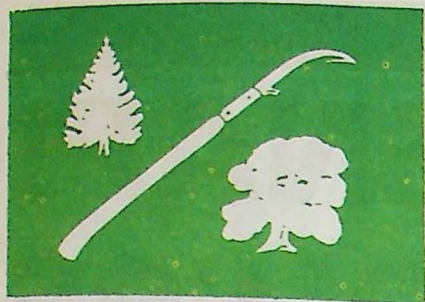




SLASHER

NEWSPAPER OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION



Dr Alan Low after his Falklands trip.

FALKLANDS TREE PROBE UNDER WAY

THERE is some prospect of successful shelterbelt and amenity tree planting in the Falkland Islands, but the potential for wood production is very limited.

That is one of the initial findings of Dr Alan Low, Principal Silviculturist at the Forestry Commission Northern Research Station, Roslin, who recently returned from a three-week study tour of the South Atlantic archipelago.

Dr Low's visit was arranged by the Overseas Development Administration, at the request of the Falkland Islands Government, and he is now preparing his detailed report.

His island-hopping trip took him to most of the small, isolated farm settlements where efforts over the past 70 years have succeeded in establishing small plots and groups of trees adjacent to houses and gardens. The biggest plantation, at Hill Cove on Western Falklands, extends to just over one hectare and the tallest tree seen by Dr Low had a height of 17m at an age of 58 years.

One of the objectives of his visit was to identify the species that have been established successfully on the windswept islands ... and even that proved a problem at times. For example, the Hill Cove plantation is recorded as being planted with Sitka spruce in 1925, but many of the trees do not show typical Sitka characteristics and efforts are being made to track down the origin of the seed used to raise the trees.

PEATY SOILS

To some extent Dr Low found similarities between the Falklands landscape and that in the north of Scotland, Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides. On the relatively poor peaty soils the vegetation consists mainly of whitegrass (*Cortaderia*) which resembles Molinia, and diddle-dee (*Empetrum rubrum*) — a low growing heather-like shrub. The climate is windy but, contrary to popular belief, rainfall is low: around Stanley the annual rainfall is just over 600 mm — comparable with the driest areas of Eastern Britain.

Travel across the rough terrain is difficult; on one journey in West Falkland Dr Low was able to cover only 25 miles in a day and the 42-mile overland trip from Stanley to Goose Green took eight hours in a Land Rover! Fortunately, most of his travel was by air, using the Falkland Government Air Service Islander and Beaver aircraft which provided excellent rapid travel between settlements and also the opportunity to carry out occasional low-level aerial surveys of areas where trees have been established.

Experience gained from Forestry Commission work in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland will assist Dr Low in formulating recommendations for tree planting in the Falklands. We hope to have more details in the next issue of "Slasher."

Seeds set up a golden harvest of £750,000

THE Forestry Commission has almost completed its biggest-ever harvest of conifer seeds — one that will reduce import bills and provide the opportunity for export sales, with the possibility of British Sitka spruce being used in Canadian forests.

Throughout Britain earlier this year conditions were almost ideal for the pollination and ripening of cones of many species. Surveys in June confirmed the potential crops and intensive planning began for the short collecting season.

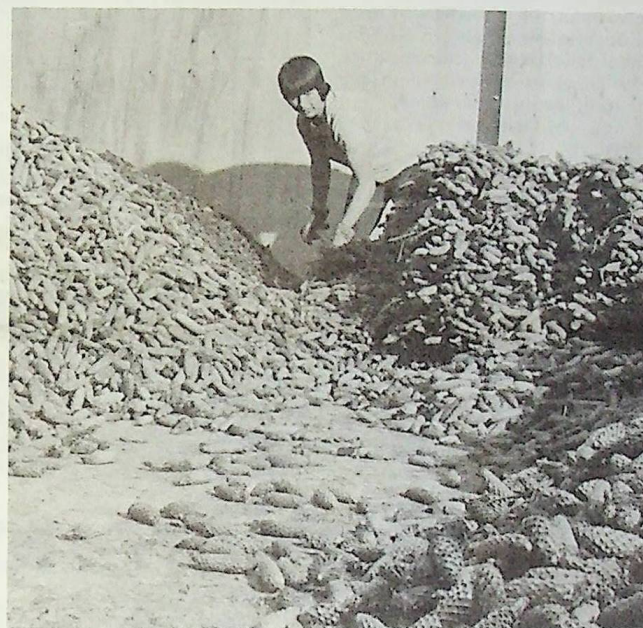
Since early September, Commission staff have been working almost around-the-clock to gather the crop of cones from registered high quality stands of trees selected by geneticists.

Particularly successful has been the crop of Sitka spruce, the species introduced from Alaska in 1831 and now the most widely planted in Great Britain. Latest estimates put the expected harvest at over 11,000 bags of cones from Commission properties, mainly in Scotland, north-west England and Wales.

ESTIMATE

These cones should produce five tons of seed, worth £750,000 at current market prices. At average viability rates this seed, which can be cold-stored for several years, will eventually produce an estimated 500 million trees. "This is the best Sitka spruce seed harvest we have ever had and Commission staff have done extremely well to secure so much in the best possible condition," said Mr Douglas Clark, Commission Seed and Plant Production Officer.

In some forests the collection of cones from selected trees was



so great that Commission storage space was insufficient and village halls, an empty advance factory and a disused hospital had to be hired to handle the exceptional quantity and ensure the cones were kept at the correct temperature and moisture content. The Commission's seed extracting plant at Alice Holt, Hampshire, will be at full stretch for several months processing the cones, and to cope with the bumper harvest additional extraction capacity has been hired in Germany.

"The international tree seed market is a very competitive one and this 1983 crop will help us launch a major export drive over the next few years as well as reduce our imports bill," said Mr Clark. The Commission has already received an order from Denmark for new crop Sitka seed and has had an enquiry from British Columbia, Canada, where there has been a poor cone harvest.

Topping the league for the heaviest harvest of Sitka cones is the Commission's West Argyll forest of Knapdale where some 2200 bags of cones were gathered — one fifth of the total Forestry Commission harvest.

Chief Forrester Mr Alan Henderson said: "We knew we were heading for a good crop but did not anticipate gathering the numbers finally harvested; that was thanks to the co-operation of all staff and relatives — wives, mothers, and children — who turned out to help keep pace with the felling of selected trees by our own staff and by contractors working on timber harvesting which included select trees."

Other conifers such as Douglas Fir and Corsican Pine have also cropped reasonably well and harvest of these, together with any available crops of broadleaved species, will boost stocks of British tree seeds.

Let's all share your news

AS the new editor of "Slasher" I have already established one problem area ... delays in forwarding details of retirements and other events. If you want every other reader kept up to date with what is happening in your area, please keep me up to date through your Correspondent. Their task is a rather thankless one but it could be made easier if they were informed in advance of noteworthy events, especially when photographs are required.

In every Conservancy there are stories I am sure you would like others to know about ... the colourful characters ... the applications of new techniques ... successes in the field of sport ... unusual wildlife. The list is endless. Let us all know what's happening in your area.

At a recent meeting of the "Slasher" consultative panel, I was asked if we could change the existing masthead, which goes right across the top of the front page, with something "more modern" ... so if you think you have a design idea that would fit into a space of about 120 mm x 130 mm, send it to me by the end of November. You can forward it to me direct or through your correspondent.

CORRESPONDENTS

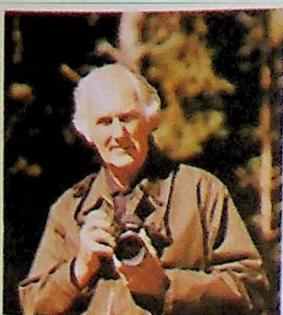
ENGLAND
NW(E) Connie Morris
NE(E) Rita Cunningham
E(E) Pauline Marshall
SW(E) Audrey Child
SE(E) John Chapman

WALES
N(W) Brina Evans
S(W) Gwyn Owen

SCOTLAND
N(S) Sheila Ferguson
E(S) Douglas Furneaux
W(S) John Watson
S(S) David Gibson.

RESEARCH
Alice Holt, Noel Blatchford
NRS John McA Smith.

TRADE UNION SIDE
Jean Thompson (HQ).



A man and the magic he conjures up with his camera — page 6-7



- And it's goodbye from all of us — page 8-9.
- All the best in sport — page 11
- Glencoe revisited — page 10
- Filming deep in a Welsh forest — page 3

LETTERS

Heart
plea

Sir,
Our quarterly magazine HOPE, which encourages chest, heart and stroke patients to get back on their feet, is always on the look-out for personal stories of recovery.

In this connection we are approaching a number of sources, whose work is interesting and well known, with the intention of trying to establish if they know of personalities working for them who have recovered from chest, heart or stroke illnesses and might be willing to tell others of their achievement.

We are wondering, therefore, if you could suggest people who might, on hearing from us, be willing to tell others of their experience.

CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT,
Editorial department,
Chest, Heart and Stroke
Association,
Tavistock House North,
Tavistock Square,
London WC1H 9JE.

Laws of
the Land

Sir,
Could I seek space to redress the balance of Mr Evans's article Laws of the Land ("Slasher", Spring '83).

From observations from within our current society — not to look too closely at Forestry and its allied professions — there is a growing tendency for Mr Evans's "Ten Laws" to become accepted beliefs.

I could quite readily believe that a philosophy amongst many industrial organisers would include them as codes of practice! Before we descend to these gloomy depths, can I suggest an "eleventh law" — "Scepticism is the certain harbinger of actuality".

M. L. PEARCE,
Research Chief Forester,
Westonbirt Arboretum,
Tetbury.

Forest
hunt

Sir,
I am trying to trace a Scottish forest known as "Jessievale".

This request follows an inquiry from a friend in Southern Africa where in a district known as New Scotland there are farms with names such as Busby, Lochiel and Jessievale, the latter believed to have been named after a Scottish forest.

Can you help confirm the existence of such a named forest in Scotland and where it is?

Mrs. E. L. COOK,
7 Queen's Road,
Chandlers Yard,
Eastleigh,
Hampshire.

Back
numbers

I would like to get as many back numbers as possible of the (now defunct) "Journal of the Forestry Commission" and wondered whether I could use the pages of the Slasher to see if anyone has a set they would be prepared to let me have. The journal was a research / practical forestry booklet which was published yearly. The last one was numbered 36 and was printed by the FC in London in 1969.

SANDY GREIG
H & M HQ.

Here's some for the album

SNAP!
YOU'RE
IN THE
PICTURE

ABOVE: The Forestry Commission has named a forest ride in the New Forest to honour the services to the forest rendered by Sir Dudley Forwood BT, who retired as Official Verderer last year.

Our photograph shows, left to right: Sir Dudley and Lady Forwood; Conservator Charles Begley; Maldwin Drummond, chairman of the New Forest Consultative Panel; Nicolas Banister, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest; Donn Small, the retired deputy surveyor, and Lord Manners, Official Verderer.

RIGHT: As North West England Conservancy Office is situated on the banks of the River Dee, it seemed natural for the Social Club to enter the raft race held on a sunny Sunday afternoon in Chester.

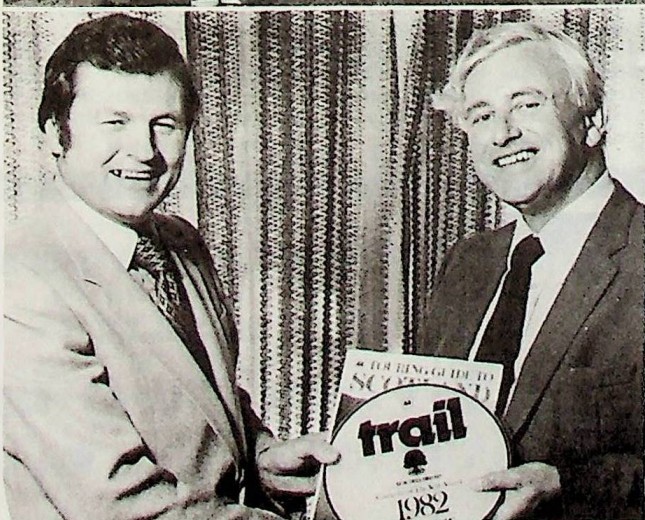
The crew — Carol Hewitt, Jane Stanley, Howard Davies, Martyn Potton and Colin Walsh — raised £127.75 for the Chester and District Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.



Conference in focus



Mr George Holmes, Director General, gave the opening address to an International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO) Conference in Edinburgh, concerned to seek new ways of applying research results in forestry practice. The conference, organised by NRS and led by Dr George Mueller, US Forest Service and leader of the IUFRO Group concerned, attracted representatives from 18 countries and all continents and included members of Oxford University international course on Forest Research who travelled "en masse" to Edinburgh. Our picture shows the delegates gathered together and it's one for the album.



LEFT: Top site and a top award for Glencoe. Mr Ian Herd, Regional manager for South Scotland of The Automobile Association, hands over the Trail — Campsite of The Year award to The Conservator West Scotland, Mr D. Y. M. Robertson. The AA also presented a copy of their Touring Guide to Scotland to Glasgow Conservancy Office.

Julian
pens a
winner

The James Cup, awarded to Julian Evans for his article in the April 1982 issue in the Quarterly Journal of Forestry entitled "Silviculture of Oak and Beech in northern France." The award was made during a visit by the Kent branch of the Royal Forestry Society to Ham Street Woods national nature reserve.

The Raj takes a final bow

A Welsh forest is to feature in a major television production about the last days of the British Raj in India. The film, due to be screened sometime next year, has been four years in the making and Head Forester, G. A. Philpot, explains how the Forestry Commission became involved.

Parts of Dyfi Forest and the Forest Centre were taken over by Granada Television to finish filming the £8,000,000, production "The Jewel in the Crown."

This is a dramatisation of Paul Scott's epic story, "The Raj Quartet," which concerns the last years of the British Raj in India from 1942-1947, and has been adapted for television by Ken Taylor.

Most of the filming had been completed in India earlier at places like Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore and the hill station of Simla. Some 18 months previously I had been round the forest with Ian Seaffie, the Production Manager. Sites closely resembling India had been chosen. Unfortunately, due to windblow, changing markets, etc. many areas had been cleared. Nevertheless, alternative sites were found.

Before the film crews and stars arrived, the builders moved in. The office blocks had to be painted different colours, flag poles had to be erected, signs showing which was the CO's office, the Padre's office, etc. Up in the forest, a

very realistic colonial bungalow appeared overnight.

Between 50 and 60 actors, actresses, production staff, technicians and extras duly arrived. We were all fascinated to see the "rain-making" machine. For those who know the Corris area will appreciate that it rains and rains very hard. The Granada people were not disappointed — it poured down but not enough, so the rain making machine was in constant use.

Army vehicles from about 1940 were produced for scenes in the Forest Centre in the film, this is the home of the Fifth Pankut Rifles. The extras playing the Indian soldiers were street traders from Lancashire. Initially their marching looked very "sloppy" but they eventually resembled soldiers.

RETAKE

The filming in the forest was somewhat more dramatic — one of the stars, Dame Peggy Ashcroft, was required to ride in a rickshaw from which she was to be thrown. Here place was taken for this by a stunt woman. After landing heavily on a rather rough forest road, before the retake, a quick visit to Machynlleth was necessary to purchase three tonnes of peat.

Although all the rickshaw rides appeared to be on the forest road, the rickshaws and passenger never moved off a low loader which travelled down the road.

Although a great deal of time was spent on location at Dyfi, the actual time on finished film will only be minutes.



Dame Peggy Ashcroft (above) takes a rickshaw ride as the "rains" come down; below: The film-makers move in for some action.



Getting in the know about that transfer

Any organisation which comprises a large number of relatively small stations spread throughout the country inevitably has a proportion of its employees working in areas which are not of their own choosing. The Forestry Commission, as one of the prime examples of this type of organisation, is not exempt from this situation. While recognising that an element of this is unavoidable, we do seek to minimise its occurrence whenever we can do so without impairing the overall efficiency of the organisation.

Some years ago, it was decided to institute a Transfer Register so that staff who wished to serve in a specific location could record their desire. Then, when any suitable vacancy arose, the register would be consulted to verify whether any member of staff had already expressed a desire to serve in the area. Transfer registers are maintained at each Conservancy office (to cater for internal moves) and at HQ (to cover inter-Conservancy moves).

There are, at present, exactly 40 names (of all disciplines) on the transfer register maintained at HQ. This could be taken to imply that 98 per cent of all staff are at least within their chosen Conservancy if not in the precise location of their choosing.

An alternative interpretation is that there is a lack of knowledge among staff that the scheme exists. If this is so, we hope that the recent memorandum (NIM 30), the addition to the staff handbook (chapter 6, para. 25) and this article will have helped to alert staff to the existence of the register. The figures could also demonstrate a misunderstanding of the purpose of the whole scheme. Putting your name on the register does not of itself commit you to any move — it merely means that your name will be considered when a suitable vacancy occurs in the recorded area of preference.

For a variety of management reasons, you may not be offered such a vacancy, and if you are in a non-mobile grade and offered a posting, it is an offer which in the prevailing circumstances you may decide to decline. Mobile grades are of course liable to be posted anywhere according to management needs, but full consideration will be given to personal views where they are known. The important thing in all of this procedure is that you will have been considered. An entry in the register will not be taken to signify that you are dissatisfied with your present post — not will it be taken to infer that you are giving less than 100 per cent effort in your existing locations.

MALDWIN THOMAS, plant operator in Newtown Roads N(W), retired on job release. After service in HM Forces, Maldwyn started work in the Commission in February 1947 with a road construction gang, and, except for a period from 1950-1954, when he was employed on extraction of timber with a TD8 tracked tractor, he remained with the Roads branch until his retirement.

Many of his colleagues attended Forest Lodge, Dyfi Forest, to wish him well in his retirement. Mr Tony Summers, Conservancy Engineer, presented Maldwyn with a long service certificate from the Commission, and an inscribed clock purchased from contributions given by his many friends in Newtown Roads.

NORTH TYNE ganger Bob Robson, who spent 35 years working for the Commission, has retired. To mark the occasion a gathering of friends, fellow workmates, family and foresters past and present gathered at the Moorcock Inn.

A SMALL gathering of close colleagues in Clocaenog Forest bid farewell to John Jones after a total span of 46 years with the Commission, broken only by army service during the war.

John's official career started in Gwydyr Forest when he was a lad of 16 in 1937, though he had previously helped out his father with some weeding of recently planted silver fir in the Trefriw area. Head Forester John spent the last 10 years in Clocaenog.

He now retires to the old family home in Llanrwst.

Survey reveals more losses in private forestry

Losses in private forestry increased during 1981 according to the results of surveys carried out by the Department of Forestry, University of Aberdeen.

The University has now published the results of its latest economic surveys of private forestry and the findings of its "Income and Expenditure, Scotland 1981" states: "When the overall results for 1981 are compared to those for 1980, there was a seven per cent increase in income per hectare and a 13 per cent increase in expenditure."

"The out-turn of timber per hectare increased slightly and the level of employment decreased by eight per cent. Despite the reduction in labour and a slight increase in the amount of timber harvested there was a 39 per cent increase in the average deficit from -£9.17 in 1980 to -£12.76 in 1981.

In 1981 the direct costs were:		
	£s per hectare	Other units
Ground Preparation	113.95	
Fencing, including materials	128.74	£2.59 per metre
Planting, including plants	204.13	£86.44 per 1000 plants
Weeding	22.55	
Beating Up, including plants	35.68	£100.97 per 1000 plants
Early cleaning	29.44	
Late cleaning	51.63	
Brashing	159.57	

In 1981 the Aggregate Costs per hectare were:		
	£s per hectare	
Ground Preparation	102.45	
Fencing	28.98	
Planting	204.35	Initial Establishment £335.78

Weeding	P+0	7.61	
	P+1	13.78	
	P+2	12.78	
	P+3	11.56	
	P+4	4.69	
Beating Up	P+1	25.22	
	P+2	14.26	
	P+3	14.19	
	P+4	5.69	Plantation Formation £427.06

Direct costs, aggregate costs and the direct cost of labour and plants tabulated over a period of years shows that costs are rising. To allow for the effects of inflation these historic costs have been linked to the 1981 commodity price index.

Amazing feller that's Douglas

Douglas Finnigan, a 39-year-old forest worker at Loch Ard in West Perthshire, came fourth in this year's national tree felling contest, held near Dunoon. It's the third time that Douglas has competed in the national competition which is limited to an entry of 40. He was unplaced in the prize list at Blair Atholl in 1980 and was fourth at Dumfries in 1982.

"This year I thought I had done better; certainly the conditions for the competition were good," he said after the contest. The competitors, from all over the UK, each had to fell a mature Sitka spruce with an average height of 100 ft. (average volume 1/2 cubic metre) with five this year going through to the second round on time and quality of work.

However, coming fourth should automatically put Douglas, who has been at Kinlochard for 15 years, into the list of 40 for next year's competition.

The prizewinners: 1 Pete Murray, self-employed, of Pitcairngreen, Perthshire, 231 points; 2 Matt Peacock, of T. Smith & Sons, Kirkoswald, Ayrshire, 264 points; 3 Michael Lamb, self-employed, Widecombe in the Moor, Devon, 256 points; 4 Douglas Finnigan, FC Kinlochard, 277 points; 5 Douglas White, self-employed, Girvan, with 347 points.

Forest fuel — it's an education

In conjunction with the TGEW Ltd., Mendip's Forestry Commission Exhibit at this year's Royal Bath and West Show at Shepton Mallet went one better than in 1982 by winning first prize in the forestry section, together with a special award. The section was judged by Lord Clinton who showed keen interest in the theme of the exhibit, "Fuel from the Forest."

Since 1979, there has been an increasing demand for wood as an alternative to oil, electricity and coal. Wider interest in wood as fuel was stimulated by Dutch Elm disease. Sales of wood-burning stoves rapidly increased in the late 1970s in response to the readily available supply of cheap wood. Now that those stocks are becoming exhausted, alternatives are needed to maintain supply.

Traditional hardwood species are under great pressure in many areas and are unlikely to be regenerated quickly enough to meet the demand. Conifer stocks are more plentiful and provided woodstove numbers in use do not exceed 200,000, are capable of maintaining a regular future supply.

SEASONED

While the theme of the exhibit was fuelwood, the emphasis was on conifer, and a working wood-burner, kindly provided by Woodwarm Ltd., helped illustrate the suitability of seasoned conifer for this purpose.

Public participation was encouraged by the design of the stand and a "guess-the-volume" competition caused much head-scratching and an amusing range of "answers." Thus a small start was made in re-shaping public attitude, but a widespread concerted effort is needed if anti-conifer prejudice is to be overcome.

If we can achieve this, considerable addition to harvesting income is attainable. At present it is estimated that up to 100,000 stoves have been installed in the UK. Assuming an average annual wood consumption of 6m³ per unit and a value at roadside of £16m³, total revenue would be £9.6 million.

A cheque for Gilbert

Mr Gilbert Jones, Forest Craftsman at Tywi Forest since 1947, retired recently on health grounds.

Mr Ian Watt, District Forest Officer at Llandovery, presented Gilbert with his long service certificate and cheque on behalf of colleagues. Gilbert is one of three brothers working for the Commission who, between them, have given over 100 years service.

This was Ian's last task before retiring himself.

Glencoe duo

TWO MEMBERS of the Glencoe forest staff, Ganger Ralph Leitch and Senior Ranger Jack Scorgie, have recently retired. Ralph had spent most of his 31 years service at Glengarry but was transferred to Glencoe in 1976 to take up the post of Campsite Warden. Jack had worked as a forest ranger in Glencoe for the past 22 years and is well known throughout the Conservancy.

A piece of history brought to life



HISTORIC Queen's House, the impressive headquarters of South East England Conservancy, was formally opened on June 30, 1983, after standing empty and forlorn for five years while major repairs and restoration were carried out.

The Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Lt. Col. Sir James Scott, turned the key in the front door and stepped inside accompanied by our Chairman Sir David Montgomery, and followed by guests and staff. At a brief ceremony in the conference room, Sir James unveiled a plaque commemorating the event and in a lively and amusing speech warmly congratulated the Forestry Commission's architect on having so

skillfully and successfully transformed the rambling old royal manor house into pristine and efficient offices while keeping the building's charm and character.

Sir David recalled that five years ago there had been "a near disaster" as consulting engineers found the building "nearly falling down" and ordered an evacuation post haste. The Commission had looked at alternative means of accommodating the Conservancy office, such as renting or constructing a new building but had found the £500,000 renovation the cheapest way out. The character of the Queen's House had been maintained, and he hoped that the work would last for the next 900 years.

Queen opens pavilion

The Forestry Commission's attractive new log cabin-style pavilion in the forestry section at the Royal Welsh Showground was opened by Her Majesty, the Queen.

The Commission had for many years felt the need for a permanent building as a focal point in the showground and a place where visitors could be entertained and discuss their forestry problems. A number of proposals had been considered over the years.

This year, however, the dream became a reality with the erection of this log cabin pavilion at the entrance to the section. This came about because of generous offers made by architects, saw-mills, timber and other product manufacturers.

The pavilion has an open central area designed to give approaching visitors a framed view of the forestry section with its landscaped picnic and play area permanently maintained by the Commission. It also has an exhibition area and reception room where visitors will be able to discuss their forestry problems. Entrance at the front is by steps and from the picnic area by ramp to provide easy access for disabled visitors.

The pavilion is built entirely of locally grown softwood timber from Brechfa, Crychan and Brycheiniog forests. Douglas fir was used for the main support beams, spruce for the walls, roof, ceiling and floor and Japanese larch for the ramp posts and rails.

ASSISTANCE

This was a joint North and South Wales Conservancy venture under the guidance of Roger Bradley, Senior Officer Wales with John Everard, Assistant Conservator H&MS(W), the project leader, and Derek Baylis, Recreation Planning Officer, North Wales, the "clerk of works."

The pavilion was built by a team of four forest craftsmen: Roger Nock, Ganger, Brechfa, the site foreman; Elwyn Davies, Forest Craftsman, Brechfa; Jim Gittos, Forest Craftsman, Irfon; Rex Jones, Forest Craftsman, Crychan. It is a credit to their ingenuity and skill, never having been involved on such a project before, to have completed the construction from laying the foundations to finished pavilion in just ten weeks.

Assistance in preparing the site and the excavation of foundations and drains was given by the Llandovery Roads Branch and men from Coed Sarnau helped with staining the roof boards and refurbishing the site in readiness for the opening.

Generous help was given by the following companies:

Messrs Hird & Brooks, Architects, Penarth; architects of the Forestry Commission's holiday cabin schemes, who because of their firm's interest in the use of wood in its natural state and in the construction of log cabin type buildings, designed the pavilion.

Western Logs; who have recently set up a plant at Port Talbot to produce profiled even-diameter logs for the building of log cabins, play area equipment, fencing and a variety of other uses, machine profiled the main timbers for the construction of the pavilion and provided some of the wood paving.

M & M Timber Co. Ltd., Kidderminster; machined the saddles for the lapped log corner joints, a fundamental feature of log cabin construction.

Teifi Timber Products, Maesycrugiau; sawed the main beams and provided some wood paving.

Hickson's Timber Products Ltd., Castleford, Yorkshire; provided the pressure treating timber preservatives and stains for the roof, windows and doors.

Compriband Ltd., Shoburyness, Essex; provided the inter-log sealer. K. C. A. Knollstone Ltd., Reading; supplied the knipping screws for securing the main timbers.

TIMBER

John Jenkins (Blinds) Ltd., Newport, Gwent; provided all galvanised fittings. Western Softwoods Sawmill, Newbridge-on-Wye; sawed and machined timber for the floor, ceiling and roof.

All these services and products were provided free or at greatly reduced rates.

The theme of the exhibition in the pavilion was "Timber in the Round." The display — with the pavilion itself as the centrepiece — explained the versatility of timber as a raw material used for paper, furniture, houses, building, fencing and many other uses including firewood.



European advice

International authorities on forestry and its related industries believe that the United Kingdom should grow more timber and manufacture more timber products.

That was the view expressed by participants on the Timber Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe's first study tour in the UK.

The 40 participants, representing 12 countries, spent five days visiting forests and timber processing centres in Perthshire, Stirlingshire, Dumfriesshire and Cumbria. The ECE Timber Committee, a principal subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, involves 34 countries in Europe and North America and the visiting group was one of the most influential to be taken on such an intensive study tour organised by the Forestry Commission at the request of the Government.

Many participants believe it is essential for major importing countries — particularly the UK — to grow more of their own timber which would also bring social, economic and employment benefits. They expressed admiration for work being carried out to restore some of the United Kingdom's forests, a problem which generally does not exist on the same scale in other European countries.

First in chain

The chainsaw contest at the Three Counties Show this year was a resounding success. The object was to produce a 4' 6" long post, 7" square exactly, from the top end of a 7' 6" long oak log, approximately 12" in diameter, leaving the butt end in the round and chamfered off. Time allowance was eight minutes with time faults added.

The event was run by Tim Sawyer and Nick Styles with logs lifted into position by Brian Oakhill of Hyett Adams operating a Holder Forwarder. The judging was carried out by Mike Houghton (HE Private Woodlands) and Roy Finch, a well known contractor in the private sector, using a well-tested system of measurements and criteria to arrive at marks out of 100.

Four employees from the Dean had a go and the crowd were amazed and delighted when a young girl called Sue stepped forward from the crowd. Although she didn't win, she demonstrated both her ability and her charms to great effect and received a warm round of applause from both competitors and crowd.

The first to enter, following a demonstration by Roy Finch, was Mark Edwards, recently recruited to the Dean and son of Charlie the Foreman. He produced a very good post which gained 74 points. For the rest of the afternoon he was full of tension as one after the other competitors failed to reach his target although the second-placed man was just one point short. After 4½ hours of non-stop competition, he finally knew he was the winner.

He was presented with his prize, a Husqvarna 133 chainsaw, fully equipped, by Mr George Clive, Chairman of the Hereford Branch of the RFS.

PRINCE AT THE VILLAGE

The Nant Gwrtheyrn Trust, formed to restore an abandoned quarry village on the coast of Llyn Peninsular, and to use the accommodation to further Welsh language and culture, asked the Prince of Wales Committee for advice and a grant.

The most difficult problem was to restore the access track, which in places had gradients greater than 1 in 2½. This track, classed as a public road, ran mainly through a small commission plantation, and the committee approached Mr Summers, Conservancy Engineer N(W), for advice in improving the access, which was totally inadequate for any traffic other than that employing four-wheel drive.

A new alignment was planned, initially outside Commission boundaries, but eventually was replanned to be within forest boundaries because of acquisition problems. The scheme was offered to the committee and the trust, together with the offer for sale of the plantation under the current disposal programme, and was gladly accepted.

The disposal was quickly processed by Mr David Williams, Principal Land Agent N(W), and work started on the road on July 4. Four days later the Prince of Wales, arriving by helicopter, inaugurated the village project, and Mr Summers and Mr Williams were presented to him. After discussing their contributions to the restoration, they followed the Prince's party to the village centre where, after thanking all participants in a speech in both the Welsh and English languages, the Prince left by helicopter.

OBITUARIES

RAY PALLET . . .

. . . who had retired as District Forest Officer at Carmarthen in March 1962, died on September 16, aged 82. Ray, whose FC personal file number was P1, joined the commission as a forest worker at Salcey Forest in East England in 1921. After attending the Dean Forester Training School in 1924-26 he transferred to South Wales, serving at Tintern before moving to Tair Onen where he was involved in planning the layout of the nursery there; he became Head Forester in charge of the nursery in 1941. He was promoted to District Officer in 1944 serving again at Tintern and at Monmouth before moving to Director Wales Office at Aberystwyth in 1950 to become the Nurseries Officer for Wales. He returned to South Wales in 1954 to take charge of Brecon District and moved to Carmarthen in 1957.

CHARLES BARRINGTON . .

. . . Former Conservator SE(E), died in August at his home in Findon, near Worthing, Sussex. He read for a BA degree at Cambridge and was one of the few forest officers who also held a qualification as a chartered surveyor. He was Private Woodlands Officer in NW(E) around 1948 and was subsequently appointed Conservator. After a spell in HQ at Savile Row he became Conservator SE(E) until his retirement.

TED GARDNER . . .

. . . died aged 62. He carried a debilitating illness with characteristic fortitude. Always cheerful, his willingness to help others was the hallmark which won him friendship and great respect throughout his career. Following naval service, Ted joined the Commission working in Forest and Training Branch in N(W), Training Branch in SE(E) and finally as Survey Forester with Field Surveys Branch in S(W).

GRAHAM FLETCHER . . .

. . . low loader driver at Heathhall Workshops, South Scotland, died suddenly at the age of 54. Graham had over 32 years service with the Commission in Kielder and South Scotland.

REG LAWES . . .

. . . Eighty one is a good age, and there is something rare and pleasing these days about a long life spent in the same village working on the land, even in retirement. Reg was a Forester at Bere, having started with the Crown Office of Woods in 1916, and he died in July having spent his working life caring for his broadleaved woods, and his retirement tending his immaculate garden.

ALEC CLARK . . .

. . . at the age of 84. Alec started work with the Commission in (SS) as a mobile mechanic in 1949, and was made foreman mechanic in 1954, where he remained until he retired in 1963. Sympathy is extended to his widow.

TOM ANDERSON . . .

. . . died at the age of 92. He joined the Commission in 1924 as a forester having previously worked in the Office of Woods from 1919. He was A/DO in 1940 and was seconded to the Ministry of Supply in 1941, returning to the FC in 1946 and retired on medical grounds.

TED ASPINALL . . .

. . . on August 11, after a short illness. Aged 58, Ted had spent his entire service of 35 years, in North West England, and had close associations with Delamere where he was the Nursery Forester.

MINISTER DEFENDS GLEN AFFRIC SALE

THE Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr George Younger, has defended the Forestry Commission decision to sell back into private ownership 11,696 hectares of Glen Affric in West Inverness-shire.

In 1951, the Forestry Commission acquired 28,743 ha and some 7400 ha are now under plantation. The previous owner retained sporting and grazing rights and recently his successors asked to re-purchase, under the "offer-back" procedure, certain parts of the estate.

The Commission has agreed to the sale of 11,356 ha of hill land which is unplanted or not suitable for planting, plus 342 ha of young spruce and pine plantations. The native Caledonian Pine Woods have been excluded from any sale and will continue to be managed and conserved by the Commission.

At the Third World Wilderness Congress in Inverness in October, Mr Younger was presented with a petition, carrying about 500 signatures, opposing the sale and calling for the area to be preserved as a National Wilderness area or future National Park.

In a later radio interview Mr Younger said: "Fortunately I do not

think the sale proposal has anything to do with conservation as such. The guidelines we gave to the Commission for any sale made it quite clear that we expected them to take account of conservation matters and the proposal to sell some grounds on Glen Affric is in line with Government guidelines."

The Congress attracted almost 400 conservationists from around the world and the chairman was Finlay MacRae (FC DOI Dingwall) a man who is well known for his love of wilderness areas worldwide.

In his opening address, he said: "The erosion of ecosystems has mostly been at the hand of man. I want to get people back in the glens; I

don't care where they come from as long as they settle happily and stay there."

Alan Grainger, Commonwealth Forestry Institute, Oxford, warned that with the vast amounts of wood being cut for fuel it was time forestry was accorded a proper status at international level.

"The United Kingdom should have a programme of afforestation to include deforested uplands and lowlands. Developed nations have still to come to terms with the role and value of the forest; they are an important part of our lives and we should not turn our backs on our forest heritage but must consider our ability to bequeath these forests as part of civilised society."



Shotton site under way

SITE works at the new paper mill at Shotton, North Wales, started in mid-August and foundation construction is now well under way. The United Paper Mills plant is scheduled to come on stream in mid-1985 and will consume some 450,000 tonnes of pulpwood and wood residue a year.

Our picture was taken during the signing of the Commission's long-term contract to supply 50-60 per cent of the mill's pulpwood requirement, when Director General George Holmes said: "The Commission has an important part to play in creating the right climate for such investments by long term contracts."

"This development, together with existing plants and markets for small roundwood in Wales, will take up the available supply for as far as Wales and Merseyside are concerned."

There is an active interest in new timber utilisation projects in Scotland, particularly in the field of Orientated Strand Board, where developments are expected to be announced soon.

Picture shows: DG George Holmes (left) and Niilo Hakkarainen (Managing Director, United Paper Mills), sign the contract, watched by (l to r) Kevin Lyden (Secretary Shotton Paper Company); Jukka Martinen (Managing Director, Shotton Paper Company); Gwynn Francis (Director H&M FC); and Ingrid Haggblom (Dep. Managing Director, U.P.M.).

A Royal honour for Jackie Fettis

ON September 13, the Forestry Commission was honoured to welcome to Wadworth Wood, Don forest, the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, Mr Gerard Young. He came as Her Majesty The Queen's representative to present the British Empire Medal to Mr Jack Fettis, voluntary warden of Wadworth.

At the presentation, amid pine and beech, attended by councillors, relatives, colleagues and friends, Conservator North East England Tony Spencer spoke of Jackie's unstinting service to the Forestry Commission since the early 1950s when he had first arrived from his native County Durham to work in the South Yorkshire coalfields.

In an area like Wadworth Wood where early establishment is hindered by fires, tipping and vandalism, Mr Fettis has spent many thousands of hours patrolling the wood and the now established plantations surrounding the presentation area stand as a record of his service to the Forestry Commission.

It's goodbye from them

HEAD Forester Tony Horn left the Commission at the end of March after 31 years' service. A former Lynford Hall student, Tony spent nine years in various capacities with Research Division. Following six years in the Chilterns, Tony became Private Woodlands Head Forester in Suffolk District where he spent 13 (not unlucky) years. He left to take a post in private forestry in the same area. The occasion was marked by the presentation of a camera and a book on wildlife from his friends and colleagues.

FOLLOWING the amalgamation of Lavenham and Walden Forests, Mrs Heidi Few left the Forestry Commission having served for 19 years as Forest Clerk at Walden. She had played a quiet but essential part in the management of this Essex Forest and was presented with a rose bowl by the staff.

FOREST Craftswoman, Miss Margaret Wood, retired from Clatteringshaws Forest after 27 years service. Ganger, Mr Valery (Joe) Vasilieff, presented her with a water colour painting of a local scene from all the staff and her friends at Clatteringshaws Forest.

BILL MCGIVERN retired after 36 years of distinguished service. Bill started his career with the Forestry Commission on September 14, 1947, with employment as a Forest Worker before attending the Glentress school. He later saw service at Ae and Edgarhope before returning to Glentress in 1966 as Head Forester. The latter part of his career has been spent at the Bennan where, as Chief Forester, he demonstrated his great skills in forest management. His friends and colleagues in wishing him a

happy retirement presented a cheque with which he intends to purchase a good set of binoculars.

JOCK WHITE retired recently from the Commission after 17 years service. Jock joined the Commission in 1966 as a forest worker at Laurieston Forest which is now named Fleet. In 1969 he became a mobile crawler tractor operator where he remained until ill-health forced him to retire. Mr Jimmy Paterson, Ploughing Manager, wished him all the best in his retirement and presented Jock with a cheque as a tribute from his many friends.

AT a lunch at Cranbrook, Kent, prior to the retirement of Les Howe, Private Woodlands Head Forester, Ian Skinner, Assistant Conservator SE(E) paid tribute to Les's service to the Commission. He presented a cheque, towards photographic equipment, on behalf of his colleagues. Mrs Howe also received a bouquet of flowers in honour of the occasion.

GRAHAM SEMPLE, Principal Forest Officer at Kielder, has retired after nearly 36 years service. His early years with the Commission were spent mainly in SW(E) but it was his later service at Silviculturist (S), and later Silviculturist (N) at the newly established NRS, which made many friends for him in research. Some of these old friends were present at a dinner held to mark his retirement at The Percy Arms Hotel, Otterburn. Since 1975, Graham had been serving in NE(E) and for the past five years at Kielder. During this time the mammoth Kielder Water Scheme had come to fruition and harvesting at Kielder had swung completely from tree length to shortwood working.

See pages 8/9

Unions to set out Forestry views

THE TUC is to draw up a detailed statement on forestry issues with unions concerned for submission to the Government.

This follows a meeting on October 18, between a TUC delegation, representing all workers employed by the Forestry Commission, and Ministers to discuss the effects of sales of forestry assets under the 1981 Forestry Act.

The delegation was headed by Mr Alastair Graham, General Secretary of the CPSE and a member of the TUC's Economic Committee. The meeting was chaired by Lord Gray, Minister of State at the Scottish Office, with Lord Belstead representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Mr Stradling Thomas MP representing the Welsh Office.

During the meeting TUC representatives expressed concern about a number of issues, including the implications of the Forestry Act for rural employment; the development of the wood processing industries; and the future of the Forestry Commission itself.

After the meeting, Mr Graham said Ministers had not satisfactorily dealt with the concerns raised by the trade union side. A TUC statement said: "The Minister of State at the Scottish Office said he could not give the trade unions the assurance they were seeking but would carefully consider and take account of all the points raised by them."

"In addition Ministers indicated that they were reasonably optimistic about the future prospects for forestry, both public and private sector. They gave an assurance that Forestry Commission land has not and will not be sold at knockdown prices and that the Forestry Commission's role as the principal body in the Forestry industry would continue into the next century. The TUC delegation was also pleased to learn that the Government continues to support forestry expansion and that their broad intention is that there should be 30,000 hectares of new forestry planting annually."

'I PREFER MY TROPHIES ON FILM'



ABOVE — Peregrine falcon female looking after her ravenous family. RIGHT — And a buzzard does the same for its family; FAR RIGHT — young badgers emerging at dusk.

THE SIMPLE MAJESTY OF AN OLD SCOTS PINE IS BEAUTY ITSELF.

Mister Magic with a camera

"IT'S often easier to shoot them with a gun than it is to get them with a camera... but I prefer my trophies on film."

These are the words of forester / photographer Don MacCaskill, who retired after 25 years' service with the Forestry Commission.

In the rapidly expanding world of wildlife photography, Don MacCaskill is a name that is steadily becoming more recognizable to more authors, publishers and film-makers. It is his vast collection to illustrate and

at the same time, the written and photographic work of Don and his wife Bridget featuring in numerous publications.

At the age of 64, Don is the epitome of a man who has spent all his working life in the forests... lean, tough and weathered. But that is a far cry from the callow young man who started work in Argyll's Inver-

Forest in 1937. Born in the village of Kilmartin, Don suffered many illnesses throughout childhood with rheumatic fever.

As a "nipper" Don started in Inverlervie Forest and after a spell at Knapdale he was sent to Benmore Forest School in 1939. When war broke out and his medical background prohibited active service, he was attached to the Forestry Commission timber supply department and remained there until 1945. Then it was on to the Forest of Dean for further training and after a nine-year spell back in Argyll at Ardgartan, he was sent to Lennax Forest, a unit rather unique in his opinion. "At times it was rather surreal sitting in a hilltop forest with the lights of Glasgow and the sprawling, surrounding industrial area spread out below."

Since then, Don has been filling the frame with every possible subject to be seen in and around the forest. Although some of his most spectacular photographs are of birds of prey, he is adamant: "I am not a bird photographer; all flora, fauna, landscapes and even mist and rain make excellent subjects."

He admits that some of his best work has been pure chance... like the day he came across a wildcat when out in a Commission

van and as usual had his camera at hand. But for much of his photography the keynote is planning and patience. Like the nights waiting with infra-red equipment to get "just the right" photographs of owls; the frustration of building a hide near an eagle eyrie only to find the eggs later being stolen and the parent deserting the area.

PROGRAMMES

Don, latterly Chief Forester at Strathgry, is adamant that the afforestation of hillsides has secured the future of much of our wildlife and not the opposite as is claimed by some. "The forests are the real reservoirs of wildlife in this country, providing habitat which has cyclical changes bringing along changes in the whole ecology. If it were not for our forests we would have many fewer species of birds and mammals."

He also feels there is a need for a broader-based training for future foresters; that too little attention is paid to the value of the sylviculturist who perhaps has a clearer picture of the planning programme that will, in the long term, provide a more balanced forest complex. And he fears that some of Britain's established forests are being cleared earlier than they should be.

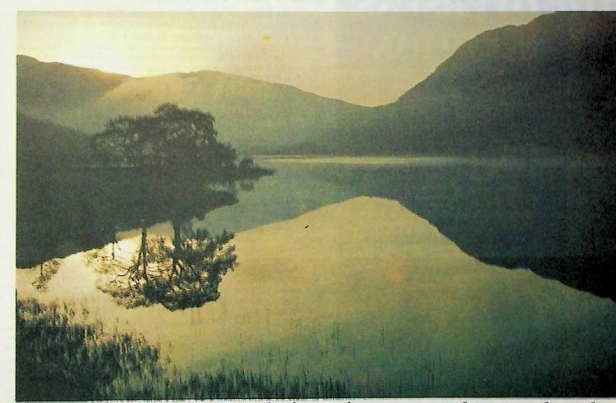
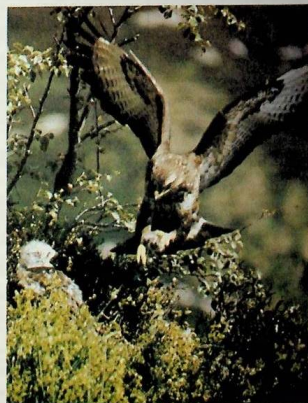
In the past few years, Don and Bridget have become involved in a new time-consuming study — that of wild otters — and just a short time after his retirement part of the couple set off to the west coast to continue their involvement and filming of a small group of otters in a west coast loch. And over the winter months when he's not out and about with his cameras or in his darkroom processing his films Don MacCaskill will be turning his attention to a new interest... teaching himself to draw and paint.



ABOVE: An otter takes a breather before his next adventure.



LEFT: A family of Forest Red Deer seen bemused by Don's presence.



Dawn brings in a new day on lovely Loch Lubnaig — and when did it ever look as beautiful.

DON MacCASKILL ON A FOREST WALKABOUT

RETIREMENTS



Southern Newspapers photo.

A matter for consideration

PENSIONS AND THE OVERSEAS CONNECTION

The Pensions Department of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) wishes to identify those officers who, having served overseas as members of the Colonial Service or HM Overseas Civil Service on permanent and pensionable terms with British Colonial Governments, subsequently transferred to the UK Civil or Public Service and who, when they retire, will be entitled to *separate* overseas service pensions.

The officers concerned are those who were appointed on permanent and pensionable terms by:

- The Secretary of State for the Colonies or the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- The Department for Technical Co-operation
- The Ministry of Overseas Development
- The Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administrations.

Many officers who served overseas *on secondment* from the Home Civil Service, do not qualify for separate pensions in respect of such service which may however count towards their Home Civil/Public Service pensions.

Any officer who has served overseas and who is not already in receipt of a pension or gratuity in respect of that service and who believes that he or she may qualify for an overseas service pension, should write to Pensions Department (Ref. PD/ROR) Overseas Development Administration, Room AH 420, Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8EA, giving the following information:

Full name and address; date of birth; present department; details of service; (a) dates of Home Service and departments, (b) dates of Overseas Service and territories; probable retirement date, if known; any other relevant information including Colonial Office, Crown Agents, etc., reference numbers.

Inquiries should be referred to Mr J. MacLeod, Room AH 425, Abercrombie House. Tel. East Kilbride (03552) 41199, Ext. 3415, GTN 2643 3415.

Important changes in the Forestry Commission's retirement policy have been set in train recently following the proposal by the management structure review group to introduce a new, three-tier structure based on about 70 forest districts.

This means, among other things, that staff numbers in the forest and forest officer classes are to be cut by some 140 in the period up to December 31 next year.

To achieve the reduction it was decided to lower the retirement age for foresters and forest officers to 60 and the aim is to phase in the new policy so that it becomes fully effective by December 1985.

It will work like this:—

Year of Birth	To Retire By
FOIs and Foresters	
1918	31.12.83
1919	31.3.84
1920	30.6.84
1921	30.9.84
1922	31.12.84
1923	30.4.85
1924	31.8.85
1925	31.12.85
PFOs	
1922	31.12.83
1924	at 60th birthday

But since even this will not achieve the necessary cuts in staff by December 1984, it was also decided to introduce a special voluntary premature retirement scheme for up to a maximum of 40 officers.

Those retiring under VPR will have their reckonable service enhanced to what they could have attained by the age of 60 and have all superannuation benefits paid with effect from their last day of service.

Forty volunteers — and it is stressed that there is absolutely no compulsion involved in the scheme — have been selected from those who applied by the closing date of August 1.

CONSULTATIONS

Mr George Murray, Commissioner for Administration and Finance, in a report aimed at putting all the staff in the picture on developments over the management structure review, says: "I should like to record management's appreciation of the co-operation of the trade union sides in the hectic and sometimes difficult consultations which have taken place over the past few months."

"I hope that our continuing consultations will enable us to resolve the outstanding issues in a sensible way that will secure the inter-related objectives of the future efficiency of the Forestry Commission and the long-term interests of the staff."

Ron's view of the forest

Tradition and the New Forest are almost synonymous and one very pleasant custom is the large and heart-warming crowd that gathers whenever an old Forest hand departs into well-earned retirement.

Ron Watkinson came to the New Forest in 1969 from Bucklebury a Head Forester, and retired as Chief Forester having spent all his service in South East England — apart from his sojourn at the Dean Forester Training School.

Conservator Charles Begley did the honours during a crowded hour at the Happy Cheese Inn when Ron and his wife were almost submerged.

A painting of Ron's favourite forest view specially commissioned from Foreman Peter Buss was presented to him together with a cheque. Ganger Maurice Wollaston then stepped forward to hand over an elegant thumb stick made with roe buck horn and forest clerk Anne Stower presented Mrs Watkinson with a bouquet.

• Our photograph shows, left to right — Anne Stower, Maurice Wollaston, Derek Howard, Ron and Rose Watkinson, Charles Begley and Alan Ray.

ERIC LEWIS, Area Civil Engineer at Bellingham, retired on October 31. Eric joined the Civil Service in 1948 working as a Civil Engineer with the Ministry of Works from 1948-55 from where he transferred to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. He served at Windscale Calder and Headquarters Risley until he transferred to the Commission in 1969 being appointed to the post of Research Engineer at HQ Basingstoke. His final move took him to Bellingham as Area Civil Engineer in 1974 where he served until his retirement.

FORESTER John Cooper has retired after 33 years' service, all in South East Conservancy. An alumnus of the Dean School, John was on the staff of Queen Elizabeth Forest for eleven years, and earned particular praise for his work associated with the Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

JACK WILSON, Head Forester, Stonleigh, retired on the 1 November 1983, after 37 years service with the Forestry Commission.

Jack started his career with the Commission in 1941 as a Forest Apprentice and after a five year spell in the armed forces (1942-47) served at various forests in the NW(Eng) Conservancy. In recent years he became more involved in shows unit work and also became fully involved in the British Forest Heritage Trust project as Assistant Curator.

ALEC'S IN THE PICTURE

Chief Forester Alec Lockhart retired after 38 years with the Commission.

Following service with the Royal Air Force as a pilot, Alec attended the forester training school in the New Forest and at Gwydyr, North Wales. He served for a time at Culbin before moving to Strontian.

He was transferred to Shin Forest where he was

Wildlife control was his speciality

John (Johnnie) MacArthur, SRI at Achaglachgach Forest has retired. His service started in 1932 and in 1938 the "boys" in the squad were "invited" to find other work.

Consequently he started work at Ederline Estate at the south end of Loch Awe as gamekeeper, until he was called up with the militia in 1939 at the outbreak of the Second World War.

He saw action with the Desert Rats in North Africa, serving with the Royal Artillery. Taken prisoner in 1942, he survived the rigours of the forced labour camps in Silesia. At the end of the war he returned to the commission at Achaglachgach, until he had to take over his father's farm at Kilberry in 1952. Nine months later, he rejoined the commission and soon afterwards was regraded as Ranger, in which capacity he served until his retirement.

Being one of the old brigade Johnnie will leave a gap that will be difficult to fill and the Commission will be the poorer with the retirement of this loyal servant, who was presented with a set of carbon shafted golf "woods" and a fishing rod and reel.

We wish him and his wife, Jessie, a long and happy retirement and although he has "formally" retired, he can expect to find his friends at the door looking for some advice on different aspects of wildlife.

Mr Peachey — or is it Mr Mayor?

Fred Peachey retired as a Ganger at Micheldever Forest in 1975 . . . now he is Mayor of the city of Winchester.

During his Commission service, Fred was active on behalf of his fellow workers through the union movement. Indeed, he was responsible for forming the NUAAW branch at Micheldever just after the war and became a national representative.

This aspect of Fred's background was recalled at the Mayor-making ceremony in the historic Guildhall when he was described as a fearless man in pursuit of helping his fellow-men . . . a man of great principles and belief in what was right.

During the Second World War Fred served with the Eighth Army in the King's Own Light Infantry and rose to the rank of colour sergeant.

The new Mayoress, Rosalie, spent her life in teaching, becoming a head mistress and receiving an advanced diploma in education.

Between them, Fred and Rosalie can be expected to be active and benevolent leaders of the city council and we wish them every success.

instrumental in developing one of the Commission's largest forests over a period of 17 years. In 1978 he transferred to the newly amalgamated forest of Eden.

At a reception held in the Lomond Hotel, Freuchie, Mr Grant, Conservator E(S) presented Alec with an SLR camera, complete with various lens, donated by friends in the North and East Conservancies.



Researcher who made his mark

Many friends said farewell to Research Chief Forester Jim Thomson at a luncheon at Bush House when he retired after a long career in which he made his mark in the Research Division.

After joining the Forestry Commission as a forest worker in May 1939, he began a research career in the Sample Plot section in January 1946, and in this role travelled all over Britain.

Little did he realise when he had a bad fall from a tree he was measuring that it would change his life. While convalescing from his injuries, far away from home, he was helped by Florence, whom he later married.

They set up home at Benmore, where he was in charge of the West Scotland area for Silviculture (North) and where he made an important contribution to the Kilmun Arboretum, among other duties.

In 1955 he moved to Newton, where he further established his reputation, not only as an expert on heathland afforestation, but also as someone to whom one could turn for good advice and as a trainer of newcomers to research in exacting detail.

He was promoted to Chief Forester in 1970 and moved to the Northern Research Station, where he was responsible for supervising all silvicultural research between Deeside and the English border. In later years, he specialised in herbicide research, his extensive knowledge of other topics made him an invaluable adviser.

Thanking Jim for his many years of good work, Mr David Seal (Chief Research Officer — North) said that he would be very hard to replace.

Jim and Florence were presented with suitcases and Jim was given a golf bag for his favourite sport (he has the lowest handicap at NRS) and Florence a bouquet of flowers.

On behalf of the Research Foresters, Ted Baldwin produced a 5-page speech of good wishes, but kindly agreed to paraphrase it since Jim and Florence had one final duty: this was for each to plant a Dawn Redwood in the grounds of the Northern Research Station (picture above).

IAN'S VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION

Mr Ian S. Watt, District Forest Officer at Llandovery for the past 13 years, retired after 35 years service with the Commission.

After war service in the Royal Air Force Ian graduated in forestry at Aberdeen University and joined the Commission there in 1948. He then served as District Forest Officer at Perth and Acquisition Officer at Edinburgh. He later returned to Perth for 15 years before transferring to Llandovery in 1970.

Ian has recently become secretary of the West Wales branch of the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. He is also interested in Welsh history and is at present busily engaged in the campaign to raise money in this the Year of the Castles in Wales for the restoration of the Dynevor Castle.

He was awarded the MBE in 1982 for his services to forestry and conservation.

Ian has been succeeded as District Officer for the Llandovery Forest District by Angus Maxwell, who had been Chief Forester in charge of Crychan Forest for the past 12 years.

CHARMER DONN

Those who know Donn Small will not be surprised that he wanted no ceremony to attend his leaving the post that for twelve years has made his name synonymous with the New Forest.

During his stewardship, the Forestry Commission successfully completed in the New Forest what is probably the biggest conservation exercise ever undertaken in this country, and public recognition of its importance came with the award of the OBE to Donn in 1977 and the visit to the Forest of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1979.

Yet it was not as Deputy Surveyor but as a much valued and loved colleague that Donn Small was lately entertained to a buffet lunch at the restored Queen's House by staff of South East England Conservancy and was presented with a cheque by Conservator Charles Begley, who paid a warm tribute to Donn's work for the New Forest. In his reply, Donn — in typical fashion — gave much of the credit to the willing support he had received from his colleagues.

There are many both inside and outside the Commission who will miss Donn's infectious enthusiasm and charm.

In the Queen Mother's Birthday Awards which were set up to mark the 80th birthday of Her Majesty, who is Patron of the Keep Britain Tidy Group, Donn was awarded a Special Mention Certificate.

These royal awards are being given for outstanding effort in promoting improvement of the environment, including litter abatement. Donn regards it as recognition of the devoted efforts of the whole team which arranges for the removal of the 400 tons of rubbish from the New Forest every year, in particular Forestry Commission staff Rita Ingram, Albert Nash, Tony Ingram and John Ealing.

Honour for a driver

Bill Smith, a tractor driver (H&M) on Thetford, who assist in running industrial first-aid training courses in the district, and is area superintendent of the Breckland St John Ambulance, have been invested as an Officer of the Venerable Order of St John in which he had previously been a Serving Brother.

Bill has been a member of St John for 30 years and his investiture was carried out in London by the Lord Prior, Sir Maurice Dorman.

Award from a 'trespasser'

The Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire had to get special permission from his counterpart in Leicestershire to "trespass" 200 yards to present Frank Cornell with the British Empire Medal, awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Frank lives in Lincolnshire but the site for the presentation was the Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue which Frank has tended for the past ten years . . . just inside the Leicestershire border!

Pastures new

A wee valedictor nosh-up was held in the West Scotland Conservancy Office to commiserate with Conservator David Robertson on having to leave "the dear green place" (honestly — that's what Glasgow means) for pastures new. He is bound for Aberystwyth to take over the post of Director Wales. Every cloud has a silver lining — David's mother-in-law lives in Aberystwyth.

Goodbye two

A GROUP of friends and colleagues gathered in the canteen at Alice Holt Lodge to mark the retirement of "Bob" Waters and Roger Twallin.

Bob was presented with a carriage clock by Carolyn Bellet on behalf of the Census staff and with a camera by Mr A. J. Grayson (Director R&D), bought with the donations from staff throughout the Commission. Bob's long service dates back to 1937.

Top notch

FOREST Craftsman Wilson Lloyd retired after 47 years service at Gwydyr, which was broken by a period of four years as a Bevin boy at Llay Main Colliery, Wrexham. Wilson is noted for his meticulous standards of work — only the best was good enough. Forest Officer Graham Mayhead and Chief Forester Bill Taylor visited Wilson at his home to present him with his Long Service Certificate and a cheque contributed to by all Gwydyr staff.

48 years

LES HOWARD, Leading Ganger at Tair Onen, has retired after 48 years service.

Les started in 1935 in his native Suffolk. After war service in the army in North Africa, Italy and the Western Front he returned to his home forest.

Then, in 1955, he was transferred to Tair Onen Nursery in South Glamorgan as Ganger. With the closure of the nursery in 1972 and the amalgamation of four units into Tair Onen Forest, he became the Senior Ganger, a post he served well until ill health forced his retirement only a couple of years short of his half century.



Sydney Farquhar, Senior Ranger I, has retired after 25 years service in ranger duties at Forest of Deer. Sydney had always shown a great interest in all kinds of wildlife and old habits die hard . . . it's said that he still rises at some unearthly hour in the middle of the night to observe wildlife. At a ceremony at the Forest Office he was presented with a long service certificate by Ian Grant, Conservator E(S) and colleagues and friends presented him with a clock and ornament.

FAREWELL TO JOHN DAVIES

MORE than 170 friends, colleagues and business acquaintances of Mr John Davies attended a farewell buffet at the Murray Arms Hotel, Gatchow, to mark his retirement. The Director General, Mr George Holmes, handed over a painting, briefcase and a sum of money to mark Mr Davies' retirement. Mr Davies' wife, Betti, was presented with an enamelled decorative pot. At the end of the evening it was learned that Mr Davies had been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours' List.

Mr Davies joined the Commission after the war. He was a District Officer in North Wales for eight years until 1958 when he took up a similar appointment with the West Scotland Conservancy. He became an Assistant Conservator in West Scotland in 1968 and the following year he was promoted to Conservator, West Scotland.

He moved to Dumfries in 1971 and during his 12 years in the Conservancy, forestry has continued to expand. Outside forestry, Mr Davies has many interests from hill walking to the arts and music and has written several books. He was recently appointed Chairman of the MSC's area Manpower Board.

At a separate ceremony, a mature Douglas Fir tree in Bannan Forest by the banks of Loch Ken was renamed the John Davies Douglas Fir in recognition of the service Mr Davies gave to forestry.

WALLY'S A BUSY MAN

THE very popular Workshop Manager at Santon Downham, Mr W. J. ("Wally") Roshier, retired after 37 years with the Commission's East England Conservancy in Thetford Forest. From his early days as a lorry driver, Wally soon became Foreman in charge of the workshops and rose through the grades to PTO III.

At a ceremony in the village hall at Santon Downham, the present CME, Jack Maiden, introduced his predecessor Graham Cook who paid tribute to Wally and mentioned that between them and the Workshop CO, Miss Jean Auger, they had devoted 115 years to looking after the 400 or so machines at Thetford and East England generally.

Conservator Rod Hewitt thanked Wally for his considerable service and presented him with a garden table, broly and chair set plus a substantial cheque. He will have plenty to do when he retires, for in addition to his love for his garden, he is secretary to the Breckland Social Club, and vice chairman of the Parish Council.



WHEN Perce Mundy, Fred Beasley and Amby Buhil (who is an American citizen) retired from Savernake Forest, they had amassed 104 years service between them. And Chief Forester Mike Dunn calculated they each walked round the world once during their working life planting over 2,000,000 trees and weeding over 6000 acres (twice over Savernake).

They are pictured with (rear left) Conservator John Fletcher and District Officer Geoff Keighley.

TALE OF WOE FROM OUR UNSUNG HEROINE

As District Office clerkesses might soon become people of the past, I thought that this little ditty might strike a chord in the hearts of those who, like myself, have struggled against dreadful odds, and with unfailing devotion to duty, to keep the Forestry Commission working along lines vaguely resembling normality.

It was written on an afternoon, when between the hours of 1 pm and 4.30 pm, I had in my office at one time or another (it seemed all at once at one point) —

1 DO with 2 guests.

1 Chief Forester with 3 guests.

2 electricians (occasionally clambering on my desk to reach the fuse box.

3 sales reps.

101 (at least) forest walkers.

Every member of Fort Augustus District staff plus half the industrial staff of Inch-nacardoch Forest.

All this and filing too! When I was eventually hauled out from behind the filing cabinets, where I was having a lovely, quiet nervous breakdown, I decided there and then to capture for posterity the difficulties of being one of the unsung heroes of industry.

The telephone's ringing, the radio's talking,

The DO is wanting his tea;

There's pages of typing

should have been done by

lunchtime,

And it's already quarter

past three.

I'm collating some info of the

DO wants pronto,

But it's not so easy, I find;

Checking the addition of each

forest's submission,

Is driving me out of my

mind.

Here's four forest walkers,

wanting 100s of answers,

To questions on things of

import;

"Can we build a barbecue, or

else take our car

through?

You mean you expect us to

WALK!!!?

The office electricians are having

hysterics,

Our new heating is being

installed;

So my calculating is quite

devastating,

On the help of my fingers

I've called.

It's nearly four thirty, the

cups are still dirty,

And the place closes up for

the day;

So I switch all the phones

through, before I forget

to,

And homeward start

making my way.

I just reach the car to find my

route barred,

By a workabus parked in

my way;

As my brow starts to furrow, I

remember tomorrow,

And I smile 'cause today is

Friday!

HEATHER BOYD,
Fort Augustus.

You've guessed . . . on a day when the rains came down

THE GREAT GLASGOW SAFARI

I checked with the weather centre. Between June 20 and August 22, Glasgow enjoyed 58 dry, mainly sunny days.

The law of averages just wasn't on our side when, on August 23, the West Scotland Conservancy office mob set out on its annual Sitka spruce safari to Glencoe . . . and, sure enough, it was precipitating down!

With visibility nearly nil, it was an act of faith to believe that the train was passing through the breathtaking scenery which borders the West Highland Line. Time-passing games of Charades introduced

many of us to the hitherto hidden histrionic talents of colleagues . . . Margaret Morgan's mime for "Quadruphenia" was worth an Oscar; others engaged in intellectual conversation . . . "Nae bother. Rangers'll take five off them"; and some talked shop . . . "could make a bomb in subsistence if I went to the Falklands."

FO Malcolm Macpherson welcomed us at Bridge of Orchy, made brief introductions to forest staff, then trundled us off in mini-buses to look at remnants of the Caledonian Forest on Blackmount Estate. While Assistant Conservator

By J. Watson,
West
Scotland
Conservancy

Jim Atterson explained the disappearance of the old Scots pinewoods — largely due to fire — and how at one time the area was tree-covered to a height of 2000 feet, half the company were nodding knowingly but looking at a nearby block of Sitka.

Their gazes were re-directed to the ancient Pinus Sylvestris just visible on the skyline.

CITY BLOOD

Next stop Rannoch Moor.

With the rain trickling down our necks and the ubiquitous midge getting high on an unfamiliar strain of city blood, we all showed commendable interest in a research plot of mixed conifers growing successfully on peat in the most inhospitable of environments. For the silvicultural aficionado, yield class in part as high as 16. (You pay attention when you're "Slasher" correspondent).

As we approached the Glen of

Weeping, the skies mercifully stopped doing the former and the mountains played hide and seek in the swirling clouds.

The Glencoe Visitor Centre is run by the National Trust and houses many interesting exhibits. Of course, the story of the massacre looms large. This abuse of highland hospitality by the Campbells in 1692 has passed into the bloody annals of Scottish history.

There is in the Centre a facsimile of the letter to Captain Campbell of Glenlyon directing his soldiery to spare no-one under 70.

After packlunching at the picnic tables outside the Centre, it was time to hit the trail — the Signal Rock Forest variety.

To the credit of calf muscles more used to the gentle slopes of Sauchiehall Street we all climbed Signal Rock, the rocky knoll which commands a panoramic view of the Glen. Reputedly a one-time place of worship for Druids, it was latterly associated with the afore-mentioned attempted genocide as the point from which the signal for the start of the massacre was given.

Seeing the Glen under lowering skies it was hard to believe that nowadays nothing more nefarious than the odd fiddling of the Accounts Gen 8 takes place.

BEAUTY SPOT

The caravan and camp site was next on our itinerary. It recently won an award . . . and justly so. One of the points in its favour is that it can't be seen from the main road. This also has its disadvantages!

Whatever neck of the woods you live in I'm sure it has its beauty spot. West Scotland is well served with scenery, from the Ayrshire coast north through Loch Lomondside, the Trossachs and the many lochs and glens up to and including Glencoe.

A plum in this cornucopia of natural beauty is to be found in the Commission's Lochan Trail — a sheltered stretch of water fringed with 31 varieties of tree and having the "Pap of Glencoe" as a magnificent backdrop. No wonder it figures prominently on pictorial calendars. The cameras were working overtime.

In the new £60,000 forest store, beside the office, Chief Forester Bill Mason and his staff laid on a most welcome afternoon tea served in the best china borrowed from Ballachulish women's guild.

And then on to Fort William to catch the 6.22. By this time the sun was splitting the sky.

Song is never far from the lips of the merry Glasgow peasantry and so it was that for four stricken hours the West Conservancy chorals sang through their varied repertoire — from "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah" to "Ye Cannie Shuv Yer Grannie Aff a Bus."

One idiot actually sang "Trees." As usual Les Girls provided a sumptuous repast and the odd mouthful of Libbraumilch or Valpolicello was gargled to clear the larynx during the Wagnerian-proportioned singalong.

Our thanks to everyone who helped to make our day out such a success.

Footnote: By the way, if you can't afford Nuit San Georges, I recommend the Valpolicello — £1.99 at British Home Stores.



A view from Glencoe Forest, looking down Loch Leven with the 'Pap' of Glencoe on the right.

Moving up and on at the commission

The Queen has approved the appointment of Mr Gwyn Jones Francis as Commissioner for Harvesting and Marketing at the Forestry Commission in succession to Mr Dallas Alfred Mithen, who retires in November.

Mr Francis (52) is at present Director of the Commission's harvesting and marketing division.

Mr Roger Bradley (46), at present director and senior officer (Wales) based in Aberystwyth, will replace Mr Francis as director, harvesting and marketing division at Headquarters.

Mr David Robertson (54), Conservator for West Scotland based in Glasgow, will fill Mr Bradley's post on promotion to director.

A graduate of the University College of North Wales, Bangor, Mr Francis joined the Commission in 1954 after service with the Royal Engineers. He served as a District Officer at Llandrindod Wells and Neath, and in 1956 was transferred to the Commission's Forester Training School at Gwydyr. Four years later he was appointed head of the training school, and occupied that post until 1964 when he went to Canada to take

a MSc degree at the University of Toronto.

He returned to the Commission as District Officer at Ruthin. In 1969 he was promoted to Assistant Conservator and was in charge of harvesting and marketing in the South Wales Conservancy until 1973 when he moved to the headquarters harvesting and marketing division. He was appointed Conservator and head of the division in 1976, and director of the division in 1979.

The man he replaces, Mr Dallas Alfred Mithen, has been a Commissioner since 1977 with responsibility for harvesting and marketing, research and engineering. He joined the Commission in 1946 as a forest worker and in 1950 gained a BSc (Forestry) from the University of North Wales, Bangor. After periods in South East England, Cambridge and the New Forest he was appointed Senior Officer Scotland in 1971. He was made a CB in the 1983 Birthday Honours. Mr Mithen's home is in Peebles.

Mr Bradley, an Oxford forestry graduate, joined the Forestry Commission as District Officer in 1960. He served at the Commission's Forest Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, in Surrey for the first seven years

of his career before being transferred to Lorne district in West Scotland. In 1974 he was promoted Assistant Conservator South Wales, in 1977 he was promoted to Conservator North Wales and in 1981 he became Director and Senior Officer (Wales).

Mr Robertson graduated in forestry at Edinburgh University and was appointed District Officer with the Commission in Tintern, South Wales in 1953. He then served in Aberystwyth, Cardiff and Carmarthen before being transferred in 1961 to the Commission's planning and economics division based at the Forest Research Station at Alice Holt. He was promoted to Assistant Conservator (harvesting and marketing) for North East England, York, becoming Conservator (forest management) at Headquarters.

Mr J. Atterson, at present Assistant Conservator Harvesting and Marketing W(Scotland) has been temporarily promoted to fill the Conservator W(Scotland) post with effect from 19 September. Mr P. R. Quelch, at present FOI Loch Awe District has been temporarily promoted to fill the post of Assistant Conservator Harvesting and Marketing in Glasgow with effect from 19 September.

Cheers to a great victory

THE Forestry Commission NE(E) v. North East Timber Merchants Association match was held at Pickering, North Yorkshire on a perfect wicket and in beautiful weather.

NETMA won the toss and elected to bat first. The FC team fielded and bowled well and the Merchants were in trouble at 85 for 6 and looked as if they would be dismissed for a low score, but a great fight-back led by D. Dosser, who knocked up 72 not out, and C. Tunnicliffe, who scored 38, enabled them to reach 198 for 9 in the allowed 40 overs.

The Commission set about the formidable task of scoring 199 runs to win in 40 overs. After a steady start they had made 99 for 4 when John Richardson of Wykeham was joined by skipper Alan Beardsley of Dalby. They proceeded to put on 70 runs in 25 minutes before Alan was out for 50 runs. After this flurry of activity, John Richardson and Bob Little (Conservancy Office) saw the Commission safely through to 200 runs for five wickets to win the game.

Hero of the afternoon for the Commission was John Richardson.

Thus the Place Cricket Cup, which has been played for since 1953, came back to the Commission for the first time since 1977.



Welcome Caroline

Caroline Jones (33), has taken up the new EO welfare officer post at HQ on promotion from N(W) Conservancy Office, Aberystwyth.

She joined the Commission in 1974 and was active in CPSEA for more than eight years.

Caroline is married. Her interests include reading, music, squash, cinema and current affairs.

Trees on increase

Britain's farmers are planting more trees and the increased interest in woodlands could be linked to increased prosperity in agriculture. Latest Ministry of Agriculture figures show that the area of woodlands went up by 5.5 per cent in the past year to a total of 300,000 ha. The increase was the biggest annual rise since 1976.

An NFU survey shows a clear relationship between the changing fortunes of farmers and the trend in woodland plantings on farms. It points out that between 1974/75 and 1978/79 woodland planting rates declined sharply in line with the fall in farm incomes. Since then, as farm incomes have gradually recovered, the rate of increase in farm woodland area has risen again.

Our model forest

Work is progressing well on the Forestry Commission's "Model Forest" exhibit for the Liverpool International Garden Festival.

Designed as a piece of theatre to create a forest environment in Liverpool it uses miniaturisation to explain the totality of British forestry to an audience who know little about the subject and which will contain large numbers of schoolchildren.

The design and construction of a miniature upland forest built to the average model railway scale but covering an area of approximately 30 metres by 25 metres equivalent to an actual landscape of some 7 square kilometres, has proved a challenge to our landscape design team who have based the miniature forest on a section of Dwfri Forest in North Wales. The model landscape has had to be modified to fit our site at Liverpool but all essential features of a typical Welsh landscape have been incorporated. Over a quarter of a million actual tree seedlings and transplants representing the major forest species will be planted according to the landscape plans worked out by our forest design team.



ONE for the cup . . . Kenny Fergus (Drawing Office) prepares to show how the HQ team won the trophy. Looking on (l to r) are the other squad members: Gerry Cannon (Office Services), Alex Cowan, Club Captain (Finance), Sandy Lyon (Secretariat), Eric Urquhart (FMD), Alan Wilson (Purchasing), and Dave Stewart (Computers), and Geoff Freedman (Engineering).



MARTHON madness also struck four at Headquarters and after weeks of (sporadic) training they took part in the Edinburgh event. The best time was returned by Garry Duncan (front, right) who looks as if his 3 hours 14 minutes left him more than breathless!

Derek Hall, also kneeling was over the line in 3 hours 35 minutes; David Howard (standing, left) making his second Edinburgh run clocked 3 hours 24 minutes and Keith Ball was home in 4 hours.

Having won the Scottish Championship last year, a rink from Dumfries, representing Scotland, won the International Championship in the Civil Service Bowling Association finals held at Penarth, Cardiff, and at the annual dinner were presented with the Baldwin Bowl.

The rink was skipped by Jim Byth from South Scotland Conservancy Office. Billy Gordon, Forest Craftsman from Ae played second and Davie Cronie, Tipper Driver at East Roads, played third. The lead was Jim Pirrie, local manager of the Unemployment Benefit Office. The original rink included Davie Bennett, retired Civil Engineer in Dumfries but he was unable to play at Penarth. The semi-final against Wales ended after two extra ends with the score 22-21 at 23 ends. In the final, the Scottish rink beat Northern Ireland by seven shots.

The picture shows from left to right, Jim Byth, Dave Cronie, Billy Gordon, and Jim Pirrie with the trophies won.



ALL THE SPORTS NEWS

Westonbirt winners

A cricket challenge shield was presented in 1980 by Alice Holt Lodge CC for annual matches against Westonbirt Arboretum CC — the venue alternating between the two locations.

Alice Holt were far too strong and won the shield in 1980, 1981 and 1982, but at last Westonbirt had their revenge in the match in August at Alice Holt.

Playing on the Bentley Village pitch, Westonbirt won the toss and were soon among the wickets of the home side, finally being set a target of 66 to win. Westonbirt paced themselves well and passed the total for the loss of six wickets — proudly coming home with the trophy for the first time.

Archers target

KINGS FOREST, Thetford, was the venue for the 1983 European Field Archery Championships. The five day event in August attracted 230 archers from several countries.

The three 28-target courses were designed and constructed amid 30 hectares of pine forest by Forester Geoff Southgate. Geoff, who is a member of the local club, Kings Forest Bowmen, and his wife Dorothy, secretary of the International Field Archery Association, worked for eight months in their spare time preparing and organising the championships.

Next year the tournament is being staged in Sweden and Geoff and Dorothy are looking forward to shooting in the forests of Sweden.

Calling golfers

East (Scotland) Conservancy held a golf outing at Elgin Golf Course and a special prize of an Ash Bowl (to be played for, we hope, annually) was donated by timber Merchants James Jones & Sons Ltd., Larbert. It was decided to award the Ash Bowl to the handicap winner, Mr Graham Menzies of the Newton Nursery Research Branch, who returned at net 70 in adverse weather condition.

A further outing was held at Edzell and the handicap winner was Head Forester David Douglas, Drummond Hill Forest, who returned an excellent 69 off a handicap of 4.

Considering that the golf outings were resurrected after a lapse of many years, the attendances were very good. We hope in future to continue the outings with increased attendances and anyone interested who was not invited to the 1983 outings should get in touch with D. Furneaux, East (Scotland) Conservancy.

Retired employees are especially invited.

TENCH RECORD BROKEN

FOR the second time in two years the Scottish record for tench has been broken, by a visitor fishing in Forestry Commission-owned waters. Mr R. Curtis of Carnaby, Bridlington, caught a fish weighing 5 lbs 5 1/4 oz, in June from Spectacle Loch in Penninghame Forest in Galloway, South Scotland.

The first capture of a record fish in 1982 created wide interest amongst coarse anglers after a r35eort in various countryside angling magazines and resulted in a big increase in permits sold. The odd name of the loch is derived from its shape. The relatively small lochs, joined by a connecting burn, result in a shape similar to a pair of spectacles.

Ray's on course for run success

AMONG the thousands of runners in the recent Glasgow Marathon was Ray Cameron, EO H&M Section, Inverness. Ray (29), has always been interested in running and while a member of his local athletic club, became involved with coaching youngsters as well as racing.

The Moray Marathon in August this year was Ray's first participation in such an event

and he found it a great experience. He says he was really nervous on the morning of the run (had to make several trips to the loo as he felt he couldn't afford to be caught out on the run) and set off with thoughts of just getting round the course.

However, as the race developed he felt more and more competitive and despite a temperature of 80 degrees, he felt stronger as the miles went by. He finished fifth in 2 hrs. 52 mins. from a field of 190, suffered no ill effects and started looking forward to the Glasgow Marathon.

Ray's start in the Glasgow event was slow due to the vast number of runners ahead of him at the starting line but after five miles he was feeling really good and running in a group chasing the leaders. When 20 miles was reached he felt strong and pleased with his time. With just five miles to go the wind started to cause him problems and he had to slow down. Fortunately, he managed to pick up pace again and finished in 2 hrs. 36 mins., just 19 mins. behind the winner, and in 55th position. Ray says this was a tremendous event and one which he intends to take part in again next year.

Ray's marathon runs resulted in the Highland Scanner Appeal benefiting to the tune of £130 in sponsorship money.

In search of the nation's wild cats



The Forestry Commission is assisting in a survey of Britain's wildcat population. The project is being undertaken by Dr Nigel Easterbee of the Nature Conservancy Council, who wants to determine the status and distribution of the wildcat and the incidence of hybridisation with domestic or feral cats.

Dr Easterbee points out: "The wildcat (*Felis silvestris*) once occurred throughout the country but by the beginning of this century it had been driven to the edge of extinction through persistent persecution and habitat destruction, surviving only in northwest Scotland.

"With diminished persecution the population has expanded and wildcats now occur mainly north of the line Glasgow-Edinburgh, but there is evidence that they may have spread into the south of Scotland and records from the north of England should not be discounted.

A significant threat to the wildcat at present may be hybridisation with the domestic cat (*Felis catus*), so in addition to sightings of wildcats, information and dead specimens (or

COMMISSION PLAYS PART IN SURVEY

just the skull) of "wild-type" cats or presumed hybrids will be welcomed by Dr Easterbees, at the conservancy council's offices in Edinburgh.

At present there is little formal protection in Britain for the wildcat. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 prohibits certain methods of killing or taking which in theory reduced persecution. A periodic review of status and distribution is therefore necessary so that a greater degree of protection can be granted should current population levels decline.

Preliminary information for the survey will be collected by questionnaires, interviews and from records of sightings; the Forestry Commission and National Trust for Scotland have agreed to help with this work. Detailed studies in selected areas will follow.

Yompers take the high road to hi-jinx

It was the day that 75 fit, and not-so-fit, men and women competed in the first Coed y Brenin Yomp.

Organised by members of Dolgellau District and Coed y Brenin, the competitors came from a wide variety of organisations within Gwynedd, including a number of fine young men from the Forests of Dyfi, Beddgelert, Coed y Brenin, Dolgellau District and the Aberystwyth Office.

The day was inspired by a similar event reported in the "Slasher" as having taken place previously in West Scotland.

Each male competitor had to carry a minimum of 25 lbs., with each female carrying 15 lbs., before they set off at timed intervals over a varied course of 12½ miles. The route included sections of steep unclassified tarmac road, forest roads and paths, and across a variety of open terrain with a river crossing and a stretch of deep tussocky molinia bog.

The weather was a mixture of sunshine and heavy showers which were a welcome refresher for those taking part.

The Commission's participants gave a good account of themselves, with Pat Sherwood from Estates Section leading the way with her choice of footwear depending on the conditions.

Dyfi were represented by Ken Searson, Jim Sauter and Gerwyn James. They were reported to be carrying at least 5 lbs. of food included in their 25 lbs. pack, and were last seen settling down for a picnic in the middle of the molinia bog.

Coed y Brenin entered a large contingent which included Peter Lodge, who was hard pressed to keep up with his 12-year-old son; Bobby Roberts who forgot his pony, but who, with his team-mate Ken Jones, would have turned in a good time if they hadn't argued about the length of their lunch break. Gwilym Humphries was the Commission's fastest man despite losing his way on part of the route, and he narrowly beat Mark Yorke dressed in a pair of pre-1940 shorts last seen in Kielder on the late Conservator for NE(E), and Chris Edwards, who was responsible for laying out some of the hardest and nastiest part of the course.

Alan Owen, E. A. Jones, Colin Tranter and Philip James from the Aberystwyth office also carried the flag with distinction, and arrived at the finish looking slimmer and fit (to drop). Frank Farrelly was the oldest participant and went round at a fine pace less his pack but towed by his sprightly spaniel. Last man to go was Mark Pritchard, whose job was to sweep up any dilettants or dandies in distress. He crossed the river with aplomb, having failed to do so on the first attempt.

CONFIDENTIAL

The fastest competitor came from the Joint Services Mountain Training Centre who went round in 2 hours 12 minutes. The slowest time is confidential.

The event was considered a great success and already another challenge is fixed for May 1984, when Coed y Brenin will be defending the inter-Commission challenge cup presented by DO Mark Yorke. Anyone wishing to partake from outside North Wales is invited to contact the Dolgellau office for details.

Triple silver victory in the south

The Forestry Commission's South East England Conservancy has won three Silver Medal Certificates in the annual woodlands and plantations competition sponsored by the Royal Agricultural Society of England.

The certificates were presented at the Royal Show by Princess Alice.

The New Forest was awarded two of the certificates. One was for a plantation where the final crop is intended to be a mixture of conifers and hardwoods, which went to Park Hill Inclosure, compartment 44, a densely-stocked crop of oak, beech and Scots pine natural regeneration where selective thinning will leave the best trees regardless of species, and where the mixture will be retained for 100 years before the pine are removed and the oak left to mature for at least another 100 years.

The other certificate for naturally-regenerated hardwoods over two hectares, went to oak and beech in compartments 1A and 2A in Brick Kiln Inclosure, described by the judges as of good form with nice crowns developing and looking forward to a further 150 years of life within the rotation.

Micheldever Forest receives the third certificate for compartment 19c in Micheldever Wood, oak planted in 1928, lightly thinned and promising well as a very nice stand.

In their general comments on the competition, the judges drew particular attention to the large and impressive entry by the Forestry Commission.



MEET A REAL GENT

THERE was a large gathering of colleagues and friends at the retirement party at Churchills Hotel, Llandaff, for Don Barrett, Land Agent at Cardiff, who retired after 31 years service with the Commission. He joined the Commission at York in January 1952, moving to Cambridge in 1959 where he spent 12 years before coming to Cardiff in 1971.

Don was a "real gent" whose sense of humour, courtesy and helpfulness endeared him to all. Alan Rix, Conservator, in thanking Don for his long, conscientious and valuable service, referred to his sense of humour and fair play and his tenacity in dealing with awkward cases.

North West England staff and friends said goodbye to Pat Winchester at the Clipstone Office, Sherwood Forest, when Pat, District Officer in charge of Peak and Sherwood District, retired after 34 years with the Commission.

FINAL FLING FOR PAT

Pat is the last of the Forest Officers who began their forestry career before the war, doing his first year at Edinburgh University in the session of 1938-39.

He was appointed District Officer in charge of the New Forest, Ringwood and Ferndown in 1949. His long association with NW(E) began when he transferred from Malvern to the North Lakes District in 1957, and continued when he returned to Chester as Recreational Planning Officer in 1973, after a five-year spell in SW(E) at Taunton.

Pat was presented with a cheque from colleagues and friends. An unusual gift was a scroll, giving the directions for dancing The Foresters' Reel, a Scottish Country Dance composed by Mrs Maidie Winchester, Pat's mother, on the occasion of the FC Headquarters move to Edinburgh in 1973.

Trees for all seasons

Available now . . . the 1984 Calendar "Trees for all seasons". . . and some people reckon the 12 tree-scenes are the best collection to date! And the price is unchanged at £1.75 (£2 by post from Publications, Forestry Commission, Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4LH.

Order form:

Please send copy/copies of the 1984 Calendar "Trees for all Seasons" to:

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

.....

I enclose cheque/postal orders for £..... (£2 per copy by post) payable to Forestry Commission.

EXAMPLE (above) . . . the scene depicting June in the 1984 calendar — Conifer plantations and stream, Hafren, Wales.