



SLASHER

NEWSPAPER OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION



Summer

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Meet John
Davies . . .
He's on
top of
the world

— PAGE 8

A LAND WHERE EAGLES DARE

— PAGES 6-7

THE MAGIC
OF A
PAINTER —
IN FULL
COLOUR

— PAGE 4

Take a trip down the butterfly beat

— PAGE 9

Ships that
pass in
the night

— PAGE 3

Obituaries

— PAGE 11

Retirements

— PAGE 12

FOREST IN MIDDLE OF MERSEYSIDE

The Forestry Commission are helping to work the "miracle" of Merseyside.

This involves turning 235 acres of derelict dockside land into the venue for Britain's first International Garden Festival to be held at Liverpool from May to October next year.

Members of the Forest Design branch who have been visiting the site are now getting down to the big task of mounting the Commission's Festival exhibit which is perhaps their most ambitious — with the final cost possibly being in the region of £100,000.

But the money, as well as that from all the other participants, will be "well-spent" by turning the site at Toxteth — scene of last summer's riots — into a "wonderland" which, by bringing the countryside to the bustling sailors' city, is certain to excite the admiration and envy of the millions expected to visit the event.

The Commission's exhibit promises to do that — and more.

The main area of the site will be devoted to a model of an upland forest. About half-a-million seedlings of ten or a dozen different varieties of trees will be used to illustrate, among other things, the best of modern landscape design in forestry together with care for the needs of agriculture.

CONSERVATION

It will be a "working" forest in every sense — with models of machinery, deer glades, and many other examples of conservation work.

By "SLASHER" REPORTER

Facilities for public recreation such as pony trekking, campsites or picnic areas will also be featured.

It is also hoped to show a model of an integrated sawmill and a life-size forest chalet to serve as an exhibition house for forest products.

Walkways with elevated viewing points are planned for the entire project.

The scheme is being jointly mounted by the Information branch and the Forest Design branch. The project team leader is Mr Simon Bell, who recently joined the Design branch as Landscape Architect.

ART COLLEGE

The team also includes members of the Edinburgh College of Art and the Glasgow School of Landscape Architecture.

Operation facelift is underway

The Festival, initiated by Mr Michael Heseltine, the then Minister for the Environment, may help to go some way to quell the fears planted in people's mind by George Orwell, about life in "1984."

Roll up — and prove him wrong!

Incidentally, it is interesting to recall that in 1884 a major forestry exhibition, under the patronage of Queen Victoria, was held in the grounds of Donaldson's Hospital in Edinburgh. There were more than 500 exhibits and about 20 different countries — representing from Europe, the Far East, South and Central America, the United States and Canada, South Africa and Scandinavia — took part.

Medals to commemorate the Exhibition were struck and one of them recently came into the hands of Mr M. W. Bell of Fare-lohead Forest W (S). It was awarded to a Glasgow company for woods used for railways.

Savernake loses two stalwarts

There were two retirements recently from Savernake Forest SW(E) — Mr Donald Wilcox and Mr Gordon Parsons.

Mr Wilcox retired after over 40 years with the Commission, all of them spent at Savernake.

He started there in 1941 when he was 14 and his first job was in the nursery. Those were the days when horses were hired to plough and harrow the ground and to pull timber from prep. ground sites.

It was Mr Wilcox's next job to lead the horses but when mechanisation arrived he soon became accustomed to the Allen scythe and Clifford rotavator.

Savernake lost another "stalwart" in January when Mr Parsons retired after 26 years at what was originally Bentley Forest. He was the third of three brothers to work for the Commission and in fact generations of his family have worked hazel coppice and carried out other woodland crafts in the Salisbury area.

Mr Parsons was involved in a vast weeding and clearing programme over some 2000 acres in Salisbury Forest (and saw Bentley amalgamate with Salisbury, Salisbury with Cranborne Chase and finally Cranborne with Savernake).

More retirements on Page 12.

New Editor

THE temporary editor of "Slasher" writes: This is my last issue and from now on the new incumbent in the editorial chair will be Mr Roy Gregor, who is well-known as a journalist and broadcaster, particularly on agricultural topics.

Thank you all very much for your contributions and pictures and keeping me up to date with retirements and, alas, obituaries. Just one small request. Will you please write on one side of the paper only, and if in long hand will you leave a little space between the lines. Double spacing with a typewriter would also be appreciated.

If you want to know about "deadlines" give the Information branch at HQ a ring. Goodbye, and my thanks to you all.

GEORGE MILLAR.

BRANCHBRIEFS PASTURES NEW FOR BIG JIM

IT'S pastures new for that colourful character at Westonbirt Arboretum — Superintendent Forester Jim MacDonald.

He has been transferred to Wymersley E (E) and Westonbirt Arboretum will somehow never be quite the same again. At a function to mark his transfer Jim, his wife, Christine, and their son Alan were presented with gifts by the staff at the Arboretum.

In making the presentation, Research Chief Forester Les Pearce warmly praised Jim's professionalism and fairness. Then, in lighter vein, he referred to Jim's stature (all trees in the Arboretum are now pruned up to at least six-and-a-half feet) and to his stentorian greetings which left no visitor or research worker in doubt about his identity.

Jim has been succeeded by Peter Gregory in a straight swap of posts.

Yomping along in North Wales

ABOUT 70 people, including at least one 62-year-old, took part in a "yomp" — in Falklands fashion — through about 13 miles of forest and open hill country in North Wales.

It was arranged by the Forestry Commission's Dolgellau District Office at Gwynedd and started and finished at the well-known hostelry at Tyn-y-Groes.

The entrants were split into three age groups — 17-25, 26-40 and 41 and over, and they all, like the marines, carried a pack.

Everyone who completed the course got a medal, with prizes being presented to the fastest individuals and teams within the three age groups by the local MP, Mr Dafydd Ellis Thomas, who took part in the event.

SPORTS CLUB BACK ON TARGET

THE Forestry Commission (Edinburgh) Sports and Social Club is now in a much healthier situation, according to the report presented to the annual meeting by the chairman Mr Gerald Perry.

He writes that at the close of the year under review they were able to recover the position sufficiently well to have a substantial surplus in their accounts.

"Much of this was due to our ending our support for the canteen and to increased profits in the bar."

Mr Perry adds: "We are in the happy position of being able to satisfy the reasonable requests for assistance from the various activities under our umbrella and still have sufficient funds to entertain notions which would have been extravagant some time ago."

1 million trees

MR ALLAN STEWART, Scottish Office minister with responsibility for Home Affairs and the Environment, planted the millionth tree for the Central Scotland Woodlands Project in the village of Salsburgh.

The Central Scotland Woodlands Project which started in 1979 is financed by the Countryside Commission for Scotland and by three Regional Councils — Central, Lothian and Strathclyde — and supported by many other organisations.

Mr Stewart also presented certificates to local schoolchildren who are taking part in the project.

HOW THE GERMANS TREAT THE FOREST

It was a "busman's holiday" for Mr Andy Patmore, a Ganger at Wymersley Forest, Northamptonshire, on a visit to Germany.

He was very impressed, so much so, that he felt impelled to contribute an account of his experiences to "Slasher." It gives a penetrating insight into their ways and ours.

While on holiday in the Sauerland, part of Westphalia in Northern Germany, I was lucky enough to spend half a day with a German Forester, Walter Schmitz, who managed 1000 ha of forest on the hills above Brilon. This town is surrounded by 18,000 ha of forest, 17 revieren (beats) controlled by a Forest Director at Brilon Forest Office.

The Sauerland is a heavily forested range of hills lying between Dortmund in the west and Kassel in the east, the highest point rising to just over 840m near Winterberg. This area is nicknamed the Dutchman's Alps as it is the nearest ski-ing resort for the Dutch to flood to in a cold winter snap.

The dominant tree species are Norway Spruce and Beech, yet only 150 years ago the forest was Oak and Beech. Spruce were planted in place of the hardwoods due to careless farming techniques. For years before, farmers had raided the woods for leafmould for their fields and saturated them with cattle, pigs, sheep and goats which destroyed any natural regeneration and the forest over-matured. Large-scale felling of the hardwoods occurred during the mid-19th century and the first conifers were planted in the exhausted soil once the livestock were removed.

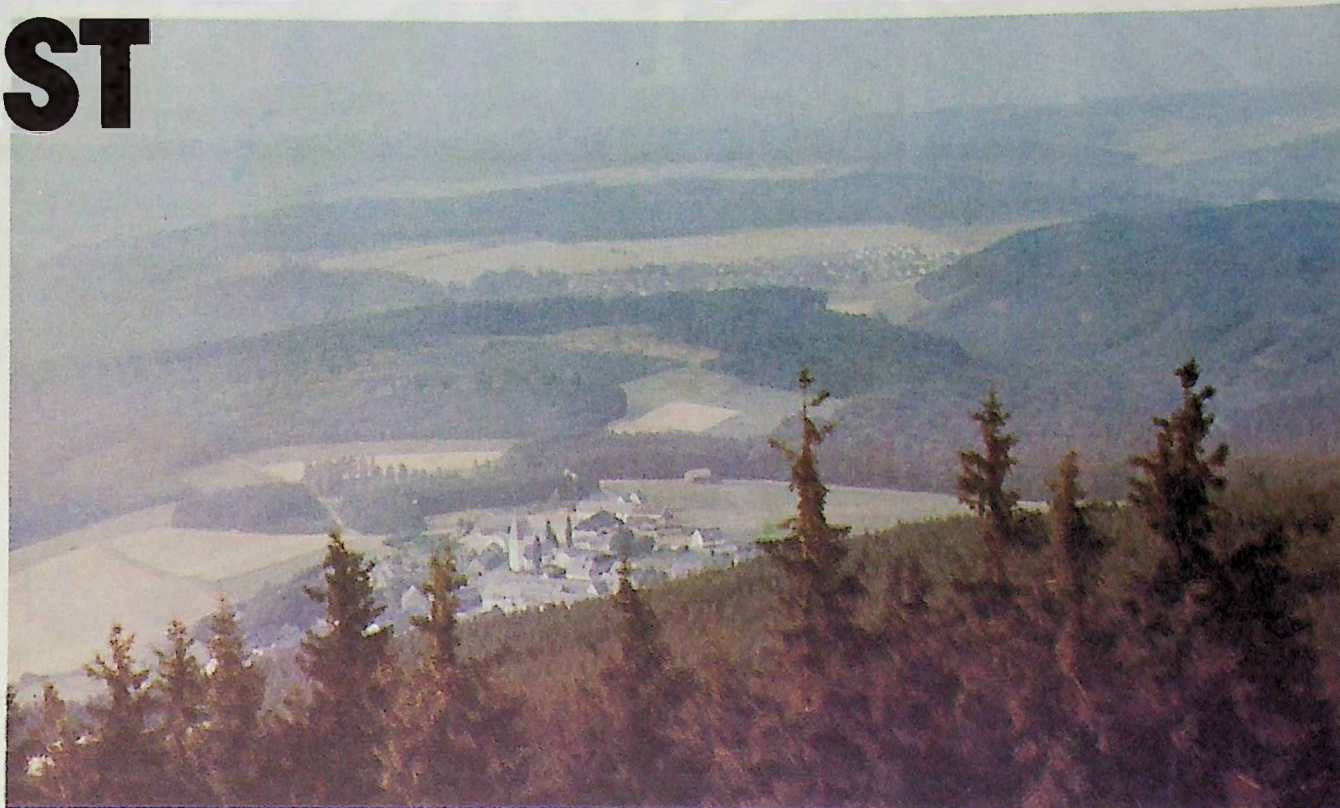
TRUSTY BEETLE

My tour of the forest started from Walter's house (and office), a beautiful building set back from the public road on the edge of the vast forest stretching away over a steep hill. We travelled up into the forest on an excellent forest road in a VW Beetle, his own vehicle which the Bundes Forst (State Forest) paid him an allowance of up to 700km a month for using it. (Most foresters use their own vehicles). As the trusty Beetle whistled its way up the hill through mature Norway Spruce, all of them as straight as gun barrels, he told me his 1000 ha was 60 per cent conifer and 40 per cent broadleaves. Mainly Norway Spruce with some Larch and Douglas Fir and Beech with some Oak and Maple. No pine are grown (except for amenity) as they are too susceptible to snow breakage. Heavy snow is not expected every year but hard winters occur more often than in southern Britain.

Our first stop was at an establishing crop of Beech. He explained in broken English that the Beech were established by natural regeneration whenever possible, helped by planting should the process fail to cover the whole site. When planting is necessary the Beech are put in 50cm apart in rows 2m apart. On some sites Larch and Douglas Fir are planted amongst the Beech every 5m. The trees are weeded two or three times a year as no weedkillers are used. The only chemical used on the whole forest are deer repellants.

When the site is ready for its first thinning in 50 to 20 years time, should a good quality Larch or Douglas Fir exist, it will be pruned to a height of 5m and recorded by the forester as a final crop tree. When the rotation is over after 120 years, the forester at that time will know exactly how many conifers exist with the Beech. All marking of thinnings is done by the beat forester — nobody else!

Climbing higher into the hills we stopped to look at a 30 ha experimental crop of 25-year-old Norway Spruce which had just been thinned. The experiment was that he had selected the final crop trees about 5m apart and they were in the process of being pruned to 6m. These trees are to be left to mature through further thinnings to the age of 100 years to see if they can produce a log suitable for veneer. German foresters and wood-using industries are worried that in 70 years time veneer logs from Africa, South America and Asia will be so scarce and expensive that they must now try to find a quick



One of Andy's pictures from his fact-finding trip.

Andy takes a busman's holiday in the Dutchman's Alps

way to produce quality veneer logs, hopefully from Spruce. To prune these trees his workforce were being paid 2½ Deutsche Mark (62p) per tree and Walter added they were doing alright out of it.

ACID RAIN

At the highest point of his beat, about 600m, we stopped to look at another experimental plot, this time concerning the reason why natural regenerated Beech was dying off on this particular slope. A small area had been fenced against deer under widely spaced mature Beech trees. For years the regenerating Beech in this area would grow very slowly to the age of four or five years then die off. Equally slow it was discovered that the ever-increasing acidity of rain from the Ruhr industrial district (just down the road as the cloud flies) was killing the trees. This rain called 'Sauer-Regen' (Acid Rain) has become an international and political problem as Scandinavian countries are showered with Western Europe's pollution.

Not many days pass without 'Sauer Regen' being mentioned in the news media. This rain not only kills well established natural regenerated Beech, it will also kill sturdy nursery trees planted out and has reduced the Yield Class of semi-mature Beeches. The only way to solve this problem is to tighten the anti-pollution laws and reduce the amount of sulphur released into the atmosphere.

As the forest road met the public road in the bottom of the valley we had to pass through a large car park, one of several in Brilon Forest. The State Forest spends a lot of money on public

recreation. From this car park there were several 'Rundweg' (circular waymarked footpaths) of varying length following roads, rides and even racks. Also in the district were nature trails, a long-distance path, a keep fit/jogging trail (a circular path with exercise apparatus made of timber enroute e.g. hurdles, leap-frog posts). Adventure playgrounds and a network of cross-country ski-ing trails ('Loipe') for the winter months. Some of the forest roads are made extra wide to cater for Loipe. Most of these wide rails are lined with amenity trees such as Cherry, Maples, Red Oak, Weymouth Pine and the occasional mature Spruce and Beech left standing when a bordering crop is clear felled.

Nature conservation plays a large part in German forestry policies. Large tracts of forest are jointly managed with the 'Natur Schutz Gebiet' NSG (the equivalent of our Nature Conservancy Council) as Nature Reserves with minimum forestry operations within them, whether it be to safeguard a heath of stunted pines and heather, an area of over-mature trees or a haunt of rare flowers or fungi. In most compartments bird-boxes are put up by the State Forestry to encourage a healthy bird population. The boxes have different designs for different species. The commonest birds using the different designs are titmice (including crested tit), redstarts, tree creepers and long-eared owls. Other species present in the Sauerland include Buzzard, Goshawk, Black Grouse, Capercaillie, Haw Finch, Black Redstart and Black Woodpecker.

Hunting is very popular in Germany, made obvious by the extraordinary number of high seats crammed into the countryside. Walter Schmitz has seven hunters on his beat. He knows how many Roe and Red Deer he has in his area and informs the hunter (Jager) how many of what species and sex they are allowed to cull. The hunters pay about 50 DM (£12.50) per ha for hunting rights within the forest and between 70-80 DM (£17.50-£20) per ha should they rent forest land that borders on to meadows. All shots are taken from high seats before a certain time in the morning and after a certain time in the evening according to the season.

WILD SHEEP

In other parts of the Sauerland, Sika, Fallow, Wild Pig and Mouflon (a wild sheep) are also hunted. Deer are common but extremely shy as are the rarer Boar and Mouflon.

The State Forest is self-supporting but even though 30 per cent of West Germany is forested she can only produce 50 per cent of her timber needs. Imports come from Poland, Austria and Scandinavia. All timber is sold by auction, mature Spruce fetching about 200 DM/m³ (£50).

Take a trip down memory lane

A picture from the past. Taken almost 32 years ago, it shows the successful 1951 entry to the old Lynford Hall Forestry School after presentation of their certificates. They are (back row, left to right): Pat Marsh, Wilf Meek, Pete Gascoigne, Paul Collings, Alan Flint, Eric Rogers, Henry Smith and Ray Monk.

Middle row (left to right): Ted Baldwin, Rex Howell, Peter Kirby, Pete Davys, Dick Bird, Peter Daborn, Pete Pritchard, Neil Cochrane.

Front row (left to right): Mike Whitlock, Charlie Hinds, Norman Fugler, Bill Tyler and Paul Winkworth.

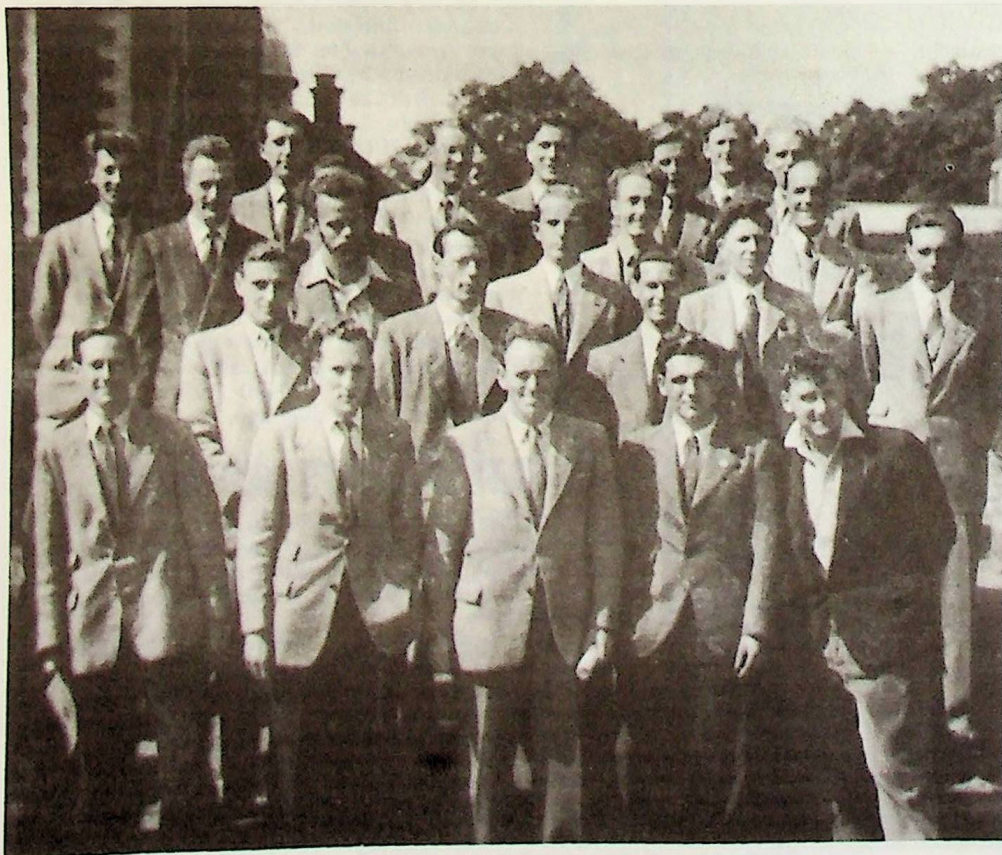
Blast from the past

Seven years ago this item appeared in "Slasher." In view of the changing scene — and of course the Commission has not been untouched — John Brunton, Head Forester at Bardney thought it worth resurrecting.

SO ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN . . .

Anyone planning a spot of reorganising in the New Year would do well to take heed of what Roman Consul Caius Petronius wrote in his report: "We trained hard but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by REORGANISING — and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress, while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation!"

. . . and we all know what happened to the Roman Empire!



Bid to stamp out spruce bark beetle

Shropshire has been the hardest hit of the English counties by the ravages of the spruce bark beetle — but help from across the Atlantic has been received at Mortimer Forest, near Ludlow, in the centre of the outbreak.

It's in the form of a mobile Mechanical peeler which swiftly skims off all the bark from felled Spruce thus destroying all beetle workings. The bark is taken away by conveyor, dumped in a hole in the ground and covered with two feet of soil.

The main infestation at the Vennals has meant that Spruce are having to be felled premature — at the ages of 34 and 35 — with the resultant loss in value as well as the additional cost of peeling.

Mr Arthur Barlow, Marches District Officer, said that the spruce bark beetle presented a widespread problem in the mid-Wales and its border counties, taking in an area from Aberdovey across to Shrewsbury, the Forest of Dean and back again to mid-Wales.

He told "Slasher": "Shropshire certainly has had the worst of the infestation. We have something like 60,000 trees to fell, mainly concentrated near Ludlow and that has certainly been a major problem."

SOLUTION

He said that when the beetle was first discovered in August last year they had started hand-stripping, but as they found the extent of the infestation they quickly realised that with such a large concentrated area of infested trees the only solution was to clear fell.

"With a programme of something like 12,000 cubic metres of timber, we had to find a way of mechanically peeling large diameter logs. The peeling also had to be completed by the middle of May in order to eradicate as much of the beetle as possible before emergency in the summer."

"We brought in this large mechanical peeler from America to help with the work. It skims off all the bark and particularly the rough areas where beetle adults or larvae are located."

But only time will tell if the days of the spruce bark beetle are numbered. A further survey is to be carried out this coming Autumn to check all previously infested stands in the country and see what additional beetle activity has occurred during the year.

A NEW LIFE AHEAD FOR THIS GRACEFUL ORIONIA



... THANKS TO A FORESTER CALLED DAVID

A new look and a new life lies ahead for the sailing ship Orion which was built in Spain 20 years ago — and much of the credit must go to the workers in the Forestry Commission's S/W England Conservancy, notably forester Mr David Pedler, who is skilled in nautical know-how.

Their job was to provide the Orion with new masts, spars, booms and yards as part of the major refit she underwent in docks at Plymouth.

The re-rigging of the Orion, now owned by a wealthy American — a Dr Hemsell — is just one of such tasks that are undertaken by the Commission.

Mr Pedler said he has been involved with the mast market for ten years. It started when the then C/Forester Norman Hindley and David began to visit boat yards in the area and got small orders. Since then they have supplied most of the solid masts used in Cornwall.

A lot of the masts and spars go to the Falmouth oyster fleet, the only pure sail working boats in the country.

They have also supplied several large sailing boats such as the "Marques" used in the BBC series and the "Beagle" in the Darwin series.

Other boats provided with new rigging by the Commission staff have gone on world cruises.

In 1980/81 two lorryloads of masts and spars were sent to Spain for the rebuilding of a large sailing vessel named the "Inca" and, as the name implies, she was used for carrying gold in the Mediterranean. She is now in this country on charter work.

ENGINE

The Orion has a deck length of 92 ft and was built in Spain in 1964 with pine and oak. When she arrived in Britain she was docked at the little port of Cockenzie on the Firth of Forth where she lay for several years until 1982 when she was bought by Dr Hemsell. She was given a small refit and a new engine and sailed south to Plymouth for a major refit.

Mr Pedler was approached by Mr Peter Gregson of "Wooden Ships," the firm working on the refit, at the end of last summer. The normal practice is for clients to visit the forest and to see the stands of timber where poles will be selected. On Gaff-rigged boats where top weight is not too important Douglas Fir is the best timber and fortunately some good stands were available for his inspection.

Mr Gregson's requirements were two masts of 71 ft and 61 ft with top diameters of 12 ins and 14 ins and two top masts of 35 ft with seven inch tops, two booms of 38 ft by nine inches and two gaffs of 36 ft by seven inches plus three yards to carry square sails 40 ft long.

Mr Pedler and Mr Gregson made a rough selection with the final selection and felling taking place in November. They were extracted and left until the end of February this year when they were collected and taken to the docks.

The normal practice is to sink the poles in salt water for three months to "cure" them but in this case, since the vessel had to be ready by an early deadline, they were shaped and dressed almost immediately. On completion, the Orion is a two-masted top sail schooner carrying three square sails.

The Orion in the early stages of her refit, and below, one of her masts is manoeuvred into position.



A record catch — but it provides a warning

If anyone has had doubts about the warning by the Forestry Commission on the increase in the grey squirrel population, this account of trapping sent to "Slasher" by Mr J. Chapman of Lyndhurst must surely provide food for second thoughts.

"If this is a record it is one we would rather be without, for it has a significance that may well have become all too clear by the time you read these lines.

On April 28 in the New Forest, Head Forester Fred Courtier was giving his annual

cage trapping demonstration to students of the Sparsholt College of Agriculture.

As each student had personally to master and demonstrate the humane killing of live squirrels, some 88 traps, Legg midgeys and Young traps, had been pre-baited by New Forest Keepers Harold Cutler and Ian Young through an area of some 80 acres of mixed broadleaves.

Between 10 am and 1 pm and 2 pm and 4 pm a total of 83

squirrels were killed, with some traps having been visited twice. Fred Courtier and Ian Young then went back over the traps for a further hour and got another 17 squirrels.

Some three weeks later a further 100 squirrels were taken from the same trap line.

These remarkable bags can give us no comfort. The alert has gone out that a population peak may be upon us and we must look to our plantations with special care this year.

• More squirrel tales on Page 7.

LONG SERVICE

His 33 years with the Forestry Commission were recognised when Mr Gordon Jeffrey was presented with a long service certificate at a ceremony at Stonehaugh.

Mr Jeffrey, who is 56, lives in West Acres, Wark, and there can be few people who know their way round the Wark Forest as well as he does. His certificate was handed over by the Commission's north east conservator, Mr Tony Spencer, and there was also the gift of a brass barometer from his colleagues which was presented on their behalf by chief forester, Mr Tom Johnstone.

A belated but nevertheless warm welcome to Mr John Fletcher, who for over four months now has been the new Conservator SW(E).

THE MAGIC OF A FORESTER'S PAINT BRUSH

A HOBBY, according to dictionary definition, is "a favourite pursuit carried on as an amusement." Many people, of course, occupy their leisure with a wide range of activities, but only a few reach the level of excellence attained by Mr Paul Barwick, one of the Silviculture (S) Foresters at Santon Downham. His hobby is landscape painting.

"Slasher" is privileged to publish some examples of his work but a full range of his paintings will be on view at an exhibition to be held in Norwich in September.

The paintings are all based on the Breckland Region. Don't miss it, if you are down that way.

When a house is a home

*"O I want to go back to the timber again
I'm afraid of the terrible town."*

THERE must be many — most of them city dwellers — who, having spent a week or two at the Forestry Commission's holiday house at East Camghouran in Rannoch, would echo these words by Robert W. Service.

But even if (alas!) East Camghouran has ceased to function as a holiday house, it is worth recording how much pleasure it afforded visitors from 1974 until the autumn of last year.

Many came back year after year and their entries — some in rhyme — in the visitors' book are a sincere tribute to the facilities they were afforded by the Commission and to the beauty of the scene.

The first of many entries appeared in the visitors' book in the summer of 1974. It was written by the Shackels family of New Malden consisting of "Pa, Ma, Sarah, Lucy, Roger and Topy the dog. It said: "Marvellous holiday — hope to return. Love your collapsible table, stuck it together again, should last a lifetime." In the nationality column they wrote — "English by birth, Scottish by sentiment, Irish by blarney, Welsh by what's left."

WATER

A Suffolk couple who were at East Camghouran in September of that year wrote: "The best holiday accommodation we have found, but beware of the local cat."

The colour of the water from the taps at East Camghouran excited many comments. A quartet from that beer-making town, Burton-on-Trent, wrote — "Don't be put off by the water. It may look like whisky but does not have the same kick."

A Gloucestershire family — "Brown water tastes okay. Disconcerting in the bath and interesting as ice-cubes."

A Portsmouth family — "Can't say much about the bath water . . . only remember afterwards, you couldn't be that dirty!"

Another English couple said — "Water more than tolerable when mixed with Scotch 60-30. Obviously drunk all week."

An Islay's man's poetic contribution on the water said: "We note complaints on water, and someone whom we met, said

SLASHER REPORTER

a blonde shampooed her hair once, and finished up brunette." Senor Juan Grazie Fernandes of Buenos Aires wrote — before the Falklands conflict — "Nice little place you've got here . . . we'll be back."

An English couple who came to East Camghouran in February 1982 in the hope of seeing the aurora borealis were disappointed but they saw something even more remarkable. A rainbow at 11.50 pm! "It was quite clear, a full arch and lasted several minutes."

For anglers — though some were disappointed — East Camghouran provided ample sport. Just one of many entries said — "Eleven days fishing and a total of 167 trout. Where can you beat that?"

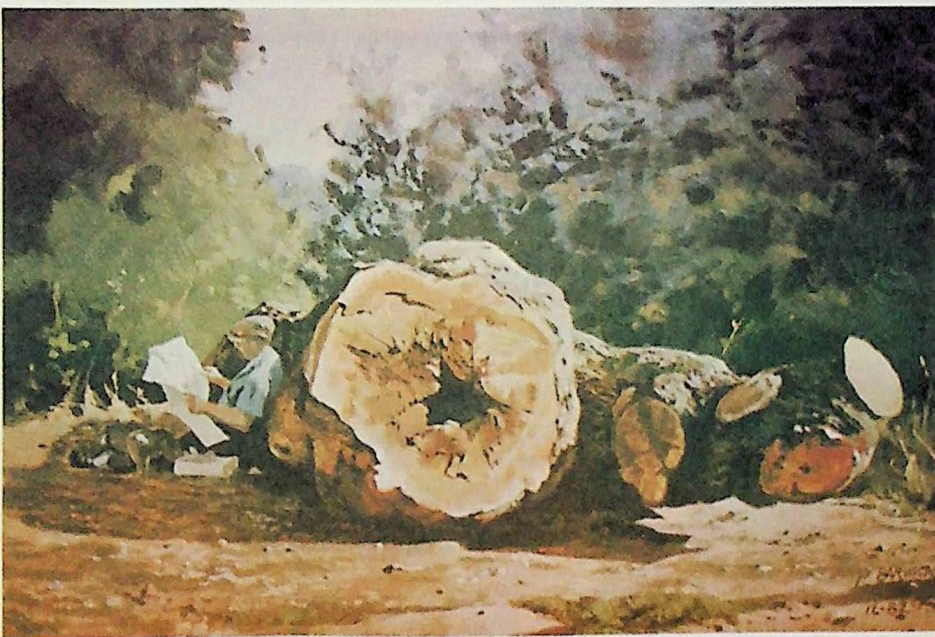
Amazingly, there was only one discordant note in all the many entries. A couple from Bromley complained — "The house lacks comfort, the furniture is too old. No TV."

A PITY

Contrast this with an Edinburgh couple's remarks: "It's so civilised here with no telephone, no TV, radio or newspapers and almost no cars. What a pity we have to return to civilisation."

A Fife couple — "Camghouran for the wonderful sound of silence."

The last word — and the final entry in the visitors' book — was by the Millwards, an English family who wrote: "The weather has been incredible — sunshine daily and not a drop of rain. We have fished, we have walked and met numerous friendly local people . . . unfortunately, all good things must come to an end" — the holiday and the cottage.



Take a tip from these safe drivers

Seven drivers from the Forestry Commission, who are based in North Yorkshire, have been awarded medals and diplomas for safe driving in 1981. The awards range from a 27-year medal to a six-year medal for continuous accident-free driving.

The recipients, who were presented with their awards by Chief Superintendent Dale of the Scarborough Police Division at a ceremony at the Commission's district office at Eastgate, Pickering, are: —

R. WALTON (DALBY): Twenty-seven year Badge — marks 27th consecutive year of accident free driving up to the end of 1981. He is a former lorry driver who has been driving for the Forestry Commission for the past 26 years in the Pickering area mainly personnel carrying vehicles; R. HEPWORTH (WYKEHAM): Seven year Badge — marks seventh consecutive year of accident free driving up to the end of 1981. General driving duties locally — Wykeham / Scarborough area; B. HALLAM (DALBY): Six year Badge — marks sixth consecutive year of accident free driving up to the end of 1981. Drives a 24-tonne gross 6-wheeler mainly based within Dalby Forest delivering poles to our pitwood depot. Makes timber collections from our Forests in the Pickering area; W. G. SIMPSON (DALBY): One year Diploma 1981. Has been driving for ca 26 years. Drives daily delivering pitwood to Northumberland, Yorkshire, Durham, Derby and Notts areas. Moves 5000 tonnes per annum. Drives in excess of 35,000 miles per annum; J. H. TOMLINSON (WYKEHAM): One year Diploma 1981. Drives crewbus from Darncombe to Wykeham daily. Is also involved with driving staff to worksites and other general driving duties; W. H. CALVERT (WYKEHAM): One year Diploma 1981. Drives crewbus between Scarborough and Wykeham daily for Wykeham staff. Also drives staff to worksites, and A. HALLSWORTH (LOW DALBY): One year Diploma 1981. Forestry Commission Mobile Mechanic for 4 years, covering the area from Durham City to Sheffield.

Seven forestry workers at Hamsterley have also gained safe-driving awards. They are Arnold Smith, Michael Kennedy, Tom Fletcher, Roy Brown, Doug Nelson, Joe Smith and Cecil Jacques.

To qualify for the awards they had to clock up their 7000 annual mileage without a scratch. The drivers mainly use the motorways and major trunk roads which attract most traffic.

COMPETITION

Pupils of Fairwater Junior School in Cwmbran were the runners-up in a national trees competition. Their entry won them £100 and the project they produced illustrating the theme of trees in aspects as varied as music and literature is now on show with the other winners in the Natural History Museum.

Parliament visit for the unions

Members of the Forestry Commission trade unions recently met MPs in the House of Commons on the disposals programme. This group includes (from left to right) Ron Brown, MBE (CSU) ex-chairman of the trade union side; Reg Williams, CPSA Headquarters Officer; Joe Meechan (CSU) the present TUS chairman; Jean Thomson (IPCS) TUS secretary; Pat Ritch (CPSA), Roger Herbert (SCPS), and MPs Dennis Canavan and Martin O'Neill.



John retires — to the Rockies!

A 100-mile trek across some of the world's toughest terrain — the Canadian "Rockies" — to follow in the footsteps of the famous 19th century Scottish explorer and botanist, David Douglas.

Mr John Davies, Forestry Commission Conservator for Dumfries and Galloway, has been planning such an expedition for the past four years and on his retirement after 35 years with the Commission he set out on June 20 for Canada to fulfil a life's ambition.

Mr Davies has a special interest in the Scone-born botanist who, on his journeyings in Canada (for what is now the Royal Horticultural Society) brought back over 200 plants, many of which are now in domestic use and whose influence in our gardens was substantial.

Incidentally, the botanist's brother had links with the Dumfries and Galloway area. He was Master of Works at Drumlanrig and, in fact, one of the original Douglas firs which he introduced in this country is planted there serving as a magnificent memorial to him.

Mr Davies, who wrote a book based on the diary of the explorer-botanist, was accompanied on the trail through the Rocky Mountains by Richard Corbet, an orienteering champion and a Duke of Edinburgh Gold medalist.

The starting point of their expedition was Jasper in Alberta and from there they went to the Whirlpool river and then through the Atabaskar Pass. They camped on the famous Committee Punchbowl which is on the Great Divide of the Rockies and later climbed Mount Brown which is thought to have been the first Rocky climbed by man.

David Douglas climbed the 10,000 ft. peak and Mr Davies and his companion did so too.

Before leaving, Mr Davies said they would have to take all their food with them as well as tents. He thought they could expect a fair amount of mosquitoes and with melting glaciers the rivers would be swollen and it would be quite muddy underfoot.

Stout men who gave us help in times of crisis

THE Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit — older members of the Commission staff will, of course, be familiar with the name but it is worth recalling for the younger element what it was and the vital part it played in war-time Britain.

And for this journey back in time thanks are due to Mr Edgar Baird of Gander, Newfoundland, who served with the unit and later became a pilot in the RAF.

The unit, composed entirely of volunteers, was raised in Newfoundland in November 1939 to come to Britain and produce from forests in Scotland and England some of the timber so badly needed for the war effort.

Their arrival here meant that timber could be despatched direct to the consumer by rail or road, thereby saving much shipping space urgently required for other vital war purposes.

The response to the appeal for lumber men to come to Britain to cut timber was immediate. The difficulty was not to recruit the 2000 men required — many more than that offered their services — but to select the men best suited for the work.

Their pay was generous by 1940 standards. It was eight shillings a day (40p in decimal currency) but, of course, lodgings came free.

The first draft of 350 men, with such of the necessary equipment that could be obtained in Newfoundland left St John's on December 13, 1939, and arrived at Liverpool five days later.

The second draft left on January 6, 1940, and travelled across Newfoundland to Canada to join their ship for the Atlantic crossing.

It speaks volumes for the convoy escorts in that cruel battle of the Atlantic that although over 3400 men of the unit sailed to Britain, not a life was lost.

Originally, the unit was intended to be mainly employed in the production of round timber — i.e. props, mining timber and so on — but after Dunkirk it had to extend its activities producing many and varied products from the forests such as props, tonnage wood, pulpwood sawlogs and telegraph poles.

In addition, the unit went into the sawmill business producing large quantities of lumber of almost every size and specification, including lumber for building bunks for air raid shelters and the very special timber required for the ship-building industry.

Furthermore, during the tense years of 1940-41, it produced much timber for vital defence projects.

In the early days, the unit was greatly hampered by lack of logging machinery, so a great deal of improvisation was



Clement Attlee visits a Newfoundland foresters camp.

necessary. However, as time went on, more machinery was made available until the unit became highly mechanised.

GUARD

The men of the unit, besides cutting timber, played a part in home defence. A battalion consisting exclusively of the overseas lumbermen was formed as the Third Inverness Battalion of the Home Guard, thus winning the distinction of being the only Home Guard unit in existence in Britain formed entirely of Dominion civilians engaged in specialised war work.

Their shoulder flash was "Newfoundland Home Guard, 3

I N" (an abbreviation of 3rd Inverness Battalion).

In his letter to "Slasher," Mr Baird says: "I know that the forests which we felled have all been replanted and are probably nearly fully grown again by this time."

"One which we felled stretched for about two miles along the south side of the Dee opposite Ballater. It was owned by Sir Victor MacKenzie who was an old man then — a veteran of the Boer and First World Wars."

"I am now retired and plan to spend the rest of my life agitating for greatly improved and expanded forestry in Newfoundland."

40 YEARS ON

Mr Denis Mills retired from Wyre Forest after over 40 years' service. He joined when he was 14 and apart from a short spell with HGTPD during the war, as well as four years service in the army, he spent all his working life with the Commission.

PRIZE WOMAN

Congratulations to Mrs Jacquie Harper, SW (E) Conservancy Drawing Office. She was awarded the first prize in the 1982 competition organised by the Society of Civil Service Authors for the best short story of the year.

The fruit of our labours

Mrs Nancy MacKenzie of Craigmount Crescent, Edinburgh, the widow of the late Alex MacKenzie, contributed the following:

Not for ourselves do we sow the seed

Or trees on the Moorland plant
But that those to whom we
bequeath our axe

May never for timber want.
Our work may be done ere the
acorn small

To the sturdy oak matures
And the good leaves lost as in
Autumn fall

Yet the fruit of our labour
endures.

"Aye be planting a tree" the
motto has been

Which through turmoil of time
has endured

A noble ideal an honourable
code

That forests for Man has
assured.

On show at 'The Highland'

The tiniest trees — grown in test tubes — and the biggest plough — were on display at the Forestry Commission's stand at the Royal Highland Show which was held at Ingliston, near Edinburgh, in June. They were features of the Commission's exhibit — "Forests for our Future" — the science and technology of modern forestry. The test tube trees, only a few centimetres high, are used to demonstrate micro-propagation techniques to multiply genetically improved trees. One seed has the potential to propagate 50,000 identical plants in one year. The massive plough — a D 60/T 90 — is used to cultivate upland soil.

The Commission's main feature at the show covered the story of tree seed, techniques for dealing with difficult sites, tree improvement, disease prevention and control and modern forest management for landscape design, wildlife, conservation and public recreation.

PRIZE GUY

The President of the British Deer Society, Lord Dulverton, issued a challenge in the March issue of the Society's journal which ought to have put foresters on their mettle. This was to identify the species of tree in a photograph. Only one correct answer was sent in and that not by a forester but our own Senior Ranger at Ringwood Forest, Vic Pardy. The species was *Taiwania Cryptomerioides*. Vic received as his prize a copy of John Davies' book *Douglas of the Forest*.

The twins who control water!

Twins have been born on the Braes of Balquhiddy — and the good news is that they're already earning their keep!

To clear up any misunderstanding . . . the twins were identical concrete structures installed in adjacent glens in West of Scotland from which information will be gathered on the effects of upland afforestation on water resources.

The structures called Crump weirs are training walls and dams of defined dimensions which allow accurate calculations of the amount of water passing over them. The Loch Ard Engineers road squad undertook the work on behalf of the Institute of Hydrology with the Scottish Development Department acting as consultants.

The concrete finish had to be of the highest quality and with the dimensions being critical, the maintenance of line and levels became

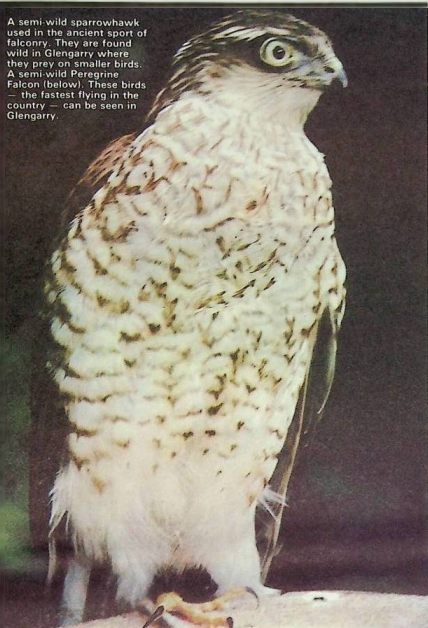
all-important. It is to the credit of Loch Ard Engineers that the steel weir crests when set were within 1mm of the required level.

Working in a burn during one of the wettest autumns on record produced more than the normal run of problems. All were surmounted, however, and the gauging stations are now in operation monitoring burn levels in the two experimental catchments.

The sites chosen by the Institute of Hydrology for the paired catchment studies were the afforested glen at Kirkton and the unplanted glen at Monachyle. These catchments offer the additional advantage that it will be possible, subsequently, to use the instrumentation installed for studies of the effects of felling the forest at Kirkton, and at a later stage, the effects of planting at Monachyle.

Golden birds of the far mountains

A semi-wild sparrowhawk used in the ancient sport of falconry. They are found wild in Glen Garry where they prey on smaller birds. A semi-wild Peregrine Falcon (below). These birds — the fastest flying in the country — can be seen in Glen Garry.



And the man who watches over them

When it comes to Golden Eagles, one man who knows all there is to know is Richard Wood of Old Ground, Invergarry, Inverness-shire.

For many years he has been associated with the Nature Conservancy and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds carrying out studies into the Golden Eagle and its breeding habits in West Inverness-shire.

He has sent this article on "Experiences with Golden Eagles" to readers of "Slasher." He writes: "Nearly a quarter of the Golden Eagle population in Europe is found in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, although considering the size of an eagle it is by no means easy to identify the bird in a large area surrounded by mountain and crag.

A hazard is sometimes mistaken for an eagle; this accounts for its nickname the "tourist's eagle." The eagle may often be seen circling a mountain peak appearing only as a speck on the horizon, although its wingspan might be five feet across.

The female, like other birds of prey, is slightly larger than the male.

Golden Eagles mate for life which is normally 20 years or more, while a raven has been known to live up to a staggering 47 years. Immaturity lasts up to five years. An immature bird is readily identified by the white plumage on the underside of the wings.

Eagles normally have more than one eyrie from which they select a nesting site, this varies from year to year. The site is chosen in the height of winter and two eggs are laid in March.

The tragedy is that very often eggs are infertile, due to the bird having eaten toxic chemicals; moreover if eggs are taken, the birds do not re-lay in that season.

Eagles are considered unwelcome visitors by various agencies, because of the popular belief that lambs are often carried off by them in their eyries. In fact, lambs rarely appear on the eagle's menu.

For centuries the Golden Eagle has been persecuted and eggs have been stolen. Burns wrote: "Of man's inhumanity to man," but, sadly, his inhumanity extends to our heritage of wildlife.

Let us hope that our Golden Eagles will not suffer the same fate as the Sea Eagles."

Mr Wood has also interested himself in falconry but he writes: "It was quite a rewarding sport but not really my cup of tea.

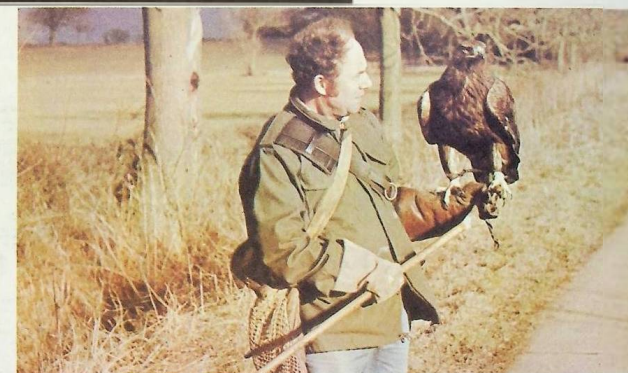
A LAND WHERE EAGLES DARE



A six-week-old Golden Eagle at Eyrie in Glen Garry with freshly-killed grouse.



ANOTHER view of the Golden Eagle whose owner lives on the flatlands of Cambridge. He has, of course, a licence to hold a Grade One Bird of Prey.



THE MAN is holding a male Golden Eagle which, when younger, was stolen from an eyrie in Sutherland. But when the thieves were traced, it was too late to return the bird to the eyrie.

Danger! Be on the lookout for squirrel

Hight-eyed and bushy-tailed; fawned upon by the public who feed and photograph it, it is, of course, the grey squirrel which now throng our public parks, gardens and woodlands. But the harsh truth about this member of the rodent family is that he's a vandal — damaging and often destroying trees by stripping off the bark from the trunk.

So an appeal by the Forestry Commission to forest and woodland owners to be on the alert for an increase in grey squirrel numbers. Young, broad-leaved trees aged from ten to 40 years — particularly beech and sycamore — are the most vulnerable, although conifers can also be affected.

Bark-stripping takes place during May, June and July and the Commission say that squirrel control should have been undertaken in and around vulnerable woods immediately before and during this period. The Commission's concern is based on the latest annual Grey Squirrel Survey carried out by foresters in Commission forests and woods.

INCREASE

The report by the Forestry Commission wildlife research branch says that although evidence of grey squirrel damage in 1982 appeared to decrease slightly, every indication is that this year could show a marked increase.

The report points out that a plentiful food supply in the winter is likely to have led to a more successful spring breeding season. Grey squirrel populations appear to occur every 8 to 12 years — the last one was in 1971.

A wildlife research officer said: "We are making every effort to warn woodland managers in advance of the need to carry out control, so that if they are on the alert effective squirrel control can be undertaken wherever there is a need."

The Commission have been undertaking a major survey of private woodlands to ascertain the extent of damage caused by grey squirrel and the control methods used. It is hoped subsequently to undertake a similar survey in Forestry Commission woodlands so that the annual squirrel questionnaire covering Commission woodlands can be more accurately related to the private woodland situation.

THE HUNTER

Mr M. B. Reany, Area Civil Engineer, South Wales Conservancy, has told "Slasher" that on a recent visit to Kenya he met Mr R. J. Prickett, who was once a Forester in North-West England. He now is "The Hunter" at Tretraps, the world-famous lodge near Nyet in the Aberdare National Park.

GOOD LUCK

Good wishes for the future of Mr Paul Callum who was the Foreman Mechanic at Hallow Repair Depot until early in May. He has now transferred on promotion to NW (E) and will be working in the Lake District.

'Ade' settles down to forest life

Meet Adewole Henry Christian Solowo-Coker — or "Ade" for short — who has good reason to look pleased with himself. After his two-year probationary period in Hereford Forest he recently had his appointment as Forester confirmed.



Ade was born of West African parents who came to Britain after the war. He was born in the Northeast and grew up on Tyneside where his late father was a general practitioner. His mother still lives in the area.

He started his forestry career at Wark Forest in January 1975, where he remained for two years. He then transferred to Dalby Forest to gain harvesting experience and left in August 1977 for a three-year OND course in forestry at the Cumbrian College of Agriculture and Forestry.

During his "middle" year he worked at Kings Forest in East Anglia, returning to the College in 1979 to complete the course successfully.

He was then appointed trainee forester by the Forestry Commission and posted to Hereford Forest for his probationary period.

ABILITY

Ade arrived at Hereford in August 1980 and his progress and performance was observed with interest. He has a cheerful, buoyant personality and soon demonstrated a marked ability to gain the confidence of his men and fellow Foresters.

He was given the task of supervising the motorway and trunk road planning for the Department of Transport and the work brought him into contact with a wide variety of people outwith the Commission.

As his experience mounted, he was given extra responsibility and has now developed into an all-round forester.

Ade, who is 27, plays rugby for the Cinderford in the forest of Dean, where he lives. He was married recently and hopes he will remain in the general area for a little longer.

But with his training over, the likelihood of a posting elsewhere looms large.

● Ade is seen here with Mrs Linda Mason, the Forest Clerk.

PRINCE ON CONSERVATION

Representatives of many organisations which can contribute to the conservation of natural resources heard a major address by the Prince of Wales when he launched the "Conservation and Development Programme for the UK" in London on June 8.

The audience included Government officials, industrialists, farmers, bankers and academics.

GREEN LIGHT FOR 'LAKE' PLAN

THE Forestry Commission have reached full agreement with the Lake District Special Planning Board over planting proposals for the Grassguards area of Dunnerdale. Site preparation and planting have begun.

Although the site lies outside the central Lakeland area in which, under an agreement reached in 1936 between the Forestry Commission and the Council for the Protection of Rural England there would be no further afforestation, Dunnerdale is an area where amenity is of high importance and must be given special consideration in any afforestation plans.

For that reason the Commission have been in discussion about its planting proposals with the special planning board since December 1981, and subsequently with the Countryside Commission who have withdrawn their objections now that the original scheme has been modified.

It is from these lengthy consultations that the present plan has emerged.

The 153 hectares of land bought by the Commission at Grassguards stretches from the River Duddon northwards for about a mile adjoining the existing Hardknott Forest along its southern edge. The plan has considered the land in three parts. The lower slopes rising from the Duddon to the bridleway from Grassguards Farm to Low Stonythwaite; the crags above the bridleway; and the basin lying beyond the crags.

On the lower slopes comprising 27 hectares, the grass and bracken land is interspersed with areas of woodland. Some of these woods have a high conservation value but have been seriously damaged by sheep over the years. The plan aims to protect them from further damage and to secure their survival by encouraging natural regeneration and planting broadleaved trees within them. These open woodlands will be managed so as to maintain their present attractive appearance.

FLOURISH

The area of crags and stony ground some 37 hectares in extent is not suitable for trees, although some holly, juniper and rowan have survived in the occasional patches of deeper soil and will be able to flourish in the absence of grazing.

In the 89 hectares basin, timber production is the main objective but the importance of recreation and amenity has been taken fully into account. Planting has been designed to harmonise with the natural landform of the area and the variety of species used reflects the conditions of the site.

Mixed broadleaves (birch, alder, gean and sycamore) will be planted facing the stream and bridleways to provide an interesting and varied route for walkers and riders along the edge of the new planting. Open spaces along the bridleway will be left to give views of rocky features and the distant hills.

A new life in the sunshine

VOLUNTARY Service Overseas are urgently renewing their appeal for skilled foresters to serve overseas, since 70 per cent of the requests from the Third World are still unfilled.

Volunteers, who were recruited in the spring, will fly out to their projects in September.

The requests fall into two broad categories: some countries want foresters with degree training in mensuration, as in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in the Pacific; countries such as Nepal and North Sudan are seeking foresters with experience to engage in practical forestry work.

The mensuration post in the Solomons requires a sound knowledge of forestry centring on the management of hardwoods. A constant review of growth and yield data as well as forward projections is also a major part of the work. The aim is not only to supervise seedling production and transplanting but also to promote community education programmes.

As Richard Bennett of VSO's agriculture desk points out: "The forestry resources of the Third World are becoming rapidly depleted. Foresters are needed to help check this depletion and assist in the re-building of this vital resource."

The address of VSO is 9 Belgrave Square, London. Tel. 01-235 5191.

PET AIMS FOR TOMORROW

SINGING star Petula Clark was in West Sussex in May to lend her support to the campaign known as "Trees for Tomorrow" aimed at restoring some of the greenery destroyed by Dutch Elm disease. The project, backed by the local council, was launched at Goodwood House, the home of the Duke of Richmond.

Petula, who stressed the importance of planting trees so that future generations could enjoy the beauty of West Sussex in years to come, has close associations with Chichester. Her father was born in the town, she herself spent a lot of her childhood there, and her son is at school there. Petula's sister works at the Festival Theatre.

Bird's eye view for disabled

WITH financial assistance to the tune of £400 from the New Forest Association, the Forestry Commission's deer observation platform at Bolderwood in the New Forest has been modified to accommodate wheelchairs, allowing disabled people to see wild deer at close quarters in the fields where they have been accustomed to graze for many years.

At the opening ceremony the Commission were honoured by the presence of Lt. General Sir Stuart Pringle, Commandant General of the Royal Marines, who is himself partially disabled following a terrorist bomb explosion.

The New Forest Association was represented by an ex-Marine, Commander Derry Seaton, and the Commission was represented by the Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, Donn Small, and Roy Hughes, Recreation and Range Officer, who was responsible for the work on the observation platform.

The Bolderwood area is popular with visitors for in addition to the deer observation platform there are way-marked forest walks, a large car park, toilet facilities and the Radnor stone commemorating a distinguished Chairman of the Forestry Commission, the Earl of Radnor.

ANSWER IS: FILL IT IN

FILL it in please — that Mammal / Bird / Damage questionnaire the Wildlife branch sends out to foresters every five years. The questionnaire involves noting the presence of most of the mammals in the forests, the damage they do, and recording the more interesting birds.

Each questionnaire relates to an individual 10 km square containing forest land. They are sent out early in the year and ideally should be completed as and when foresters observe animals and/or damage.

Your co-operation would be very much appreciated since 2000 forms have to be analysed early next year. A mammoth task for those at the Forest Research Station at Alice Holt!

WATCH THOSE SLIPS!

There is a welcome in the vales of South Wales — but there is also a threat of landslips.

So writes Mr M. B. Reaney, civil engineer, South Wales Conservancy.

In an article to "Slasher," he goes on to say that the stability of slopes which were over steepened in the Ice Age and draped with clayed superficial deposits can be easily upset.

MOVING MASS

It is not normally possible to arrest movement by conventional engineering construction methods, such as retaining walls, and the best hope lies in reducing the wetness of the moving mass. This is usually done by improving the surface and sub-surface drainage, but vegetation can provide an additional drying out effect.

Afforestation, therefore, is recognised as a possible remedial measure, particularly on the Continent.

Not any old tree will do, however. Conifers in general are unlikely to be effective as they are relatively shallow rooted, so their drying effect is superficial. What is needed is a tree which is evergreen (to act through the year), deep-rooted, quick growing and takes up a lot of moisture.

Eucalyptus could be the tree we were looking for.

Some *E. gunnii* and *E. nitida* were planted on five landslip sites in May 1982. So far, with the exception of a severe attack on sheep, both survival rate and growth are promising, but it will be some years before it can be said they are the "desicators" hoped for.

If they are a solution to the landslip problem it will be a real find, NATURALLY!

It's Pedal-Power

Pedal through the pines. That's the chance being offered to the public by the Forestry Commission with the opening of a new 10-mile long cycle trail through Achray Forest, Aberfoyle.

The Forest Cycle Trail — the first in Scotland — is for pedal cyclists only, and although some of the braes may be steep and surfaces rough in some spots, a peaceful, relaxing journey is guaranteed.

There is no charge for using the route and other attractions are the chance of seeing some wildlife — deer and capercaillie — and indulging in a spot of angling. There are three lochs along the route on which fishing is available by permit.

The route starts at the Braeval car park entrance on the A81 outside Aberfoyle and runs for 10 miles through Achray Forest — past Loch Drunkie and Loch Achray — then joining the Duke's Pass at the foot of the Trossachs.

It will be open from 10 am to 6 pm, Easter until the end of September.

NEW TRIAL FOR THE CYCLISTS

Although the main entrance is at Braeval, it is possible to join the route at Ballanton — the Forest Drive entrance — and also via Achray Farm from Brig O'Turk. On the Forest Drive, a one-way system is in operation but elsewhere the cycle route may be followed in either direction.

The Achray Forest cycle route has been opened in conjunction with a wider network of cycle routes being developed — using public roads — by Stirling District Council who have produced a leaflet setting out the routes which includes a detailed map of the Achray Forest route. This is available from the Forestry Commission campsite at Cobleland, the David Marshall Lodge and local tourist information centres. In addition, the Forest Cycle Route is clearly waymarked with signs bearing the DOT cycle motif.

Here's what it's like in a marathon

They're not so lonely now . . . these long distance runners. In fact, quite the contrary . . . as marathon running grows in popularity.

What it is like to take part in such an event is graphically described in this report for "Slasher" by one of the Commission's staff at HQ who, with two colleagues, joined a London Marathon. Bruce 3 hrs. 25 mins.; Keith 3 hrs. 50 mins.; Bill 3 hrs. 58 mins.

These were the personal bests recorded by three Edinburgh office staff in the London Marathon.

To ensure their entries were in the first 18,000 applications, an all-night vigil was staged outside Edinburgh's main post office back in the chill of November last year.

Then followed several hundred miles of pounding the roadways and pavements, through the snows, rains, gales, ice and frosts, occasionally interspersed with a little sunshine.

Saturday, April 16: thus saw HEO's Bruce Inglis (Audit), Bill McLaughlin (Finance) and Senior Cartographer, Keith Ball (Field Survey) registering at London (Ken Livingstone's own) County Hall in glorious sunshine with temperatures of 20°C, conditions not conducive for long distance running.

Fortunately, race day (Sunday, April 17) proved wet, cool and quite dismal, in fact, almost perfect for the runners.

SPECTATORS

Bill and Bruce were obliged to make their most strenuous effort of the day in actually getting to their start point on time; their pick-up bus having failed to rendezvous with them, they had to resort to London Underground and British Rail to arrive with fractions to spare.

The massed entry necessitated a segregation at two start points; Bill and Bruce (both running for Muscular Dystrophy funds) at the Red Start in Greenwich Park, which also included all the ladies' teams, first-time marathoners and a multitude of pantomime characters and transvestites, etc.

Keith (in the South London Red Cross vest) was allocated the Blue Start on Woolwich Common along with the men's teams, addicted marathon men and a motley collection of more pantomime creatures and drag artists.

After the solitude of hours of training, the presence of thousands of fellow runners and a million street spectators made the actual running comparatively easy.

As well as raising millions of £'s for extremely deserving charities, in three short years the London Marathon has become established as a (if not the) major folk participation event in world sport.

"FROM butterfly point of view, the Forestry Commission have saved from destruction three nationally valuable habitats which would otherwise have ceased to exist to posterity — thereby causing a blow to the quality of life."

This tribute comes from Mr Roger Sutton, the Recorder of the British Butterfly Conservation Society who has written to the Commission recommending an arrangement his Society has with the South West Conservancy.

His letter says: "In the local hills there are three butterfly habitats which entomologists consider worth preserving. They amount to a few acres (one is only an acre) and we have written permission to look after them and advise the Forestry Commission on maintenance."

"One is to be managed on a Christmas tree rotation which will enable the Marsh Fritillary there to survive and clearings will be maintained at the other sites to save the Duke of Burgundy, Wood White, Marsh Fritillary and the Pearl-bordered Fritillary with many others, not quite so rare."

"Christmas tree rotation means that Norway Spruces will be planted and allowed to grow a few feet and then cropped for Christmas so that in this way the field is productive but never shades out the butterflies."

Mr Sutton lists the plants that the butterflies depend on. The Duke of Burgundy caterpillars eat the leaves of the Cowslip, the Pearl-bordered Fritillary caterpillars enjoys Violet, the Wood White caterpillars the Vetches and the Marsh Fritillary caterpillars, the Devils-bit Scabious.

He goes on to say that the permission is for five years and some of the work already carried out is Sallow coppicing of rides and glades, clearing of Bramble and Hawthorn scrub, and planting out some of the butterfly plants such as Cowslip to make up for those lost by tree shading.

"At one habitat," he says, "We have even re-introduced Duke of Burgundy, whose original pupae were pulverised in preparation for tree planting but in their turn, the Forestry Commission have removed some large conifers from key areas."

Mr Sutton ends by saying that this arrangement has given a boost to the Society which by now has several agreements with responsible owners. He adds: "The Forestry Commission have supplied stakes to mark out the areas and there is an atmosphere of co-operation . . ."

EXAMPLES

Mr J. B. Teasdale, Forest Management Division, told "Slasher": "We are often conscious of the criticism levelled at us by some wildlife conservation enthusiasts and, therefore, letters of appreciation such as this from Mr Sutton are particularly encouraging."

"The examples quoted by him are of course not unique — there are many cases of co-operation with local enthusiasts and voluntary bodies but the knowledge that they are appreciated will no doubt encourage further co-operation to the benefit of wildlife conservation generally."

Mr Teasdale suggests — "Why not enlarge the picture by sending in details of other examples of co-operation and appreciation in other FC forests."

TOP: A wonderful sighting of the Marsh Fritillary; CENTRE: The Wood White is a picture of beauty; RIGHT: The Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Butterfly beauty preserved



Unions reject wage offer

The offer by the Forestry Commission to increase forest workers' pay by four per cent has been rejected by the Trade Union Side of the Forestry Commission Joint Industrial Council.

The Trade Union Side claimed that the proposal would mean that workers in State Forests would be in receipt of a basic wage lower than that which the Agricultural Wages Board stipulates as being the minimum to be paid for farm-workers.

A spokesman for the Commission agreed that while the basic rate offered (which was used for calculation of piece work rates and overtime) would be below the basic rate prescribed by the AWB for the private sector, the Commission's offer includes a fall-back guarantee which ensures that in a week when piece work was not available, no employee would fall below the AWB minimum.

Report's focus on disposals

Aim is to reduce call on public funds

The Forestry Commissioners gave further details of their approach to the disposals programme and the market response in the annual report of the Forestry Commission which was published on May 26.

After recalling that the Forestry Act of 1981 provided Forestry Ministers with wider powers to dispose of land and plantations managed by the Commission with the aim of reducing our call on public funds, the report says:

"In the period before the enactment of the new legislation we did a good deal of preliminary work in identifying suitable parcels to place on the open market once the wider powers were available, and the first were advertised in early September 1981."

The report says that plantations for disposal fall into three main categories. First there are small areas of woodland which are mainly of interest to adjoining owners. Then there are blocks of up to about 100 hectares which, when sold singly, attract private investors, or when grouped into packages are of interest to institutional purchasers. Thirdly, there are substantial blocks of a size commensurate with the preference of the institutional market whether sold outright or offered on a sale or leaseback basis.

"Our objective during the initial stage of the programme has been to test the market response to offers of plantations in these three categories in different parts of the country. The responsibility for the sale of the smaller plantations and plantable land rests with our terri-

torial Conservators. The Chief Land Agent at Headquarters is responsible for the major plantation sales and sale and leaseback transactions."

The report adds that by March 31, 1982, the total area of plantations on the market was over 4500 hectares and preparations for the sale of a further 5500 hectares were well advanced.

The initial market response was reasonably satisfactory, and it was gratifying that our properties attracted the attention of pension funds and other institutions. Contact was made with over 60 organisations of this kind in order to generate a continuing interest in our sales. Considerable progress was made with the practical aspects of sale and leaseback and we planned to launch the first such transaction during the summer of 1982.

"But because of delays in the passage of the Forestry Act, our disposals target for 1981-82 was reduced from £10 million to £7 million. In the event, sales totalled £6.9 million."

Other points from the report:

FIRES: Losses were below average because of a wet spring and summer. A total of 340 hectares of plantations was destroyed compared with over 1300 hectares in 1980-81. The work done has been in association with the Scottish Northern Fire Brigade so as to develop the use of helicopters which were put to the test for the first time in the year when helicopters were called out to three fires in the North Scotland Conservancy.

They gave valuable support in transporting men, equipment and water over difficult terrain and in observation and control work.

LAND ACQUISITION: The total area of plantable land acquired was 4467 hectares including 273 hectares already under trees. Even though this was less than the area planted during the year, it was a considerable improvement on the previous year's figures of 1752 hectares which had reflected the seventh cut that had to be made in the allocation of funds to land purchases.

The average cost of plantable land was £398 per hectare, an increase of 21 per cent compared with the average for 1980-81 of £329 per hectare.

MANPOWER REDUCTIONS: As part of the Government's policy of reducing staffing costs in the public service, we have been required to prune our salaries and wages bill by some eight per cent over the three-year period from April 1, 1979 to March 31, 1982.

The resultant manpower ceiling approved by the Civil Service Department (as it then was) was 7698. The programme of staff reductions has taken place against a background of lengthy and occasionally difficult negotiations with the trade unions, but with their co-operation the lower manpower levels have been achieved.

Cuts

Due to the combined effect of expenditure cuts in other areas, leading to lower programmes, and the continuing recession in the timber market, the number of Commission employees at March 31, 1982 was in fact 153 below the target.

MANAGEMENT OF PROPERTY: During the year, £1.4 million was spent on the construction, improvement and acquisition of buildings, compared with £800,000 the previous year.

Projects completed included the sawmill unit of a major redevelopment at Brandon Central Depot in Suffolk and new buildings to serve Glencoe and Tummel Forests in Scotland.

Work was also started in a new forest centre in Clattering-shaws Forest in southern Scotland and on a new mechanical engineering workshop at Cyrcan Forest in Wales.

Rents

The Commission's rental income for the year amounted to £1.7 million. The three-year review of house rents took place during the year and revised "fair rents" were applied in November 1981 to all the Commission's residential properties except foresters' houses.

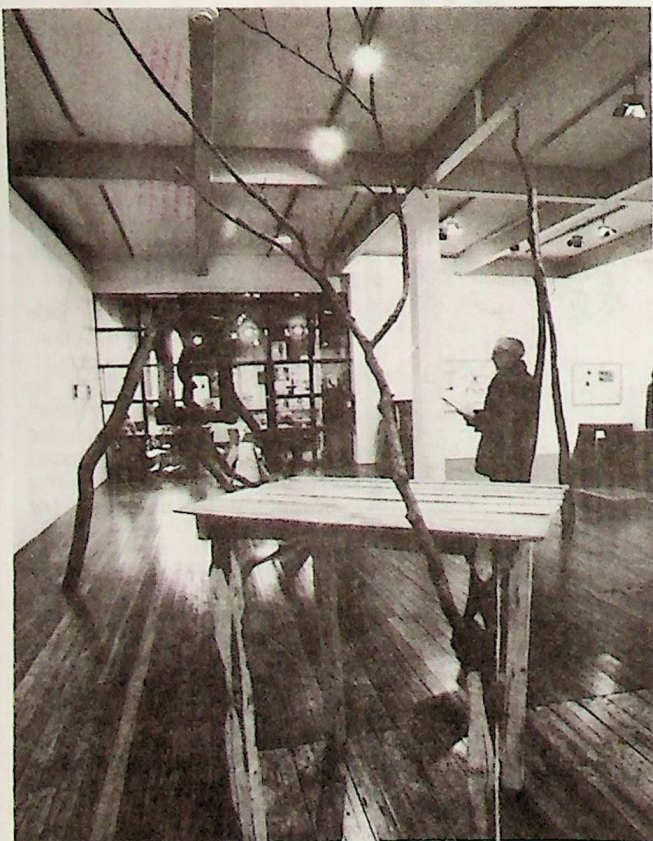
Increases in rents are phased for sitting tenants and rent rebates are offered to qualified tenants.



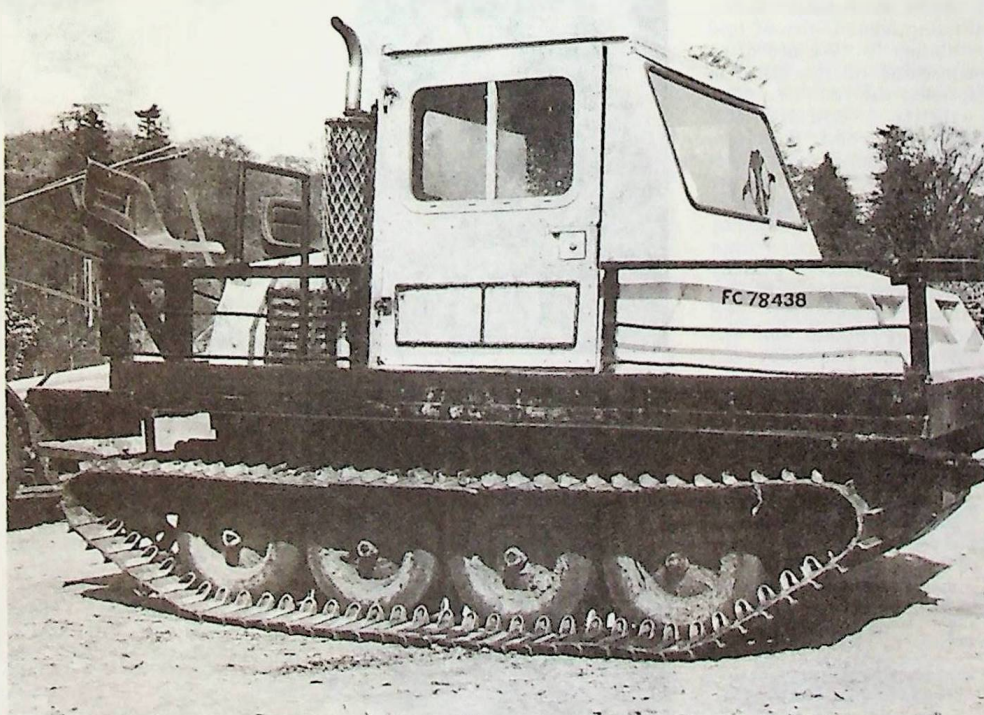
LEFT: The mountain ridge at the head of the Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys has, over the years, suffered the depredation of both the coal mining and iron and steel industries. So the Blaenau Gwent BC, Gwent CC, Welsh Development Agency and Forestry Commission are jointly involved in a 50 ha afforestation scheme for the area. The Forestry Commission has fenced the area, ploughed and ripped the ground and will plant the central area, as agents for the Borough Council, whilst two fringe areas will be fenced and planted by MSC teams sponsored by Gwent CC. The scheme has been accepted for the Forestry Grants Scheme. Children from 19 schools each planted a young broadleaf tree. On the left are children from Willowtown School. The local communities and schools will take an active part in protecting the young trees

BELOW: This is the branch that grew — into a table! It is an unusual exhibit in an unusual exhibition by a former employee of the Forestry Commission — Mr David Nash, now recognised as an "artist in wood." But it is not the trimmed, cut-to-size material from the sawmill that he uses. On the contrary, it is all unseasoned wind-blown timber whose shapes provide him with his inspiration.

At one time he worked in Grizedale Forest E (NW) under the aegis of Mr Bill Grant the head Forester and was allowed the use of wind-blown to develop his talents. He later became the "artist in residence" and some examples of his work can be seen at Grizedale. The exhibition was held in Edinburgh's Fruitmarket Gallery and is on a tour of towns in Britain.



The accent on pictures



SPECIAL DAY

A commemorative planting to mark the retirement of Mr John Davies, Conservator S (Scot) was held at Bannan Forest on June 14. Full details with pictures in the next "Slasher."

ABOVE: As most users of the Rolba Bombi cross-country vehicles will agree, the worst problem is tracks coming off in adverse conditions.

At Inver Workshop, Dunkeld, with the help and advice of our CME E(Scot), the problem has been virtually solved by extending the track frames and fitting idler sprockets to the rear. This also gives the added advantage of being able to hydraulically adjust the tracks individually, and to lock them in position when adjusted.

This modification, using standard Rolba parts, has been working for over six months on two machines without any major mishaps.



George signs off from Ledmore

One of Britain's best post-war nurseries — that's Ledmore at Bankfoot in Perthshire. And one of those responsible for earning it such an enviable reputation was George MacKenzie — Ganger at Dunkeld Forest, who has now retired.

George started work with the Forestry Commission at Newton Nursery as a part-time worker in 1935 and carried on there until war broke out in 1939. He was called up as a TA member of the Sixth Seaforth's but in 1940 he was captured, badly wounded at Dunkirk. He was demobbed in 1946.

He returned to Newton as a forest worker and on his promotion to Ganger was transferred to work under Mr A. Rose to form the new nursery at Ledmore where he was also engaged in the perfection of the Ledmore lining-out plough. In 1970, Ledmore was absorbed by amalgamation and George continued his service at Dunkeld Forest.

His retirement was marked at a small informal gathering at Dunkeld on March 24 when he was presented with various powered carpentry tools by Mr Grant, Conservator East (Scotland) on behalf of all colleagues and foresters. George is spending his retirement at Bankfoot and intends to devote his time to his two chief hobbies — carpentry and gardening.

Come on, join in and live

EARLY retirement is often longed for by people in their 50s but the harsh fact is that the sudden break from the daily grind can present problems.

Not everyone has a time-consuming hobby and for those without an active life, boredom can quickly set in.

There are about 6.5 million people in their 50s in Britain, and one of the aims of a nationwide campaign which has been launched by the Sports Council is, in their own words, "to persuade them to swap their carpet slippers for plimsolls and to quit their firesides for the hillsides."

The prime objective is to create an awareness of how involvement in physical activity, not only as a player but as a coach, official, secretary, helper in a club or manager of a youth football team, can be enjoyable and satisfying as well as contributing to health and physical well-being. A habit formed at this age can lead to a more active old age.

The campaign makes the point that not all sporting activity involves playing. What many sports clubs need, far more than yet another off-spin bowler or inside-right, is someone to make the teas, run the finances, or serve behind the bar after close of play, or even act as a referee or coach.

The Forestry Commission, in common with other industries, employs many men and women in the 50-plus age category.

Here then is their chance to keep themselves fit and when retirement comes along to make the best possible use of their leisure years.

Further details about the campaign can be obtained from the Sports Council, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London.

MAN WITH A GREAT HEAD FOR FIGURES

Alex MacKenzie, who was Mensuration Officer Scotland at the time of his retiral in 1971, died suddenly at his home in Edinburgh, at the age of 77.

He attended the Forester Training School at Beaulieu and joined the Research branch of the Forestry Commission where a substantial part of his early career was concerned with the permanent sample plots.

It was on this work that he gained his great facility for rapid calculation and estimation of tree and crop volumes. During the war he was with the Home Timber Production Department and subsequently was based in Edinburgh where, as Mensuration Officer, he dealt with a wide variety of day-to-day timber measurement problems, with the field work of the Censuses of Woodlands and other surveys.

He personally helped to establish many of the plots including the famous Bowmont series, had been involved with their subsequent remeasurements, and this particular aspect of the work always held a special place in his affections. No-one who worked with him could fail to be impressed by his ability to make rapid calculations, usually mentally, but with at best a scrap

of paper and pencil, and produce an answer which would turn out comparable with the one gained laboriously by more conventional means.

This particular talent was of great assistance at the time of the great gales of 1953 and 1968 and in the aftermath when the effects on the future volume and increment of the growing stock were being assessed. He did not hoard his knowledge, however, and many of his "rules of thumb" were published.

Many people in the Commission worked with Alex during their career and learned much of their mensuration from him. They found him a kindly and patient mentor, often amused at our stumbling attempts to get to grips with, what was to us, a very complex subject.

One of the Commission's diminishing number of "characters" has passed from our midst. All his contemporaries will cherish memories of his sense of humour and his ability to produce a few verses or an extremely apt quotation, often biblical, to suit the particular occasion.

Our sympathy goes to his widow Nancy, and to Fiona and Alasdair.

OBITUARY

FRANK FOLEY

His sudden death at the age of 53 came a great shock to his many friends and colleagues throughout the Commission. Frank died at home from a heart attack.

In a public service career which spanned more than 36 years, Frank joined the Commission's Scottish Directorate Office in Edinburgh as a CO in 1947. On his return from National Service he worked in his native Glasgow in the West Scotland Conservancy Office until 1959 when he moved north to Inverness on promotion to EO.

In 1966, on promotion to HEO Frank moved south to the Savile Row Headquarters Office where he was eventually promoted to SEO in 1972. He returned to Edinburgh in 1975 and four years later, on promotion to Principal, he became head of the Organisation and Methods branch. Latterly, he played a key role in the setting up of the Commission's new Computer branch.

Throughout his varied career Frank's astute mind, pragmatic outlook and unique sense of humour won him great respect and many friends in all spheres of the Commission. He will be greatly missed by his wife Shelagh and their sons Timothy, Simon and Anthony; their great loss will also be shared by all those who knew him.

GWILYM LLOYD

All at Coed y Brenin were shocked to hear of the sudden death of Gwilym Lloyd, of Llanfachreth, who died in Dolgellau Hospital.

Many foresters will remember him as the key figure in the North Wales ploughing team in the post-war years, operating his wide-track county tractor and Cuthbertson plough over peat bogs that were almost too wet and soft to be negotiated on foot. Gwilym endured extremes of hot and cold weather but took it all in his stride.

Those bogs are today growing fine stands of spruce and many other species ready for harvesting when the new Shotton pulp mill becomes operational.

Mr Lloyd received a Long Service Certificate on his retirement on November 26, 1981. We extend our sympathy to his brother Emrys Lloyd, also an FC employee, and all other members of the family.

JACK EATON

Forestry Commission ranger Jack Eaton — the man who designed the local fox's head forest-walk posts — of Waitcliff Bungalow, Bickley, Langdale End has died at the age of 59.

Mr Eaton, a bachelor, was noted for his knowledge of natural history and wildlife and had a gift for wood-carving and sign-writing.

He joined the Commission 34 years ago after doing military service and was a general worker in the nurseries at Broxa and Langdale, tractor driving for most of the time.

He was made a ganger in 1969, a post he held until 1971 when he became senior forest ranger. His duties were concerned with wildlife and general conservation.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Mr Eaton was involved in creating forest walks and did a lot of work on the 14-mile Blue Man walk from the Reasty Bank car park to the Cayley Arms, Allerston.

In a tribute, Mr Geoffrey Haw, Chief Forester, said: "Mr Eaton was very knowledgeable about all aspects of natural history and wildlife. He was a good artist and woodcarver and was very interested in photography."

JOSEPH PRESTON

Joe had many friends in the Commission. He started his civil service career at the age of 14 as a boy messenger with the Post Office in August 1920.

At the outbreak of war, he joined the War Office and served there until joining the Forestry Commission in December 1947 as an EO. He worked for many of his later years as an HEO in our Superannuation branch, and will be remembered by many for the advice and assistance he gave over the years, before retiring in February 1967 to Christchurch. He is survived by his widow Frances.

IAIN McNICOL

Iain McNicol, who joined the Commission at Barcaldine on leaving school in 1925 and retired as Head Forester, Fearnoch Forest in 1970, died after a long illness at the age of 73.

Many of his former FC colleagues and friends packed St Oran's Church, Connel Ferry, to hear the minister pay a moving tribute to Iain's leadership qualities and his outstanding service to the local community and to the church. He was laid to rest in the picturesque Pennyfuir Cemetery, Oban.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew him but he will be long remembered for his kindness, humour and sincerity.

DUNCAN L. MACKELLAR

We hear, from his son, of the death at the age of 79 of Duncan MacKellar who was Clerk of Works at Cairnbaan, West Scotland, for over 20 years. A well-known figure in the area, he retired in 1968 and continued to live in Lochgilphead where he was a Town Councillor until the advent of Regionalisation. Latterly failing eyesight curbed his many activities but he was still to be seen tending his garden. He was survived by his wife and son. Mrs MacKellar has since died.

JOHN MOODY

Forest Craftsman at Carron Valley Forest till his retiral in 1980, John died at the age of 64. He joined the Commission in 1955.

Chain saw event

THE world championship for loggers working with the chain saw is to be held in Finland this year. The event, from September 5-10, will be centred on the town of Mikkeli.

The short term aim of the contest is the presentation of the latest achievements in logging techniques, logging machinery, logging tools and loggers' safety equipment.

The long-term objective is to increase the appreciation of the logger's profession and to draw general attention to loggers on a national and international level.

Andrew signs off with a tree-planting

Research Head Forester Andrew Mair retired on April 22 after 36 years with the Forestry Commission. Following service with the Merchant Navy from 1940 to 1946, Andrew joined the FC in 1947 and later served with the Research Division at Newton and Tulliallan before moving to Benmore in 1955 as Research Head Forester (West Scotland), a post he held with distinction until his retirement.

As part of his duties in West Scotland Andrew managed the arboreta at Kilmun and Crarae and in this he was particularly successful. It was fitting therefore that part of his last day with the FC should be spent in Kilmun Arboretum in the company of many old friends and colleagues, ending with a surprise tree-planting ceremony. At the invitation of Dr Alan Low (Principal Silviculturist, North), he planted two golden yew trees and unveiled a plaque to mark the occasion (see picture). This was followed by a presentation outside the Kilmun District Office where approximately 60 people had gathered.

Mr David Seal (Chief Research Officer, North), thanked Andrew for his valuable service and presented him with gifts from colleagues and friends consisting of a carriage clock, fishing rod and landing net, garden tools and a cheque. Mrs Mair received a beautiful bouquet from Mrs Catherine Cooper.

Additional gifts were then presented. Research Forester Eric Crofts handed over an album of photographs in which he had inscribed the names of friends and colleagues, to remind Andrew of his days in West Scotland. Finally, Leading Research Worker Robert Good entertainingly presented Andrew with a framed cartoon and a pocket watch from past and present Research Workers.

After Andrew had expressed his thanks, the company adjourned for refreshments and to end this memorable occasion, he was asked by District Officer John MacKenzie to plant a group of heathers outside the office, using the appropriately named "Mair's Variety" of *Calluna vulgaris*.

Our good wishes for a long and happy retirement go with Andrew and Sylvia to their new home in Ely, Cambridgeshire.



Cheese and wine a la Glasgow

John A. Watson, enthusiastic new correspondent for "Slasher" in West Scotland, sent this entertaining account of the farewell party for Mr Frank Henderson and in an accompanying note, which is worth quoting, wrote: "If I've allowed a modicum of levity to creep in (it was quite a party) it's because these are the bits I remember . . ." His honesty does him credit (Ed.).

"If your image of Glasgow is par for the course you probably can't imagine the inmates of the West Scotland Conservancy office enjoying anything as sophisticated as a cheese and wine party. Let it therefore be known that on the fourth floor of Porticullis House, at the drop of a cloth cap, out comes the vino and cheddar. One of the typists has a contract for "Nuit San Jimmy" — £1.50 per barrel . . . and £1.20 back on the barrel.

Frank Henderson, for nine years A. & F.O. at Glasgow office and a sociable chap if ever there was one, hung up his calculator and Roget . . . so the distaff side hustled up some very tempting victuals and out came the red, white and rosé.

The serious business of the evening was in the capable hands of the Conservator, David Robertson, who, in making the presentation of an electric typewriter to Frank, commented on his consideration for people and general helpfulness to staff in both personal and management difficulties. Also on his willingness to take on any task and carry it through to a successful conclusion.

In reply, Frank reviewed a career in public service which included spells at the Post Office Savings Bank; HM Forces — Argyll and Lovat Scouts; Forestry Commission at Inverness and Shrewsbury; Board of Trade — (Investment Grants), and finally, at Principal Grade, in the West Scotland Conservancy Office.

Both speeches were liberally sprinkled with wit . . . lack of space and censorship laws prevent the printing of any of the stories.

Mrs Henderson didn't leave empty-handed, being presented with a handsome leather handbag.

HIGHEST PRAISE

Frank also received a book by David Daiches on "Scottish Literature" — one of his many interests — from the Chairman of the Regional Advisory Committee with the highest praise and appreciation of his period as secretary.

The evening continued its convivial way with the wine being decanted at approximately the same rate as Wimpey's pour cement. If memory serves me right, "wee Joe" the Customs and Excise doorman joined us and eventually, plonk-inspired, gave a highly professional rendering in the original German of "Call, Call Vienna Mine" . . . before throwing us out. I wonder, do they sing about Glasgow in Vienna?

Next day several of the bon viveurs of the night before suffered from headache, nausea and even remorse. It was generally agreed that the Danish Blue had been off. Our cheese and wine parties suffered a setback a few weeks ago when one of our connoisseurs noticed a news item about the European Wine-Traders' Association staging a sit-in.

Note — We have received a letter from Frank Henderson — expertly picked-out on his new typewriter (only two corrections!) — in which he comments on his "most enjoyable farewell party" and enlists the aid of the Slasher in thanking all who contributed to his presentation.

He says: "I would have liked to write individually to those who made this possible but who were not able to attend the party. Unfortunately, no record was kept of those who contributed so I have been unable to do so.

Two sign off at Carron Valley

Two stalwart members of the Carron Valley W(S) staff — Ganger Ian Ferguson and Forest Craftsman Jimmy Blair — have now retired. Their combined service totalled 70 years.

Ian started work with the Forestry Commission as a boy of 15 in 1937 at Barcaldine Forest, transferred to Carron Valley in 1962. Apart from his war service in the Royal Artillery, Ian has had 45 years continuous service at the two forests.

At an informal gathering of Ian's friends and colleagues at the Carron Bridge Hotel the Conservator, Mr David Robertson, in handing over Ian's long service certificate, paid tribute to his long and valuable service to the Commission and wished Ian and his wife Mary a long and happy retirement.

Head Forester Gordon Rae presented Ian with a suitably inscribed wrist-watch on behalf of his friends and colleagues, and Mary with a bouquet of flowers and conveyed his own personal thanks to Ian for his outstanding service to the Forestry Commission.

Ian and Mary intend to retire to "somewhere around Denny." Forestry Craftsman Jimmy Blair spent the last 25 years of his working life at the Garshelloch section of Carron Valley Forest.

RAILWAYS

Born at Rannoch Station in Perthshire, where his father worked on the railways, he moved at an early age to the Stirling area. An estate worker in his younger days, he joined the Commission in 1958 when Garshelloch was a separate forest.

Garshelloch amalgamated with Strathyre, then latterly Carron Valley and Jimmy found himself as the sole employee at Garshelloch.

A small gathering of Jimmy's colleagues assembled at the Carron Valley office and Head Forester Gordon Rae, in presenting an inscribed wrist watch, paid tribute to Jimmy and thanked him for his loyal service to the Forestry Commission.

BERTIE HANGS UP HIS CYCLE CLIPS

It was a 10-mile round trip by bike every day from his home to his job at Ringwood Forest for Bertie Lampert — that "bachelor bold" who has now bowed out after nearly 40 years' service with the Commission.

But on the day he retired after reaching his 65th birthday the Forest Craftsman hung up his cycle clips. He was collected by Head Forester Jack Davies by car for the ceremony to mark his farewell and then driven home again.

Bertie joined the Commission in 1944 at Ferndown Nursery but transferred to forestry work when the nursery closed. He became a member of the notorious "Three B's Gang" — comprising Bernard Tucker (still with the Commission), Buck Stainer (who retired in 1979) and Bertie himself. At the time of Buck Stainer's retirement the three had clocked up 105 years' service between them.

Bertie apparently is a confirmed bachelor. Although his work brought him into contact with many of the opposite sex, he resolutely decided to remain single.

At his farewell, Assistant Conservator, Nick Banister presented him with the retirement certificate and also spoke highly of the contribution Bertie had made to the work of the Commission over the years.

Friends and colleagues clubbed together to buy a portable radio for Bertie.

Another award

"SLASHER" has won another award. It's a Certificate of Merit given by the British Association of Industrial Editors for a story by Charles Greenlees of Ratagan Forest, N. Scotland on "Finns, Forests and Freedom." Former editor Gordon MacNeil will be delighted.

It's thanks for those memories

THANKS for the memory — and a symbolic gift of a carving of a squirrel — to Mr Tom Doyle, full-time official with the General and Municipal Workers' Union on the occasion of his retirement.

Squirrels, of course, are credited with astonishing powers of recollection on where they store their winter food supplies and in this "down memory lane" vein, Mr Doyle will certainly have plenty to look back on in his 10 years' association from 1973 with the Forestry Commission.

He represented his union on the Commission's Industrial and Trade Council and was also a member of the Council's sub-committee.

The carving by Mr C. J. King, head forester at the Alice Holt Research Station, was handed over at a ceremony at headquarters by Mr George Murray, Commissioner Administration and Finance and chairman of the Council.

Janet is a top girl

A 15-year-old Sheffield schoolgirl, with the apt name of Janet Bower, has won the overall prize for a project on the Forestry Commission in the nationwide BTA Study-card competition.

The competition attracted an entry of 23,175 children, with the Commission being chosen as a theme, by 1,111 of the entrants.

Janet, whose home is at Loxley Road, Sheffield, is a pupil of Wisewood School. Her entry was described as "quite outstanding . . . and the product of many hours hard work."

She is keenly interested in wildlife observation and as part of her prize she chose camera equipment and binoculars.

During the summer Janet and her parents intend to camp in the New Forest and arrangements have been made to enable her to tour the forest and meet some of the naturalists on the Commission's staff.

Janet received her prize from Mr Geoffrey Rippon, MP, chairman of Britannia Arrow Holdings, on behalf of the EP Group of companies.

THE QUEEN HONOURS FORESTERS

Mr Dallas A. Mithen, Commissioner in charge of harvesting, marketing, engineering and research at the Forestry Commission since 1971 was made a CB in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Mr Mithen was born in 1923 and educated at Maidstone Grammar School and UC of North Wales, Bangor, where he gained a BSc in forestry.

After serving with the Fleet Air Arm during the war, he joined the Forestry Commission as District Officer. He later became Deputy Surveyor, New Forest, and Conservator SE (England) before his appointment as Senior Officer, Scotland in 1971.

Mr Mithen is vice-president of the Institute of Chartered Foresters. His home is in Peebles.

Other members of the Commission honoured were: OBE — E. J. M. Davies, Conservator for South Scotland; MBE — E. G. Owen, Heo, and W. R. Start, for. manager; BEM — F. A. Cornell, Forest Craftsman, and J. Fittis, warden, Wadsworth Wood, Doncaster.

In the New Year Honours, Mr O. Jones N(Wales), was awarded the BEM.

Big turnout

There was a big turnout of friends and colleagues at the Ossian Hotel, Kincairg, to say farewell to James Scott, Head Forester of Inshriach Forest on his retirement.

His career was spent mainly in the North Conservancy where he served in Strathnairn, Farigaig, Rumster and, for the past 18 years, at Inshriach Forest.

Tributes to Jamie (as he was known) were paid by District Officer Finlay MacRae and Head Forester Alastair MacLeod.

A set of binoculars was presented by Ganger George Milton on behalf of his Inshriach colleagues. Forest Craftsman John Lyall handed over a cheque on behalf of the North Conservancy staff.