as soon as possible.

Dick Glover (Warden),

Caldons,

Glentworth.

Please note the "New Pay Award" story on Page 1 — Editor

Not the End of an Era?

Dear Editor,

I take great exception to the remark on the front page article entitled "End of an Era" (Slasher 298 — Autumn) which stated that: "Today, horses are no longer part of the British forestry scene..."

This statement is wholly untrue — there are dozens of horses at work in British forests (many on FC ground).

There are a few in the south east. However in the North, Borders and Scotland the use of horses in forestry is much more widespread — Greystoke and Kershope, to mention just two Commission forests in which they are used, albeit by contractors.

Other places where they are used (or were until recently) being the Duke of Atholl's estates, FC Thornthwaite, EFG County Durham, Charnes Es-

tate (Staffordshire), and Pickering (Yorkshire).

So, in my opinion, although no longer of major importance (at present!) the horse is still a significant part of forestry in these islands.

S. Leatherdale,

Forest Worker,

Chillerns East (Eng).

Our article featured the last horseman in the direct employment of the Forestry Commission but our readers will be pleased to know that the horse itself is continuing to work in our forests — Editor.