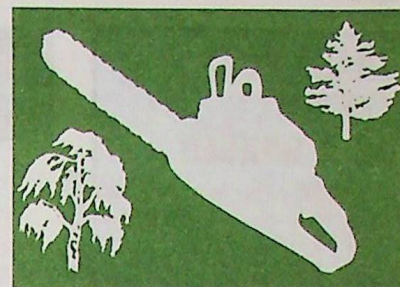




SLASHER

NEWSPAPER OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION



SPRING 1983

BRANCHBRIEFS

Wanted: Words from the past

A "PLEASE write" appeal comes from Mr Jeremy Williams, Editor of "Y Coedwigwr" (The Forester), the journal of the Forestry & Wood Science Society at UCNW. He writes: "We would like to hear from past students of the Department in the form of a letter or an article or notes about their current whereabouts and work which will bring in some valuable contributions for future issues." Incidentally, all the contributions in the latest edition of the journal were from present or former students.

Information is the conference target

The Director General, Mr George Holmes, is to open the first conference of the new International Union of Forestry Research Organisations which will be held in Edinburgh in July.

More than 50 delegates from overseas will attend, including Dr George Moeller, who works with the Forest Service of the US Depart-

ment of Agriculture and is the Group Leader of IUFRO.

Mr David Seal, Chief Research Officer (N) who has been organising the conference in Edinburgh for the Commission, said: "Its main aim is to try and improve nationally and internationally, the transfer of information from research into practice."

It's definitely lucky for some!

THE Commission's Sports and Social Club have arranged a dinner dance in the Caledonian Hotel, Princes Street, Edinburgh, on Friday, May 13. Superstitious? Well, don't be, because it promises to be a first-rate event. For instance, special rates have been arranged for anyone wishing hotel accommodation for the night. Overnight accommodation will be £20 for each guest sharing a twin room with bath, and £25 for each guest using a single room with bath. The rates include a full Scottish breakfast. The hotel has suggested that anyone wishing to book should do so as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

You're beautiful and it shows . . .

TWO Forestry Commission campsites — one in Wales and the other in Scotland — have won regional awards in the search for the campsite of the year organised jointly by the AA's magazine "Trail" and the British Tourist Authority's Beautiful Britain Campaign.

They are the Snowdonia Forest Park camping ground, Beddgelert, Gwynedd, and the Glencoe campsite at Ballachulish.

The citation for the award for Wales says: "The weather in Wales may not be altogether reliable but when

the mountain scenery is as stunning as that surrounding Snowdonia Forest Park, even rainy days look beautiful."

On the Glencoe campsite, the citation reads: "For campers wanting to lose themselves among the rugged grandeur of Scottish scenery, few sites could offer a more perfect setting than Glencoe."

"It is the ideal site for campers wanting to get away from it all to enjoy walking, climbing and other outdoor pursuits. A real camper's paradise."

Roadworthies!

MR JOHN Thompson of Carron in Moray, a Scottish car rally enthusiast whose car — a treasured possession — was stolen shortly after he had arrived at a Lake District site to watch the action had cause to be grateful to Commission staff. He writes: "My devotion to the sport wavered badly but was bolstered by the courtesy of the many pleasant and helpful spectators and my thanks also go to the very co-operative Forestry Commission marshals who were on duty."

GREEN FOR 'GO' AND THE JOBS ROLL IN

The Forestry Commission have given their blessing to a Finnish company's decision to build a multi-million-pound integrated pulp and newsprint mill at Shotton in North Wales which has been hard-hit by the rundown of its steel works.

The move was welcomed as "a real fillip for forestry and the whole economy, and a most rewarding outcome to our negotiations with the company."

Construction of the new mill — on a now disused part of the British Steel Corporation's site — will start soon, and when ready to roll in about two and a half years' time, the mill will create 270 jobs with between 800 and 900 more timber haulage and harvesting the timber, both in Commission and private forests, plus 100-200 in service industries.

The company, United Paper Mills, have been discussing the project with the Commission for almost two years.

A vital element in the go-ahead decision was the long-term availability of large quantities of pulpwood and the Commission were able to give the company the assurance it required.

Supply

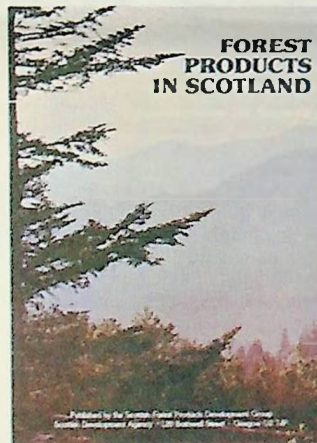
Planned production at the mill is 180,000 tonnes of newsprint a year — which will absorb about 450,000 tonnes of pulpwood and wood chips.

The Commission have concluded a long-term direct supply contract to provide United Paper Mills with between 50-60 per cent of their roundwood needs, most coming from Wales but with additional quantities from forests in northern England and southern Scotland.

The remainder of the company's raw material will be supplied from private forests, sales of standing timber from Commission forests and wood chips from sawmills.

Commission Chairman Sir David Montgomery said: "We are delighted at the decision, not only because of the tremendous boost it gives to forestry employment and to the pulpwood market, but also because it represents an economically viable exploitation of a valuable national resource."

"The mill's output will greatly strengthen the UK's stability to compete with imports and so the benefits extend beyond forestry



FOREST PRODUCTS IN SCOTLAND

Could Scotland be next for some such similar development?

The answer is that any wood processing firm looking for somewhere to invest must take Scotland into account because it is the only remaining area in Britain where the timber is available.

to the whole of the national economy."

And Mr Norman Lamont, Minister of State for Industry, described it as "a big vote of confidence in the future for UK papermaking."

Confidence

Secretary of State for Wales Nicholas Edwards added: "The announcement is excellent news for Wales and the forest industry."

United Paper Mills are among the ten largest Scandinavian paper companies.

They manage and operate five sawmills, eight mill companies, an engineering works, a chemical plant and a talc mine.

The Shotton mill will produce newsprint of a quality suitable for the most modern printing machinery by tried technology and with a productivity per man better than any present or planned production in the UK and equal to the world's most modern plants.

The type of wood to be used will be mainly spruce, but with about a ten per cent proportion of pine. It is of excellent quality. Recently substantial quantities of pulpwood were supplied to UPM for production trials. Processed at their pulpmill in Finland using the same process as that planned for Shotton, the newsprint passed all the company's tests.

Target for Scots industry

A FAR-REACHING strategy to develop Scotland's forest product industry aims to attract £300 million of investment in the next 15 years, during which time Scottish timber production will double.

This is one of the major points to emerge from a year-long review undertaken by the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board — with the support of the Forestry Commission, the Scottish Office and Timber Growers (Scotland) Limited, the private owners' organisation.

Capital cost

The co-sponsors report that there are major opportunities to build a competitive forest product industry in Scotland. They believe international companies and investors can be attracted to participate in the development of the industry and that new initiatives can be made on the home front. The report makes practical recommendations on how opportunities can best be realised. These will now be implemented.

Investment opportunities have been identified and action will now be taken to follow these through with top companies.

In the sawmilling sector, the best prospects for profitable growth, says the survey report, are to improve the industry's penetration in the UK house-building and other construction markets.

Survey

The survey, which was undertaken on behalf of the sponsoring bodies by the consultants, Arthur D. Little Ltd., also identifies the opportunity for Scotland to establish itself as a leader in the wood-based panels sector.

The pulp and paper sector is the third identified as having growth potential. Specific projects are being closely examined, particularly those at the forefront of pulping technology and offering long-term growth opportunities.

A FORREST WHO SEES THE TREES

Dr G. Ian Forrest, biochemist and member of the Genetics Branch team at the Northern Research Station, has been awarded the Institute of Chartered Foresters Silvicultural Prize for 1983. This is the first such prize given by the newly-formed Institute of Chartered Foresters. The prize was awarded for two of Ian's papers which were published in "Forestry" on variation in the monoterpenes of the Scottish pinewoods and certain European Scots pine populations. In is an expert on monoterpenes — a group of compounds forming the volatile resins of conifers, and can "finger-print" individual trees and the probable ancestry of populations quite easily.

SNAKE PUTS THE BITE ON A RANGER

HAZARD in the hills, Senior Ranger Mr A. D. Frankland NE(E) had a nasty experience on the Ralsdale block on the edge of Whorlton Moor in North Yorkshire.

He shot a rabbit on a grassy bank in a patch of bracken. When he bent down to pick up the rabbit he was bitten on the hand by an adder. He had to spend the next four days in Northallerton Hospital, but he is now quite well.

In his spare time, Mr Frankland gives illustrated talks on wildlife and now he has at least (forgive the pun) a painful, first-hand experience to relate. He also writes poetry and has had his book "Poems For Pleasure" printed.

DROP A LINE TO GHANA

PEN pals, please, for a Ghanaian student who is very anxious to correspond with members of the Forestry Commission staff in any part of the UK.

He is Augustine Blay, who has a special interest in forestry. He will be delighted to hear from you if you write to him at this address: c/o Akuroway Box 31, Bonyere-Via Axim, Ghana, West Africa.

Mr Blay has a neat turn of phrase. His opening sentence requesting pen pals in the Commission says: "By God, I hope you are in good condition..."

That surely deserves an answer!

BENEVOLENT FUND PLEA

THE Civil Service Benevolent Fund, reporting on its case work in the past year, laments: "It is a pity that some younger civil servants mistakenly associate the Fund with help in retirement when so much Fund help goes to sick and disabled civil servants."

Over £100,000 was spent helping these colleagues in difficulties in 1982 and the number of applications from serving civil servants on full pay rose to about 250.

LAST OF THE LAND GIRLS

DURING the last war many girls who joined the Women's Land Army were directed into forestry and later the Forestry Commission was fortunate enough to secure the services of some of them on a permanent basis.

The New Forest has just said goodbye to the last of its land girls with the retirement of Beryl Ettinger after almost 42 years as a forestry worker. Unlike many of her contemporaries, she did not transfer to the clerical side. She enjoyed her work in the open air and was proud of her grade of Craftswoman.

Her retirement was marked by a get-together at the Happy Cheese Inn where Conservator, Charles Begley, presented her long service certificate. Beryl also received a bouquet of flowers from Jayne Summers, a standard lamp from Chief Forester Ron Watkinson and a picnic seat made for her by local staff. Beryl has not entirely retired since she has agreed to do a bit of cleaning in the office, just for something to do.

Concern over disposal of plantations

There has been a candid exchange of views between "the man at the top" and a member of staff over the Commission's disposals programme which continues to cause anxiety. The concern that the programme has sparked among Commission staff was manifested in a letter sent to the Director General, Mr George Holmes, by Mr Mark Yorke, District Officer, Cefn-y-Maes, Brithdir, Dolgellau, Gwynedd.

Mr Holmes has agreed to Mr Yorke's request that the correspondence be published in "Slasher." Here is the full text of both letters.

Dear Mr Holmes, I am writing as a loyal member of the Commission, but one who is very concerned at the trend in plantation sales. I fully understand the instructions to the Commission and the reasons for these sales, and indeed I support the need for them in certain circumstances and the benefits that will accrue, for example, from a more economic management of individual areas of plantation.

However, I know you are fully aware from the time that the 1981 Forestry Act was being debated that certain MP's and private individuals and a wide spectrum of Commission staff did at that time ask (and are still asking with increasing concern): "At what stage will the sales cease or at least substantially diminish?"

I appreciate that you may not be able to answer this question. It is largely political and dependent on the future economic health of the country.

Nevertheless, on behalf of the taxpayer, the Commission is having to market a substantial proportion of a national asset, at a time of recession and when there is a substantial number and acreage of plantation (both private and State) on the market.

I believe that in the interests of the country and of the Forest industry, there should be a virorous and enterprising "mixture" of both privately-owned and State-owned plantation area.

I don't wish to embarrass yourself or the Commission, or to be labelled as an "agitator," but would be grateful for your advice as to how I and any other members of the Commission's staff who may have similar views, may register their concern and pose the above question in political circles?

I was, for example, considering writing to the Secretary of State.

And the Director-General replied:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concern about the possible effects of the Commission's disposals programme.

You have made the point that you understand the reasons why these sales are taking place and you recognise that benefits can accrue to the Commission in certain circumstances. Clearly, however, your main concern arises because no limits of scale or time have been attached to the disposals programme.

We have to look at the question of disposals in the context of the review of the forestry policy on which the Government embarked when they came to power. It was understandable that the Government — and indeed any Government — after a period in opposition should review existing policies to bring them into line with their political and economic thinking. The outcome of the review was announced in the statement to Parliament on December 10, 1980, and importantly it reaffirmed the Government's confidence in the future of forestry, including a continuing policy of expansion by new planting.

SCALE

As might be expected, the Government were also concerned with the balance between the public and private sectors and, with their support for private enterprise and a reduction in public spending, they wished to see greater emphasis on private participation in the forestry industry. Among other things, the Government therefore thought it right to realise some of the assets built up over the years with the aid of public funds in order to reduce the Commission's call on the Exchequer for the Forestry Enterprise.

It was made quite clear during the passage of the Act that the Government did not intend to dismember the Commission or to place it at a commercial disadvantage by creaming off

the best and most productive areas. Our Ministers also indicated that they had in mind disposals to the value of some £40 million during the first three years, beginning in 1981/82, and that it would be for the Commission to select the areas to be sold to meet the financial target set. The programme has since been extended by two years to 1985/86 and calls for disposals to the value of some £82 million in total. This is a very substantial sum and it is quite true that no cut-off point in the disposals programme has been announced.

However, I can assure you that the Commissioners are fully alert to the implications and problems that could arise if the disposals programme were to continue to be extended over several years and the Chairman and I are in close touch with Forestry Ministers who are of course ultimately responsible for determining the extent of the programme.

With regard to the effect of the disposals programme on the property market, our sales are bound, of course, to have some influence, but there is no evidence that they are having a depressing effect on land values. We are most careful not to sell our properties below the reserve prices which we set. Our objective is to secure a proper return to the public purse.

You believe that a "vigorous and enterprising mixture of both privately-owned and state-owned plantation area" would be in the interest of the country and the forest industry, and so do we. The Government is looking to the private sector to provide the larger share of new planting in the future, but we also have a continuing planting programme, albeit on a reduced scale.

The Commission and the private sector both have a part to play and the Government has recognised this by emphasising the importance they attach to the continuation of the successful partnership.

You suggested our correspondence might be published in "Slasher." For obvious reasons I do not wish to set a precedent for what might be termed the "DG's correspondence column," but I appreciate that there is always an exception to every rule and I accept that on this occasion this subject falls into that category. I have therefore passed copies of our letters to the editor of the "Slasher."

Finally, I should like to say that I realise that it is a deep felt concern for the future of the Commission that has prompted you to write to me. I am very conscious of the loyalty and forbearance shown by Commission staff through what have been and still are difficult and unsettling times. This demonstrates the underlying strength of our organisation and has been a source of great encouragement to me.



Oops! Signs of a slip showing

QUICK — Can you spot the felling (ouch!) mistake. It's so obvious that you probably can't get it right away, but look at the last line. Yes, that's it — VeAicles. A case of dropping the aitches. The exact site on Forestry Commission land has not been identified by the sender of the picture, who wonders if there are any more unusual signs around.

OBITUARIES

He joined the Service in 1948

Mr Gerald Foulds, aged 58, Executive Officer — Harvesting and Marketing, East England Conservancy, Cambridge, has died.

Gerry joined the Forestry Commission in 1948 after four years war service in the Royal Navy and two years with the Ministry of Pensions in Cambridge. He was promoted to Executive Officer in 1966 and moved to a post with Headquarters Audit Branch at Basingstoke. After that he spent three years with the Acquisitions and Disposals Division at Basingstoke and moved in 1973 to the Santon Downham District Office where he spent a very enjoyable four-and-a-half years. In 1978 he returned to Cambridge, in the Conservancy Office, as EO-in-charge of Estate Management, once again involving his knowledge of Acquisition and Disposals work (in the current Disposal Programme) until mid-way through 1981 when he moved to H. and M.

He leaves a widow and two sons, Barry and Martin.

Mr Harry Gee who worked for 33 years at Solway Forest. Deepest sympathy is extended to his family.

THE DEATH has taken place of Mr Dan Cameron, who retired from Glencoe Forest in 1978. He was a popular and conscientious worker who was an asset to the Commission. He spent nearly 30 years as a member of the original Duror Forest squad.

George Hince

George, who for many years was the warren at Radnor Forest in North Wales, died aged 74. He retired about ten years ago.

Eric Whiting

He went back to the New Forest to retire but died suddenly after an operation.

Deaglan Toibin

Mr Toibin joined the Commission in 1948 and after 23 years service at Wentwood, Slebech, Pembrey and Cymer Forests retired in 1971 under the Voluntary Service Plan for Foresters. He was 60 and leaves a widow and two daughters.

Trevor Jones

Mr Jones, Forest Craftsman at Rheola Forest until he retired in June 1979 died on March 21 last. He joined the Commission in 1948 and all his 31 years of service were spent at Rheola.

Monica Elliot

Miss Elliot died in October last year after 33 years as District Office clerk at Pickering. She and her family were closely associated with the Forestry Commission for many years and Monica was well-known by everyone in NE(E).

• More acknowledgements on Page 7.

NEW POST

Mr David Danbury is now head of the Forestry Department of the Cumbria College of Agriculture and Forestry, Newton Rigg. He succeeded the late Mr Alec Pyman. Mr Danbury was formerly the Senior Lecturer in Forestry.

MR CHARLES Thomson, a retired building labourer who worked for Yorkshire Durham Estates from 1945 to 1973 has died, aged 74. Mr Arthur Raine, a retired Forest Worker at Osmotherley Forest from 1965 to 1977, died aged 70.

COLLEAGUES were shocked to learn of the sudden death of

Trouping the colour

A drawing of the "family coat of arms" is to be handed over to Mr Leslie Troup SW(E) Conservator for the past ten years who, in the word he prefers to use, has now "departed" from the Commission.

The drawing, embodied on a rather special tray, will contain the signatures of all his colleagues and comprise a faint outline of an oak tree — based on the one outside the work study office at Alice Holt — on which is superimposed a shield showing four aspects of his career, surmounted by a deer. This in fact does form a part of his family's armorial bearings.

That gift has still to come but at his farewell on February 4 in the Ashton Court Mansion, Bristol, about 100 members of

staff from all over the SW(E) Conservancy and other Conservancies saw the Director General, Mr George Holmes, from HQ, present him with other tokens of their esteem.

These included a Flymo lawnmower (the third incidentally, to be presented in the Conservancy in the past seven months!), a picture frame and a cheque which Mr Troup plans to use to frame several of his daughter's paintings.

Then came more gifts. Chief Forester Alan Dunning handed over a rustic garden seat made by a retired member of his forest staff, Mr Percy Wareham, donated by the Wareham foresters.

They're
retiring

DRIVER TAKES HIS LEAVE

Mr Bill Gordon, lorry driver at Speymouth Forest for the past 30 years, has retired. He well remembers his early service when he transported men to and from work on Speymouth and to neighbouring forests such as Aultmore and Glenlivet. Comfort for the men being conveyed in those days was non-existent. They sat on wooden benches under a tarpaulin-covered wooden frame, huddled together to keep warm.

During the final 10 years of his service, Bill was employed on the hauling of fencing timber to and from the treatment plant, followed by deliveries to most of the forests in his own and West (Scotland) conservancies.

Foresters found him helpful and co-operative in delivering to the more remote areas which minimised secondary haulage costs.

On retirement, Bill was presented with the Commission's long service certificate by Conservator Ian Grant who thanked him for his loyal service and wished him a long and happy retirement. He was also presented with a car cassette radio from the forst, mechanical and estates branch staffs all situated at the Speymouth Forest Balnacoul Depot.

Mr George Rodkiss retired recently from the Commission after 35 years' service. George joined the Commission in 1947 as a forest worker at Wauchope Forest. Less than a year later he became a ploughing tractor operator, a grade which he held until recently.

Mr E. J. M. Davies, Conservator, presented George with his long service certificate and paid tribute to his good work and wished him a long and healthy retirement. Mr J. Paterson, Ploughing Control Manager, presented George with a cheque as a tribute from his many friends.

Tom Farrelly, Dozer Driver Neath Roads, has retired on health grounds after 47 years with the Commission.

At a farewell party at Cwm Clydach House, Ron Bromley, Conservancy Civil Engineer, presented Tom with a long service certificate; Mike Reaney, Area Civil Engineer, presented him with a silver salver and John Zehetmayr, former Conservator, gave him some sound "advice" on what to do in retirement.

Geoff Sinkinson, former Conservancy Engineer, had sent his good wishes by telegram from Karachi.

Friends and colleagues of Arthur Bramwell, Asst. Conservator FM, gathered at an Inverness hotel on March 18 to wish him well on his retirement and to present him with a gift of binoculars and a cheque.

In presenting the gifts, Mr R. G. Cathie, the Conservator, referred to Mr Bramwell's early and varied career as a Major in the Punjab Frontier Force Rifles and later as a Chief Conservator in the Nigerian Forestry Service prior to joining the Commission in 1962 as a DO II in West Scotland after which he also served in North Wales before being posted to North Scotland in 1979.

He made particular reference to the enthusiasm and diligence which Arthur displayed right up to the end.

More retirements on Page 6.

A fond farewell to Secretariat's Mr Fixit

"ON many occasions his skill saved the sanity and sometimes the skins of his colleagues in the Commission."

So said Director General George Holmes about Arthur Damerell, Senior Principal in Secretariat, at a farewell presentation in Headquarters when Arthur retired after 36 years.

Mr Holmes also reckoned he'd missed a trick — he should have got Arthur to write his speech! This was one of Arthur's greatest skills, drafting minutes and speeches, and appropriately he began his working life as an apprentice draughtsman with the Admiralty. He joined the Commission in Exeter in 1946, and his skill as a diplomat was put to the test on his very first day.

"I was ushered into the presence of the District Officer, the late Gilbert Vallance. He thought I was a trainee forester, I thought he was the chief clerk, and we had a totally incomprehensible conversation!"

After a spell in Bristol and 10 years in Cambridge, Arthur joined Headquarters in Audit in 1961. He then moved to Secretariat, where he was to stay for the next 20 years. The DG reminded assembled colleagues of the many times he was faced with delicate problems when he first came to private woodlands, and his solution was always the same: ring Arthur — you could always rely on his advice and information.

In fact, Mr Holmes thought that there was a touch of "Yes Minister" about his dealings with Arthur, and could see in him slight shades of Sir Humphrey. One remark of Arthur's totally summed up the man — "Leave it to me." No matter how fearful the problems, Arthur would come back with the answers.

PENTRATING MIND

Mr Holmes also listed the four characteristics that made Arthur Damerell play such a vital role in Secretariat. "He knows about his job, he is one of the most helpful characters you could meet, he has a penetrating mind, and he has nous on political matters."

When he was "dragged" to Edinburgh in 1979, Arthur was plunged straight into the Review, and his masterly skill in handling problems was seen right to the last — Dendroctonus arrived just before he departed to liven things up.

Mr Holmes presented Arthur, who was accompanied by his wife, Janey, with a card signed by his very many friends, and a cheque.

In reply, Arthur said that as he and Janey are both keen gardeners, he would buy a greenhouse with the money. They will be living back in their native Devon, and Arthur warned John Fletcher that if he issued any planting licences anywhere near their new home, there would be some stiff letters in the local press.

Arthur admitted that during the past three years there were some days he would rather forget, but his feelings about his Commission career were succinctly summed up in the Tennyson quote, "I am part of all I have met."

"I have been part of the Commission for a very long time, and you will always be part of me."



Smiles say it all for send-off Sam

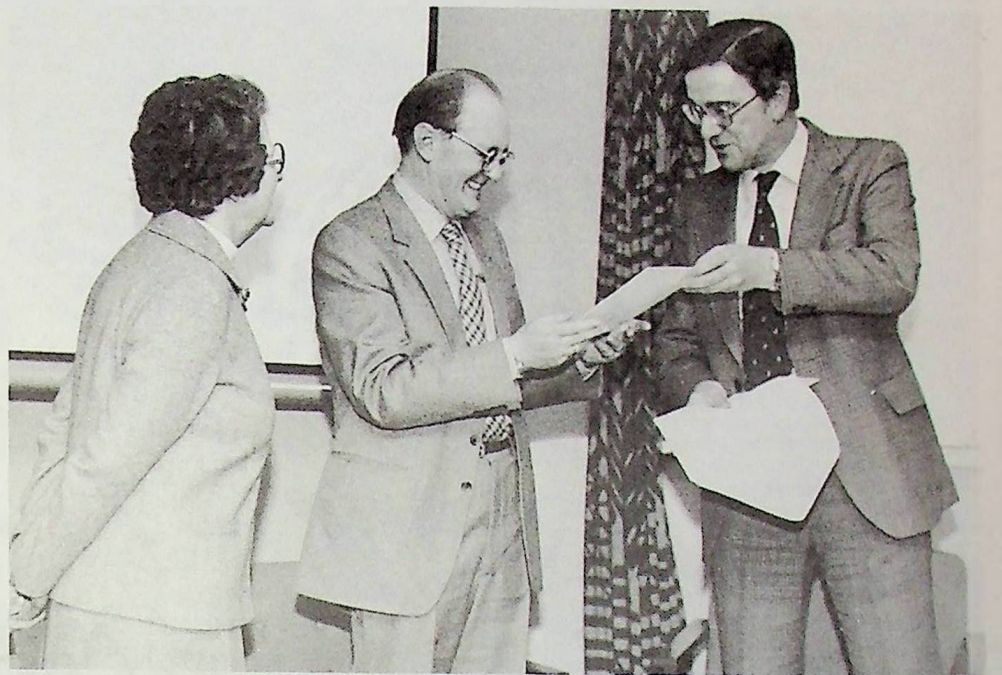
The face wreathed in smiles is that of Mr Sam Nicholls receiving his long service certificate from District Officer Mr John Williams on his retirement after 35 years with the Commission's North Wales Conservancy.

Sam began working as a forest worker in 1946 when the planted area was under 200 ha. Half a life span later, he left with the forest standing at 3000 ha and his knowledge of it unexcelled.

ACTIVE YEARS

Although not in such robust health as in his more active years, Sam looks forward to spending his retirement working in his garden, greenhouse and carpentry shed.

His retirement was marked by a large gathering of colleagues and friends at the aptly named Happy Union Inn, Abbey Cwmhir, where he also received a tankard from past and present staff from Mrs Shirley Stephens. There was a set of wine glasses for Mrs Nicholls.



Looking good is the name of the game

The Forestry Commission's policy in keeping uppermost landscaping and attention to scenic appearance has encouraged the Chairman of the Countryside Commission for Scotland, Mr David Nickson.

He expressed this view at a meeting of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society in Edinburgh and added that the commercial interests of private forestry groups should not be allowed to override amenity interests in the countryside.

Mr Nickson warned that unless both public and private forestry groups were conscious of their public image, they would invite further imposed controls.

He said that forestry had the biggest single impact on the appearance of the countryside and he appealed to private groups to include some amenity aspects in their planting programmes.

"I make this appeal in the interests of avoiding long-term conflicts in the countryside," he said. "Concessions must be made to landscaping in the tree planting and felling."

Mr Nickson forecast an increasing change from public to private ownership of plantings and said that increased pressure for plantings would fall on the Southern Uplands of Scotland.



GLENTRESS 'JOCK' SIGNS OFF

Another Forestry Commission stalwart — Mr "Jock" Thomson — has retired and it was fitting that he should end his career as a forester where it began, at Glentress, Peebles.

After outstanding war service in which he won the DCM in Italy, Jock, after training at Glentress, made his presence felt in several forests throughout South Scotland, latterly at Elibank and finally, through amalgamation of forests in the Tweed Valley, at Glentress.

At a gathering at the Countryside Inn, he was presented with a cheque by the Conservator for South Scotland, Mr John Davies. A Gallovidian, Jock and his wife, Nessie, will continue to live at Innerleithen.

Praise for a parting pair

It was goodbye from Wymersley Forest in December for Fred Underwood, Senior Ranger, and Douglas Spencer, Forest Craftsman.

Fred retired after 34 years and Douglas 19 years.

At the farewell for Fred, District officer Bob Selmes thanked him on behalf of the Conservator for his highly valued service and presented him with a long service certificate.

Mr Eric Irons, Head Forester, returned to Wymersley from Amphilth to hand over a barometer and cigars to Fred from staff past and present.

At the send-off for Douglas, Mr Selmes praised him for excellent service as a conscientious and highly respected worker. The Head Forester, Mr Peter Gregory, presented him with a pipe and a gift token from his colleagues.

Doug started work felling oaks for timber merchants in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. He was in the Navy during the war and before joining the Commission in 1963 he worked in a variety of jobs.

PRAISE FOR COMMISSION

THE Forestry Commission has been praised for the action taken at the military orchid site in Breckland which is run by the Suffolk Trust.

M. J. Penistan of Gloucestershire, writing to a Conservation journal, says: "What has been done has been splendid but due credit ought to be given to the management and staff of the

Forestry Commission on whose ground the orchids grow.

"It is they who have provided, erected and maintained the perimeter fence and have designed and set up the very decorative sets of bridges and steps to give this delightful site a most pleasant aspect and to save the plants from over-enthusiastic plant lovers' careless feet."

IT'S UP, UP AND AWAY!



A MAGNIFICENT sight as she silently begins the ascent.

Balloon in a unique study of Rannoch's Black Wood

Up, up in a balloon. That's the novel method of travel chosen by the Forestry Commission for a unique conservation study of the Black Wood of Rannoch, an important remnant of the ancient Caledonian Forest which once covered huge tracts of Scotland.

The Black Wood — so called because of its sombre appearance — has been managed by the Commission since 1947. Recognising its historic and ecological importance, the Commission created a Forest Nature Reserve totalling 2048 acres in 1975 when a management plan was agreed with the nature Conservancy Council.

The primary objective was "to maintain the character of the Black Wood and to produce in the long-term a self-perpetuating pinewood as it may have been in the Fifteenth Century before large-scale exploitation began . . ."

Genetic purity

Other aims were to maintain the genetic purity of the wood, to protect part of the area by creating zones of "no" and "minimum" disturbance" to conserve the flora and fauna, to encourage diversity of native species and to utilise the wood for research into the pinewood ecosystem.

The present management plan is due for review in 1985 and in the meantime a series of research trials on different management techniques has been undertaken to provide a more informed basis on which to proceed for the next ten years.

The hot-air balloon — provided by Matthew Gloag & Son, Ltd., proprietors of the Famous Grouse Scotch Whisky — offers a unique opportunity for additional closer and more leisurely observation of the whole of the Reserve area to establish priorities.

Experts from the Forestry Commission, the Red Deer Commission, the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology and the Nature Conservancy Council are taking part in the survey to look at such things as the distribution of the various age classes of native pine, the population of red deer, the distribution of canopy types and different species of vegetation and the state of watercourses and drainage.

Mr Roger Larsen, Principal Forest Officer, said they would be flying at only 200 ft. with the minimum amount of noise so as not to disturb the deer and other wildlife. The balloon is also be



anchored at strategic points for prolonged observation and photography.

The aerial survey began in February but because of unkind weather further flights that month had to be cancelled. But the balloon was airborne again in March.

Mr Larsen said: "The Black Wood forms the oldest part of Rannoch Forrest which had a total area of 34,500 acres, of which over half is under commercial plantations.

"It was at Rannoch that the last wolf in Scotland is reputed to have been killed and in its hey day the Black Wood was the home of wild boars, pine martens, polecats and wildcats.

"Although the wolves and boars have gone the area is still rich in wildlife. As well as containing a diversity of flora including some rare plants and insects, the Black Wood is also the ideal habitat for the squirrel, capercaillie, crossbill and some of the less common species such as the wild cat, and the Golden Eagle.

The Blackwood of Rannoch . . . a chance to see it at its best from the basket of a high-flying balloon.

Unfortunately, though the actual study had to be postponed but may take place at a future date.

HERE'S A TOUCH OF GLASS

'History' discovered in Queen Elizabeth Forest

More than 300 years ago the counties of Surrey and Sussex were apparently centres for the forest glass-making industry. Evidence of their supremacy in this field continues to surface.

"Slasher" is indebted to Mr J. Chapman of the Forestry Commission, at Lyndhurst, Hants, for this contribution about an ancient craft.

Forest glass-making in the sixteenth century was concentrated in the Weald of Sussex and Surrey among the oak woods which supplied fuel for the furnaces. The people who lived in these mediaeval glasshouses were too busy making the stuff to throw stones: the industry was reaching its peak and by the third quarter of the century was expanding to areas outside the Weald.

Placenames frequently commemorate long-forgotten use and occupations, and when in 1970 the rector of the parish of Buriton in Hampshire noticed on a tithe map of 1841 the name Glasshouse Paddock near a wooded hillside called Glass Brow — names typical of the kind of placenames found in the Weald — he recognised their significance: they were indications that there had been a local glass industry, although no previous sites had been identified in beech woods on chalk.

Glass Brow is part of Ditcham Woods, an outlier of Queen Elizabeth Forest, and a careful search along Forestry Commission tracks revealed fragments of crucible, burnt clay and brick along the edge of Glasshouse Paddock, where an abandoned well, a circular feature with high clay banks and various mounds indicated a

possible furnace site. Excavations confirmed this.

Forester John Cooper of the Queen Elizabeth staff was involved in this investigation and in 1976 he discovered and partially uncovered another site about 500 metres northeast of the original one.

No documentary evidence of this glass industry has yet been found but it is intriguing that the predecessor of the present rector of Buriton from 1567 to 1579 was William Overton who later was elevated to the Bishopric of Coventry and Lichfield and became directly involved in glassmaking when he had taken up residence at Eccleshall Castle, Staffordshire.

There are several known furnace sites in Bishop's Wood near Eccleshall and the Bishop probably supplied the wood and some starting capital in exchange for a return on the glass made on his episcopal estates.

A booklet on the forest glasshouses at Queen Elizabeth by the Curator of the City Museum at Winchester is to be published shortly. The Commission is contributing to its costs and the booklet will be sold from the Queen Elizabeth Country Park Centre.

Since the article was written, Mr Chapman has again been in touch with "Slasher" to announce that they now have details of a sixteenth century glasshouse discovered in Sidney Wood, part of Alice Holt forest, to provide another relic of the Wealden forest glass industry.

The site will be marked by a plaque and some of the finds made during the excavation — 12,000 pieces of glass were recovered.

Streams, rivers: A warning

FORESTERS BEWARE THE FISH

Angling, like golf, must rank as one of Britain's most popular pastimes but according to Mr Alan Pottinger (and would you believe it!) "These days it is not only the wits of the fish which may deny the angler his prize, but also the action of a more recently recognised terrestrial adversary — the forester."

He makes this point in an article, "What About the Fish?" in the latest edition of "Y Coedwigwr," the journal of the Forestry of Wood Science Society at the University College of North Wales.

He says: "While the demand for game fishing increases, so does the demand for land to produce more home-grown. As most of Britain's salmon and trout rivers already have coniferous woodland over at least part of their catchment and face the prospect of even more, it is important to understand the biological and economic effects of the interaction of these land uses in order to work towards reducing the damage already done to streams and rivers by forest operations..."

Salmon and trout are very

particular about where they live and breed. Fresh water conditions which are favourable are largely dependent on maintaining a stream free of obstructions, with suitable spawning grounds, a stable stream flow, and water of suitable temperature and quality.

Forest operations carried out on a river catchment can severely reduce the survival chance of fishing living in the water downstream.

Mr Pottinger says careful planning of forest operations is the answer to the problem. If the conifer tree-line is kept at least 10m back from the streamside, the reserve strip remaining can be planted with vegetation to provide energy to the stream through insect drop and leaf fall, protect the stream from the sun's heat, give protective cover to the fish and provide stability to the stream bank.

Mr Pottinger has now left UCNW for an MF, specialising in forest genetics, at the University of New Brunswick, Canada.

CENSUS OF WOODLAND AND TREES

Oak still at the top of the tree in Southeast England

WHILE the total area of woodland in South-east England has increased slightly since the end of the Second World War, the area of broad-leaved woodland in the region is virtually unchanged, accounting for 73 per cent of the total.

Oak remains the dominant broadleaved species, accounting for just over one-third of the region's total volume of standing timber. But it is being challenged in the younger age and size classes by species such as ash, birch, poplar and beech.

These are among the results revealed by the Forestry Commission's Census of Woodlands and Trees. It is the most detailed survey of Britain's woodlands undertaken since 1947, and involved three years of field work with extensive use of aerial photography.

In general, it indicated a continuing change in Britain's stock of woodlands and trees over the past 35 years.

First results

The first results to be processed cover the Commission's South-east England Conservancy (the counties of Berkshire, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, West Sussex, East Sussex, Surrey, Kent, part of Dorset and part of the Greater London Council area). They show that the total woodland area has increased by about 4 per cent, and the extent of broadleaved woodland has remained virtually unchanged since 1947.

Two reasons are given for the increase. One is that, combined with control over woodland removal, the forestry policy of successive governments has been to encourage

planting by both private owners and the Commission. This has led to a limited amount of afforestation on infertile heathland soils in Surrey, Hampshire, South-east Dorset and the High Weald, as well as in small plantations for special purposes such as shooting coverts or for landscaping.

The second is that the continuous colonisation by scrub of abandoned sand pits, quarries, railway lines and other industrial sites has been followed by an invasion of forest tree species. This now constitutes woodland, varying from reasonably well-stocked Scots pine to patchily-stocked broad-leaved woodland.

The census notes that coppice with standards has declined, and while pure coppice also fell between 1947 and 1965 its area has hardly changed since that time. The area classified as high forest has increased, particularly coniferous high forest.

The total standing volume of timber in the Conservancy amounts to 26.3 million cubic metres, of which 88 per cent is located in woodlands. Seventy per cent of this woodland volume is broadleaved, with oak being the single most important species accounting for 47 per cent of the volume of standing hardwood timber. Beech accounts for a further 18 per cent, and ash and birch for between 5 and 10 per cent each. Scots pine holds 43 per cent of the coniferous volume.

Oak is the dominant single species among the trees outside woodland, but again ash, sycamore and birch are increasing and are likely to form a higher proportion of non-woodland trees in the future.

Johnston, who until his retire, ment last April as Director of Research included Westonbirt as one of his responsibilities, and later became chairman of the Association, planted a Pin Oak.

A £2000 touch of magic

"Sharing a common interest in the beauty of the Lakes, the Langdale Partnership is happy to continue its support for the excellent work of the Theatre in the Forest."

So reads the inscription on a plaque unveiled by Brigadier C. E. Tryon-Wilson on behalf of the Langdale Partnership. This plaque will hang in the foyer of the Theatre in the heart of the Grizedale Forest in permanent recognition of financial support given the partners in the timeshare development at Langdale.

Vision, enterprise and high standards are qualities shared by the Theatre and the Langdale Partnership. However, in times of recession this unique Theatre, known as "the theatre with a touch of magic," needs more than vision to continue to bring pleasure to its many patrons.

The partnership, whose development of timeshare lodges and the newly-opened Pillar Club are adding their own "touch of magic" to the Langdale Valley, are happy to donate the sum of £2000 to the Theatre.

Prince talks of the future

Prince Charles, who is keenly interested in woodlands — he pays regular visits to forest sites in various parts of Britain — attended the recent conference in London of the Royal Forestry Society, of which he is the President.

The theme of his address was that "sound forestry practise can go hand in hand with sensible conservation."

He said: "Forestry management should be capable of seeing the forest as an ecosystem, not just as trees or wildlife in isolation. It should be a compromise for the good of the future of our forests as a whole and the co-existence of various types of upland and lowland land use, be it sporting or commercial woodland."

His address was not without its touch of humour.

The Prince stressed that he wanted to stay on good terms with the patron of the Royal Society of Nature Conservation, the patron of the British Deer Society and the patron of the Men of The Trees — all of whom are himself.

Day for tree planting

The Duke of Buccleuch, now confined to a wheelchair following a riding accident several years ago, watched as Mr A. J. Grayson planted the sycamore he presented to Westonbirt Arboretum to mark the visit to Gloucestershire by the Commonwealth Forestry Association.

The sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is the progeny of the exceptionally fine tree growing at Drumlanrig which is the tallest sycamore in Scotland, though not the largest in girth.

The visit was an occasion for tree planting and Mr David Johnston, who until his retire, ment last April as Director of Research included Westonbirt as one of his responsibilities, and later became chairman of the Association, planted a Pin Oak.

A ROYAL VISIT TO REMEMBER



Ron picks up top honour

The man in immaculate morning dress is, of course, Mr Ron Brown, Chief Forester at the Alice Holt Forestry Commission Research Station. Add the reason for the topper and tails was a once-in-a-lifetime occasion — an investiture at Buckingham Palace.

Ron was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours and on February 10, with 130 other people including Mr Arthur Cadman, a former deputy surveyor, he was at the Palace to receive the medal from the Queen.

The honour is a tribute to his work as spokesman for the trade union movement within the Commission in pursuit of the interests of forestry and the extension of forests in Britain. He started his career in forestry in Dorset with the Home-Grown Timber Production Department under the Ministry of Supply in 1940.

Ron, with his wife, son and daughter, enjoyed every moment of a memorable day.

FIVE REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE

Five reasons why the Forestry Commission should be left intact are argued by Mrs Jean Thompson, Trade Union Side Secretary in this article to "Slasher."

She submits:

- The private sector needs the Commission to lead the way in technical developments.

- The timber industry needs the Commission to ensure continuity of supplies.

- The public needs the Commission for the recreational outlets it provides.

- The rural communities need the Commission to provide the employment which maintains their way of life.
- We (the staff) need the

Commission. It's our way of life.

In her article entitled "Enough is Enough," she recalls that when the Forestry Bill was being debated in Parliament, MPs of all parties expressed opposition to its open-endedness. It gave, she claims, the Ministers total discretion to sell the Commission's assets either entire or piecemeal, to the highest bidder.

Although the Government refused to allow amendment of the Bill itself, they announced that their intention was to raise £40 million over a three-year period and in a letter to the Chairman they listed certain selective criteria such as employ-

ment, public access and rationalisation of the forest estate.

They made it clear that the Commission, not Ministers, were to select the areas for disposal.

Mrs Thomson adds: "The union opposed the whole concept of disposal but it was accepted that if it had to be, then £40 million could just about be managed . . . we are now two years older and wiser. No longer is the target £40 million. In 1982, it was increased to £65 million over four years and in February this year to £82 million over five."

And she asks: "Would anyone like to predict what 1984 will bring?"

Day for tree planting

The Duke of Buccleuch, now confined to a wheelchair following a riding accident several years ago, watched as Mr A. J. Grayson planted the sycamore he presented to Westonbirt Arboretum to mark the visit to Gloucestershire by the Commonwealth Forestry Association.

The sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is the progeny of the exceptionally fine tree growing at Drumlanrig which is the tallest sycamore in Scotland, though not the largest in girth.

The visit was an occasion for tree planting and Mr David Johnston, who until his retirement last April as Director of Research included Westonbirt as one of his responsibilities, and later became chairman of the Association, planted a Pin Oak.

A £2000 touch of magic

"Sharing a common interest in the beauty of the Lakes, the Langdale Partnership is happy to continue its support for the excellent work of the Theatre in the Forest."

So reads the inscription on a plaque unveiled by Brigadier C. E. Tryon-Wilson on behalf of the Langdale Partnership. This plaque will hang in the foyer of the Theatre in the heart of the Grizedale Forest in permanent recognition of financial support given by the partners in the timeshare development at Langdale.

Vision, enterprise and high standards are qualities shared by the Theatre and the Langdale Partnership. However, in times of recession this unique Theatre, known as "the theatre with a touch of magic," needs more than vision to continue to bring pleasure to its many patrons.

The partnership, whose development of timeshare lodges and the newly-opened Pillar Club are adding their own "touch of magic" to the Langdale Valley, are happy to donate the sum of £2000 to the Theatre.

FIVE REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE

Five reasons why the Forestry Commission should be left intact are argued by Mrs Jean Thompson, Trade Union Side Secretary in this article to "Slasher."

She submits:

- The private sector needs the Commission to lead the way in technical developments.
- The timber industry needs the Commission to ensure continuity of supplies.
- The public needs the Commission for the recreational outlets it provides.
- The rural communities need the Commission to provide the employment which maintains their way of life.
- We (the staff) need the

Commission. It's our way of life.

In her article entitled "Enough is Enough," she recalls that when the Forestry Bill was being debated in Parliament, MPs of all parties expressed opposition to its open-endedness. It gave, she claims, the Ministers total discretion to sell the Commission's assets either entire or piecemeal, to the highest bidder.

Although the Government refused to allow amendment of the Bill itself, they announced that their intention was to raise £40 million over a three-year period and in a letter to the Chairman they listed certain selective criteria such as employ-

ment, public access and rationalisation of the forest estate.

They made it clear that the Commission, not Ministers, were to select the areas for disposal.

Mrs Thomson adds: "The union opposed the whole concept of disposal but it was accepted that if it had to be, then £40 million could just about be managed . . . we are now two years older and wiser. No longer is the target £40 million. In 1982, it was increased to £65 million over four years and in February this year to £82 million over five."

And she asks: "Would anyone like to predict what 1984 will bring?"

IT'S BACK TO THE DAYS OF TRADITION



Picture by Solway Press Services 38 High St Dalbeattie.

History takes Fiona's fancy

MISS Fiona Macfarlane, who works as a draughtswoman in South Scotland Drawing Office, has been chosen as one of this year's principals in the Dumfries "Guid Nychburris" festivities which are held in May and June. The festivities are based on the old tradition of marking the burgh boundaries. They were revived in their present form in 1932. Fiona had had plenty of experience of Riding the Marches, first becoming involved when she was only five. The climax of her week will be on June 18 when she and the Cornet's lad, Mr Jeff McKean, will lead more than 300 riders round Dumfries culminating in the charge up Bank Street on to the High Street at 11 am when the local "Queen of the South" is crowned at the town's historic Midsteple.

PICTURE: SOLWAY PRESS SERVICES

Ron, with his wife, son and daughter, enjoyed every moment of a memorable day.

HATS OFF FOR A HAPPY RETIREMENT

A Bulletin for Leslie

"Top of the tree man" Conservator Mr Leslie Troup has now retired and fitting tribute was paid to him in the area's news bulletin "Chainsaw Chatter." Thanks are paid to him "for leading us over the past ten years in such a kindly, though firm fashion. He has always been most approachable and has treated everyone the same, whoever they are."

The hope is expressed that his future will hold both health and happiness and that they will see him from time to time as he will still be in the locality and doubtless still very much involved with forestry.

Research was Jim's forte

Leading Research Worker (Supervisor) Jim Robson, retired after 35 years service with the Commission.

Jim started his working life as a gardener then joined the Commission in 1947 working at Kielder. After six years, he transferred to Kielder Research and spent the rest of his time working on the variable and ever-increasing aspects of research work.

On his last day, Jim was presented with his long service certificate by David Seal, Chief Research Officer (North). Head Forester John McNeill presented a carriage clock on behalf of friends and colleagues who had gathered at the Research Office to wish Jim and his wife, Molly, a long and happy retirement.

Life in the Greek Navy

There can't be many members of the Forestry Commission who can boast (if that is the appropriate word) that they served with the Greek Navy during the last war, but that was what happened to Mr Jack Wood who recently retired after eight years as the Commission's Chief Purchasing Officer.

Mr Wood joined the Royal Navy in January 1942 but was seconded to the Greek Navy for most of his war service which ended with his demobilisation in 1946.

To mark his retirement he was presented with a cheque by the Controller of Finance, Mr Colin Turquand. Mr Wood is a DIY enthusiast.

Manager retires

Bramhill Workshop has lost its Manager with the retirement of Harry Tapley after nearly 32 years' service with the Commission. Harry began as a Mobile Mechanic in the summer of 1951, was made Foreman in 1967 and Workshop Manager in 1975.

Reminiscences flowed under the influence of more heady brews at a farewell party during which Conservator Charles Begley presented Harry with a portable television from friends and colleagues. Both horseplay and high technology seem to have featured in Harry's career, the former when a runaway charger took a header through the windscreen of his official van, the latter in the early days when he was introduced to the practice of rearing out bushes with a half-round file. Fortunately things have progressed since then and under Harry's leadership the Bramhill Workshop has earned an enviable reputation for high quality service.

Oor Willie — a born survivor

MR WILLIAM NICOLSON, former Chief Forester for the Black Isle, is a survivor. During the war he served with the Royal Engineers in a bomb disposal unit and then — as if that worrying experience hadn't been enough — after demobilisation he fell victim to Polio.

No wonder then that those present at the ceremony, held in the Royal Hotel, Dingwall, in December, to mark his retirement, fully endorsed the salute that Willie was "a man of exemplary loyalty and determination of spirit — that he blended such desirable qualities with good humour and strong humanity."

His career in forestry began in the Black Isle over 40 years ago when he came from his native Skye to work at Blackstand. After the

war he returned to North Scotland where he set up Torrachilly Forest and it was while serving there that he met and married his wife, Violet.

Willie served in every Conservancy in Scotland and his skill as a nurseryman was always in demand.

He returned to his island birthplace for eight years where he enjoyed speaking Gaelic — his mother's tongue — which he uses so richly when the occasion arises.

Mr R. Cathie, Conservator North, handed a cheque to Willie at his retirement ceremony. Best wishes go to Willie and Violet for a long and happy retirement in their new home at Munloch.



Fred Egerton, Area Engineer in Llanrwst has retired after 35 years spent entirely in North Wales. During his service with the Forestry Commission, few if any roads in the northern area have escaped his attention in one form or another. At a gathering at the Llanrwst office, Roger Bradley, Senior Officer of Wales, presented Fred with a watch and cheque on behalf of his colleagues to mark what must be a unique period of service for an engineer in the Commission. Fred's wife, Doris, was also presented with a bouquet of flowers by his office staff.

After the presentation his many friends present wished him well in his retirement. Fred has recently taken up golf, and intends to spend many enjoyable hours on the course with his wife, who is also a golfer.



Alec can now look back

A cheque and a pair of binoculars (perhaps to look back on a career spanning 47 happy years with the Commission) were among the gifts presented to Mr Alec Graham at a function in the Riverdale Hotel, Bellingham, to mark his retirement.

Alec joined the Commission in 1935 working with the Nursery gang at Kielder and in fact spent all the 47 years in the NE(E) in the North Tyne Valley. He moved to Falstone in 1938 and spent the following two years there before going into the Army from 1940 to 1946. He returned to the Commission as a tractor driver and in 1955 was made a mechanic at Kielder. In 1968 he was promoted to Mechanical Inspector and continued in that post until his retirement last November.

Sacked for 'moral reasons'

CAN you imagine the outcry — or indeed the headlines — if in these more enlightened days a woman was paid off for "moral reasons." But 43 years ago that was what happened to Maimie MacDonald who has now retired as clerkess at Inverliever.

The story of her sacking was told by Mr George Francy, Chief Forester at Inverliever, at the well-attended ceilidh dance which was held in her honour at Dalavich Hall.

He recalled that Maimie started as a forest worker at Invernan in 1940 but was paid off at the end of that summer for "moral reasons" — simply because she was the only girl on the all-male squad. As Mr Francy pointed out, there was no women's lib in those far-off days.

But Maimie returned in 1942 and was transferred to "timber control" until the end of the war.

Her service as clerkess lasted 16 years and she became well-known for her helpfulness and efficiency. Since the early 1970s many Newton Rigg "sandwich" students benefited from her "crash" course in office procedure and all gained a "pass," largely owing to the experience they gained while standing in for Maimie while she was on holiday.

Mr Peter Quelch, DO for Loch Awe district, presented a writing desk and a cheque which has since been "converted" to a music centre and a watch. Maimie's many friends are hoping that she will decide to spend her retirement in the neighbourhood.

Eddie is a man of the trees

THE "man of the trees" — that's how Mr Eddie Heal, ganger and beat steward, has been described. And aptly, too, for it has been estimated that in his 34 years service with the Commission, and taking into account trunk road planting, he has helped to plant, weed and clean some two million trees!

Eddie has now retired and at his farewell, more than 40 years working on the land were recalled at Micheldever Forest. Starting in agriculture, Eddie joined the Commission in 1949 — when the woods still echoed to the sound of the axe — and helped to replant Chawton beat after the wartime fellings.

He became an expert driver and was equally at home with the controls of tractors, dumpers and lorries. For 30 years he ferried his colleagues through the forest — if not exactly in luxury then certainly with skill and care.

Eddie devoted most of his energy and a good deal of his spare time to promoting the interests of forestry.

Conservator Charles Begley presented him (appropriately) with a set of wood-working tools subscribed for by colleagues and friends.

Opportunity knocks in Scotland

RETIREMENT from an active working life can often present problems. After the initial euphoria, some find — to their surprise — that life can become a bit of a bore.

So here is an opportunity to keep your hand in.

Fountain Forestry, an independent concern, require a part-time Health and Safety Officer for their Scottish Division.

Duties would include site visits and inspection throughout Scotland, also liaison with safety representatives and the Scottish Board on all matters of present and future legislation.

Ideally applicants should be retired or about to retire, with experience in the forest industry, an interest in health and safety, living in central Scotland and be a car owner.

Interested? Apply in writing to Mr M. A. Ashmole, Fountain Forestry Ltd., Durn, Isla Road, Perth.

PETER GETS A CAMERA

AFTER 32 years with the Forestry Commission, Mr Peter Langley retired at the beginning of February. Peter joined the Commission as a District Forest Officer at Kielder and later served in Lincolnshire before joining the Education and Training Branch at Headquarters. As the organiser and contributor to many courses he became well-known throughout the Commission, particularly in the days when Northerwood House was the residential education centre.

A keen sportsman in earlier days, Peter was an Oxford rugby football blue and an England trialist; he has a great interest in birds and wildlife. In more recent years he suffered from a severe physical handicap but gained the admiration and respect of all who knew him by the cheerful and courageous way that he made light of, and overcame, his difficulties.

At an evening reception at Alice Holt Lodge, where Peter has spent the last nine years dealing with scientific and technical information, the Director (R. and D.), Mr A. J. Grayson, presented him with a camera of his own choosing and a cheque.

'ROBIN' SLIPS ANCHOR

Former Royal Navy Lieutenant, Mr R. Raban-Williams, South Scotland Conservancy Land Agent, took the good ship to retirement on February 17 after a suitable farewell in the Conservancy "mess."

Robin, as he was affectionately known, served in the Royal Navy from 1936 until 1949, attaining Lieutenant's rank and then until 1958 he worked on various private estates. He later became District Estate Officer 1 at Hexham but in 1969 a move took him to Bellingham where he served until August 1976 when he was promoted to Conservancy Land Agent and transferred to Dumfries where he served until retirement.

When Dick stepped in to help

MR DICK GRENFELL, who should have retired from Eggesford Forest in April last, finally did so in November after 35 years with the Forestry Commission, nearly all of which were spent in SW(E). When the Head Forester at Eggesford had an accident in December 1981, which seemed likely to result in prolonged absence, Dick was appointed Head Forester i/c and managed the forest until the end of October last.

Conservator Leslie Troup presented him with a record player and cash when about 40 of his friends held a farewell for Dick and Mrs Grenfell in a local pub. Mr Troup thanked him for stepping in and "doing a grand job."

Four say farewell

FOUR of the SW(E) staff are now enjoying their retirement. At West Somerset or Brendon, as it then was, the forest clerk, Mr Derrick Mason, retired after 34 years. He is a keen gardener.

Brendon also lost Mr George Ford after 29 years with the Commission. Mr Bill Puckey has left Kernow Forest after over 34 years. He is another keen gardener, specialising in shrubs. Mr Ivan King has retired from Mendip after spending 18 years working in the forest. For the past ten he drove the workers' transport vehicle.

25 years in forest

Mr G. A. Shears, SFW, has retired after 25 years on the Cleveland Forest during which time he helped to establish many of the woods around his home. He is remaining in his present home and will continue his work in forestry on a private estate nearby. He was presented with a clock on behalf of the forest staff by Mr Calder, the District Officer.

Off on job release

Mr A. S. Blanchard retired in February after almost 36 years with the Forestry Commission. He went on job release.

He started as a forest worker in July 1947 and was a forest craftsman in 1964.

His working life in the Commission was spent in or around Scarsdale in East Yorkshire.

He was presented with his Long Service Certificate by the Conservator.

Fighter Tom

MANY members of the Commission staff will know Mr Tom Daniel, District Organiser of the then NUAAW in Hampshire who has now retired. He was a worthy and stubborn fighter for his members' interest as well as a most likeable and friendly individual with a great sense of public duty. He was a JP and was awarded the OBE.

Left service

AFTER 36 years with the Commission at Chopwell Wood, Sunderland, as a handyman and storekeeper, Mr Arthur Nichol has retired aged 65. He was presented with his long service certificate by Mr Spencer, the Conservator, on February 18.

Big send-off

SW(E) Head Forester Mr Peter Parson has retired from Kernow and although he wanted to slip away quietly he did not altogether succeed.

At an informal gathering at a local hostelry he was given a send-off and presented with a fishing rod and reel for sea fishing.

OBITUARY

Peter McLelland

Glentroot Forest lost one of its "founder members" with the death of Peter at the age of 59. He started as a forest worker in Glentroot in 1948 and rose through the ranks to become Forester there. His fund of knowledge about Glentroot was regularly drawn upon by his colleagues. Sympathy is extended to Mrs McLelland who has suffered ill-health since her bereavement, and to the two sons. The elder Peter recently joined the Forestry Commission as an apprentice mechanic.

Tommy Bell

Shock and sadness — these were the feelings that must have swept many people in the various offices of the Commission to hear of Tommy's sudden death at the age of 53. He spent his working life with the Commission which he joined when he was 17 and served in York, Cardiff and in Inverness where, in 1974, he became HEO. He must have been the easiest man in the Commission to give a job description to, for he believed that if there was a job to be done and no one else available to do it, then he should do it himself. He will be missed, particularly by his colleagues in North Scotland, and of course by his widow, Brenda and sons Michael and David.

I. White

Or Ike as he was known to all his colleagues. He started work for the Commission in August 1957 at what was then known as Sproston Depot near Helmsley in North Yorkshire as a mobile mechanic. He was promoted to Foreman Mechanic in January 1964 and remained at Sproston until 1968 when he moved to Conservancy Office as Mechanical Instructor and continued in that role — apart from a short period on temporary promotion to P & TO 1V — at Kielder Workshop until he retired in 1979. In the course of his various duties, Ike met and knew many people in NE(E) and they will remember him for his kindness, consideration and inability to say "no" to any request for help.

James Wilson

RETIRED as Conservancy Land Agent in York in August 1978, Mr Wilson died in November. After leaving the Commission "Willie" (as he was affectionately known) drew up plans for a long-distance footpath in Norfolk but alas failed to live long enough to see the end of the project which was approved by the Department of the Environment. While with the Commission he worked in the Thetford Forest area and in Yorkshire and Scotland.

THE MATRON

MISS Nan Drysdale — former matron of Faskally Forester Training School. She died on Christmas Day in Roodlands Hospital, Haddington, East Lothian. She was in her 80s and was in reasonably good health until up to about four days before her death. After her nursing training in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, she entered private nursing before joining the Faskally Training School. She was well known to an era of Faskally students as well as to other students from Forester Training Schools on exchange visits as "The Matron." She worked tirelessly for the Forestry Commission interests until her retirement.

Danny J. Jones

Super salesman Danny, E O Harvesting and Marketing in the South Wales Conservancy for 14 years until his retirement on health grounds in September 1981 after 38 years service — 31 of them with the Commission at Cardiff — died on January 28. He started his Civil Service career with the Ministry of Transport at the shipping office at Cardiff docks in 1943 and in 1943 transferred to the Ministry of Fuel and Power before joining the Forestry Commission as a clerical officer in 1950. Danny had a "computer brain" which enabled him to match up pitwood demands in no less than 70 sizes from 30 coalmines to the 20 or so supplying forests.

Alec Pyman

Alec, head of the Forestry Department at Newton Rigg College who used to be with the Commission died suddenly last October just as he was approaching retirement. He came to the SW(E) office each year with the College Principal to conduct the annual interviews of pre-OND students. His friendly and cheerful presence will be missed.

Harold L. Watkins

Died in February. He was a Forestry Commissioner from 1967-73 and was a member of the National Committee for Wales, Forestry Commission from 1967-73.

Sidney Atkinson

Senior Ranger 1 who died at the age of 56 on February 21. He joined the Commission in 1963 as a warrenier at Hambleton Forest. He lived in Kirby Moorside.

Edith Nolan

Edith had a wide circle of friends and acquaintances and she will be remembered in official circles for the prestige she brought to the Commission in her handling of reception desk duties while at the Savile Row HQ offices. She never forgot a name or a face and the beautiful flowers which always adorned the office were a hallmark of her personality. She died on December 22. She had suffered from asthma and emphysema and retired from the Basingstoke office in December 1974 due to ill-health.

James Wilson

James Fulton Wilson on November 28 aged 67. Willie (as he was known to all his friends and colleagues) joined the Commission in 1947 at Bristol. During his career he served at Woking, London, Inverness, Chester and finally York as Conservancy Land Agent. He retired in August 1978 and moved to Norfolk to enjoy his hobby of bird-watching.

Douglas McNaught

Dougie started with the Commission at Benmore School in 1940. He joined South Scotland Conservancy in October 1946 at Dalbeattie Forest as a forest worker. In June 1950 he moved to Dalnacallan Forest and in August 1955 he became a Forester. In October 1956 he moved to Arecloach Forest where he stayed until May 1965 when he became Head Forester and moved to Craik Forest where he remained until ill-health forced him to retire in 1979. He is survived by his widow and family.

Life and times of the beetle-hunters

Mr Peter Ralph, one of the foresters in the Dean, tells "Slasher" about his experiences on a "beetle drive" — but this was no game.

The "beetle hunters" was the far from flattering title bestowed on the Dendroctonus survey team in the Dean, by the local staff. Like the "bounty hunters" on television we found them — but no taste of paradise for us, just 1000 or so hectares of spruce to check.

It all started, as far as I was concerned, on a Monday morning. On returning from three week's leave, I was confronted with the fact that a new and dangerous (to spruce trees) bug had been discovered at Mortimer Forest in NW(E) and I was to lead the survey team in the Dean. A motley crew, two sandwich students — Rod and Andy — Dave, a survey assistant, and myself.

After a hurried visit to Mortimer to ascertain what we should be looking for, plus two days mapping spruce areas, deciding priorities and working out a plan of campaign, we were off.

The team takes neither credit nor blame for the first find in the Dean, this honour (or dishonour) going to Stan Waite of the recreation staff. On the Thursday in Crabtree Hill Enclosure he spotted a resin tube on a roadside tree and decided our starting point.

Our first day in Crabtree Hill really drove home the point that resin tubes 10 metres up in heavy canopy were extremely difficult to spot, to say the least. A number of four-man meetings and a certain amount of tree climbing were necessary before we had any confidence in "high" spotting. Binoculars were not a lot of help in the relative darkness of 40-year-old Norway Spruce.

On our first full day of beetle-hunting we received a visit from a BBC "Points West" cameraman, whose pictures immortalised Rod's right hand (holding a beetle, needless to say).

After two days in Crabtree Hill and Kensley areas (83 infested trees) we had our "eye in" and split into two teams, Rod and Andy taking south beat, Dave and I north. By the end of the week further finds in Nagshead (7 trees), Cannop (26 trees) and at the Barse (7

trees) had swelled our total.

North team slogged through Ruardean Hill and Highmeadow Woods all Bank Holiday week with no sightings. In the South more finds in Russells Enclosure (10 trees) and at Blaize Bailey and a visit from Research Branch. Colin King and his team checked the attacks in the Kensley and Crabtree Hill areas and ascertained that D. Micans had been in the Dean for at least five years.

Week three brought a bad infestation at Boys Grave (38 trees) and the first clear fell decision, followed by more finds in Russells (14 trees) and the first attack in Sallow Vallets Enclosure (13 trees).

Thinking that the worst was over, we started week four only to discover the two worst outbreaks on the same day. One in Sallow Vallets (150 trees)—later to be clear felled (closely scrutinised by R. and D.), the second in Speech House Walk (105 trees), which included infestation of the 80-year-old Spruce Drive.

Disaster

Anti climax was the only thing which could follow this disaster and the rest of the week produced minor finds in Middle-ridge (3 trees) and Serridge (7 trees).

By now we were convinced that D. Micans should have been named D. unpredictabilis, as we had found it in crops varying from 20 to 80-plus years old and in Yield Classes from 10 to 22. Added to this, the creature was found from below ground level to heights of 20 metres plus. In unthinned, unbrushed crops as well as being present in undamaged trees immediately adjacent to badly damaged ones. Confusing, to say the least, and necessitating an intensive survey. Week five produced more finds in Spruce Drive (2 trees) and a rash of small outbreaks in Serridge and Birch Wood (10 trees in all). Two single attacks in Great Kensley completed the week's tally.

A further visit by Colin King, to see the devastation at Sallow Vallets and Spruce Drive, took place, also to check a report of attacks on Scots Pine (fortunately non proven) added to this week's interest.

The penultimate week's tally was three minor outbreaks, a single at Hawkwell and two in Middle-ridge. The final week was clear, no attacks.

Further work with R. and D. branch in Sallow Vallets, a P. R. exercise with the local press at Spruce Drive, a visit to Wyre Forest — which produced an outbreak (58 trees) in an out-lying area, have all concerned me in the past four months, not to mention the felling / peeling programme in co-operation with the H. and M. staff. Plus, of course, a large amount of paperwork, to record all aspects of survey and control methods.

Quite a job — and all caused by an insect only a quarter of an inch long!



Lord hands over award

FORMER NUM president, Joe (now Lord) Gormley congratulates Mr J. N. Kennedy on accepting the major commendation won by the Forestry Commission for the development of the Loch Awe Forest Cabins. The occasion was the presentation of the Business and Industry Environmental Awards.

Signal honour for a knight of the New Forest

A signal, and certainly unusual, honour was bestowed on Sir Dudley Forwood on his retirement as Official Verderer of the New Forest.

As a joint gesture of their appreciation of his services, the Forestry Commission and the Verderers of the New Forest decided that the ancient track between The Old House and Turf Croft, where he had so often ridden, should henceforth be known as "Sir Dudley's Ride."

SUCCESSOR

Mr Donn Small, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest Verderers' Court, described Sir Dudley as "a worthy successor in a long line of distinguished gentlemen who have served this Forest in this post. He went on to say that he counted it an honour and privilege to have served this Forest in the

company of such a distinguished man.

Sir Dudley, he said, had established a rapport between the Verderers and the Forestry Commission which had enabled both to continue to protect this great Forest against many subtle forms of change.

APPRECIATION

The Commission and the Verderers had given deep consideration to the manner in which they could adequately express their appreciation of the great service Sir Dudley had done the New Forest, not just here and now but so that future generations might in their turn be reminded of one of the Forest's guardians.

A plaque bearing Sir Dudley's name will be placed on the track so that all who use it would have cause to remember and be grateful to him for his work.

Bob's in a spin about a dryer

SPIN dryers (let's face it) usually fall into the domain of women but the fact is that no such more welcome gift from his colleagues could have been received by Dr Robert A. Farmer who, after seven years, has left the Lothian and Tweed District of South Scotland to become Deputy Chief Work Study Officer at Alice Holt.

The reason: Bob is a fell / marathon runner and the spin dryer will be a boon because he always seems to choose the wettest of weather to indulge in his favourite pastime. The dryer was handed over by Conservator John Davies in the Dilkusha Hotel, Peebles, at a ceremony to mark the double farewell for two District Officers — Bob's and that of Mr David J. Balfour, who has left the Lothian and Tweed District after four years for a new role with A. & R. Brownlie, the saw-milling firm. He received a smart brown briefcase and his wife a bouquet of flowers.

Laws of the land

Laws — these "pillars of wisdom" on matters scientific — sometimes have a disturbing habit of complete disobedience.

"Slasher" is indebted for this contribution by Mr Phil Evans, postgraduate wood science student at UCNW, who writes: "Researching into the properties and behaviour of a material as variable as wood is fraught with many pitfalls. The following selection of edited and abbreviated 'laws of research' may be hoped to guide any prospective postgraduate student, or serve to ward them away."

- First Law — If anything can go wrong, it will.
- Second Law — Even if nothing can possibly go wrong, it will anyway.
- Third Law — However many times it works on trial it will fail to work in the wood science practical.
- Fourth Law — Everything takes longer.
- Fifth Law — And costs more.
- Sixth Law — In any collection of data, the figure that is most obviously correct beyond all need of checking — is the mistake.
- Seventh Law — The more innocuous the modification appears to be, the further its influence will extend.
- Eighth Law — The only books and records which get lost are those one particularly wishes to keep.
- Ninth Law — In any calculation, any error which can creep in will do so.
- Tenth Law — Interchangeable parts don't.

Two years in the tropics?

Fancy spending two years in the tropics? Well, there's your chance. The organisation knows as Voluntary Service Overseas, are offering four forester posts in sunny climes but don't expect a life of ease.

In Vanuatu, for example where VSO are looking for a specialist in logging and sawmilling, building or mechanics, the successful applicant will have to build his own house!

The other opportunities are for a nursery research officer in the Solomon Islands and for two volunteers to work on re-afforestation projects aimed at improving the quality of life and environment of over 40,000 refugees in North Sudan.

In each case the posts are open only to single men because of social and cultural conditions.

Full details can be obtained from: VSO, 9 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PW. But first anyone interested should consult Personnel Branch before making any commitment.

LECTURER

Mr David Ward has been appointed Senior Lecturer at Inverness Technical College in succession to Mr A. P. B. Hamilton who has retired. Mr Ward formerly a Training Officer with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry Projects, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at Ibadan, Nigeria.

REUNION TIME

It is proposed to hold a reunion of old "Glentressians." Anyone interested should contact either Mr J. F. Wilson, Ochil or D. F. D. Black, Dunkeld, East Scotland.

SHOWSTOPPER

That's the Forest Theatre

WHAT have Ken Dodd, Arthur Negus, George Melly, the Royal Shakespeare Company, pianist John Lill and naturalist Phil Drabble and the Welsh National Opera Company in common?

The answer is a tiny theatre in the most unlikely of settings — the heart of Lakeland's Grizedale Forest.

They are just some of the hundreds of international names who have taken the winding road up into the hills above Hawkshead.

Such is the reputation of the 200-seat theatre that many stars ask specifically to appear there.

The "Theatre in the Forest" is the brainchild of Bill Grant, who was Chief Forester at Grizedale until he retired last year.

The seed was sown in the early 1970s when Bill won a Churchill Fellowship to the United States. During his three-month study tour he was impressed by the little theatres dotted throughout the national parks and forests.

CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

By this time, the Commission's recreation plan for Grizedale was well established with nature trails and a lecture room where visitors could see films on forestry.

"The visitors were flocking to the forest and I thought that what was really needed was a cultural experience in the evening to round off their daytime forest experience," said Bill Grant.

"I approached the Conservator, Jack Chard, who was a man of great vision. We had an unused hayloft behind the forest office and he agreed we could turn it into a small theatre.

"This was to be a theatre for the community totally integrated with the Commission. We sounded out a number of local people and formed a steering committee.

"We then wrote to the Charity Commission and the Grizedale Society became a registered charity."

Jack Chard helped draw up the aims of the Society which were clearly defined.

But where was the money to come from?

The Arts Council were holding a weekend symposium at Lancaster University and Bill Grant invited them to visit Grizedale. Council members arrived on a Saturday afternoon and were impressed by the Society's plans. Bill knew Sandy Dunbar, the Director of the Scottish Arts Council, and he suggested they contact the Gulbenkian Foundation for funds. Bill intended to ask for £1000 but on Sandy Dunbar's advice he upped his request to £8000 and the Foundation gave them £3000.

The Theatre in the Forest was on its way! The hay loft, which had latterly been used as a seed store, was cleared out. For the next 12 months teams of volunteers sanded floors, built seats and a stage, raised the beams, created a bar and a box office. John Fletcher, their then District Officer now Conservator (SW), was one of those who gave up nights and weekends.

The work was finally completed and the opening saw a packed house with ballet from the Northern Dance Theatre.

"It was a disaster," Bill recalled. "The seating was on the one level and only the first couple of rows could see the dancers' feet. We realised immediately we would have to put in raking.



"This was a mammoth task. Lord Lonsdale supplied free beams and we worked seven nights a week for two months, but we managed it and the theatre was really in business."

Treating it as a business has been the key to success. Special concerts which do not attract great audiences are counter-balanced by "no-risk" folk nights. The theatre plays to an average 85 per cent capacity.

More than 1000 people from countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yugoslavia are among the members of the Society.

ANNUAL BUDGET

The annual budget is now £40,000 but there is only one full-time employee, secretary Jennifer Hill. The committee of 12, under director Bill Grant, includes head ranger John Chubby, skilled forest worker Wilf Stratford, forester Norman Howgate and his wife Edna.

The president has always been the Forestry Commission chairman and Sir Ralph Verney and pianist John Lill are vice-chairmen.

Ken Dodd first saw the Grizedale Theatre on a TV documentary. "I was so impressed I told my agent to book me there at once. But I had to wait a year before they had a free night.

"Driving up that narrow road in the dark I felt I was in the middle of Midsummer Night's Dream.

"I joked about it being a hut in the wood. In fact, it is one of the best theatres I've played in. The wonderful intimate atmosphere is quite unique."

After a three-hour performance before a packed audience, Ken summed up the feelings of so many performers who have appeared in the Theatre in the Forest with these words — "I must come back again."

**AND HERE'S
KEN DODD,
ONE OF
THE FOREST
THEATRE'S
BIG STARS**

THE DEER NUMBERS GAME

Research takes a leap forward

DEER! Sighting them provides thrills for tourists but foresters have different reasons for keeping them under surveillance.

The way of life of red deer has been and of course still is a chief concern of Philip R. Ratcliffe, the FC Wildlife Research Officer at Glenbranter, Strachur, in Argyll and also of others engaged in such work with the Commission and with other bodies.

Over the past five years, Mr Ratcliffe has been studying the ecology of red deer and has developed methods for estimating their numbers in Scottish commercial forests.

Studies have shown that red deer cannot easily be excluded from commercial forests and it is now accepted that wherever forestry is developed, within the existing deer range in Scotland, resident populations will become established.

Deer management has frequently involved a spot of "crystal ball gazing" because past practices of controlling deer populations have been unsatisfactory. New ideas are concerned with predicting how deer populations might change in association with their environment and on the likely impact on trees.

This means objectively assessing the significance of the damage and understanding changes in habitats and populations.

MANAGEMENT REGIMES

Red deer research has more recently involved monitoring the effects of selected application of the new management regimes. Work on fresh design for deer management and the relationship between damage and deer density will be investigated.

Because it is essential to know more about individual deer and how they use the forest, several interesting experiments have been carried out at Glenbranter. Some deer have been marked with identifiable ear flashes and others fitted with radio transmitters



A Red Stag somewhere in the forest.

which have enabled the animals to be tracked throughout the day and night and even when they are in the thickest cover.

The signals could also tell where the animals were feeding or resting. In one case, a hind fitted with a transmitter was kept under observation for ten months until the collar holding it on broke off. Investigations continue.

We've done it again! For a second time, the Forestry Commission's Snowdonia Forest Park at Beddgelert in Wales has won the Automobile Association's top award for being the "campsite of the year."