

SLASHER

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Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

Nature conservation aims

'Reasonable balance needed in land use'

THE Forestry Commission is giving additional emphasis to its policy of positively encouraging nature conservation with the appointment in every conservancy of a senior officer with special responsibility for environmental matters. It has also appointed Dr J. Morton Boyd as its first Conservation Consultant (see p. 2).

At a Press conference in London on the publication of the Commission's annual report Sir David Montgomery, Chairman, said:

"The Forestry Commission's prime task is growing the trees to meet the country's future timber needs. We do, however, recognise, that the countryside is a finite and valuable resource, and the needs of forestry are just one of the demands which must be met. It is vital that all the various countryside interests come together to strike a sensible and reasonable balance of land-use to meet the needs of the people today and in the future.

"We will not achieve this by adopting intransigent positions. We must talk and discuss, and do it in a sensible manner — not uncritically, but constructively — accepting that on the national scale no one interest can be given an over-riding priority.

"There has in recent times been an increasing awareness of the importance of conservation, and I believe that the Forestry Commission has a record to be proud of. Policies and management practices directed towards nature conservation have existed for many years. Commission forests contain 350 Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering 70,000 hectares and 80 nature reserves covering another 2000 hectares.

"Very many of our foresters are enthusiastic and knowledgeable naturalists, active within their local naturalists' trusts and national organisations; some are acknowledged authorities on various subjects."

AMERICAN ORDERS BOOST SEED SALES

Acorns lead way to another harvest bonanza

A continually growing export order book is boosting Forestry Commission seed sales to record levels. And, after its busiest ever year, the seed extraction unit at Alice Holt is already facing a hectic start to 1985.

Over the last two months, the unit has been hard pressed to cope with over 8.3 tonnes of acorns, gathered in the Commission's biggest harvesting operation for many years among selected stands of oak, as well as a heavy crop of other broad-leaved seeds. Now it is tackling Scots and Corsican pine and Japanese and hybrid larch.

problem with some of the beech masts we have been able to cope with what appeared to be an endless supply of hardwood seeds."

PROCESS

The team at Alice Holt had only just begun to clear up after the processing of the 1983 bumper harvest of Sitka spruce when the warning went out: "Expect a heavy season of broadleaved tree seeds."

Within a matter of weeks almost 3000 kilos of acorns from pedunculate oak and 5300 kilos from sessile oak had been gathered, most of it from selected stands in the New Forest. That operation involved many Commission workers and their families and some groups of volunteers who were having

to race against time — and the New Forest commoners' pigs — to collect one of the best acorn crops in memory. Throughout Britain there was a good crop of acorns but in other parts of Europe yields were poor. This has allowed the Commission to win business which in previous years has gone to continental merchants.

"Already we have committed orders for some thousands of pounds worth of oak," said Douglas Clark, FC Seed and Plant Production Officer.

"But that is only part of the excellent year for collection of broadleaved tree seeds. We have had a good season for wild cherry in Surrey, hazel in Scotland, sycamore in Yorkshire, as well as beech, blackthorn and horse chestnuts. I would like to thank everyone who has been involved."

WELCOME

The extractory is busily engaged at the moment processing larch and pine cones. The ultimate destination of many of the pine seeds will be North America where Christmas tree growers are keen to obtain seed from Scots pine grown in East England. Potential orders for several hundred kilos of seed will eventually mean that tens of millions of the Christmas trees going onto the American retail market will have been produced from FC seed.

Mr Clark said: "The turnover of our seed business is small in relation to income from timber harvesting — producing several hundreds of thousands of pounds rather than millions — but it provides a welcome contribution to Commission finances.

"We have long been established as the main UK supplier of forestry tree seeds and are fast becoming regarded as major European merchant. Our reputation as reliable suppliers of first class quality seed at competitive prices is helping us to gain new business and our success in the North American Christmas tree market is yet a further expression of confidence."



Acorn harvest in the New Forest

Wales appoints community forester

The Forestry Commission has appointed John B. Griffiths as its first ever Community Forester, acting within the Rhondda Borough.

The new appointment has been welcomed by the Borough as a step towards closer integration with its interests and those of the Forestry Commission which has 10,000 acres within the authority's boundary.

Mr Griffiths, a local man, started his FC career at Llanwanno in 1954 and has served at Tair Onen, Cymmer, Rhondda and St Gywnno forests and was recently based at Llanwynno Forest District Office. The Borough Council is providing office accommodation at Bronwydd, Porth.

ENHANCE

It was said the Rhondda required special consideration with a population of 86,000 in close proximity to plantations. Opportunity would be taken, by thinning and felling and the introduction of more broad-leaved trees, to enhance the scenic value of the forest. Initial schemes will involve removing some trees recognised as being too close to houses and the introduction of a series of planned adventure playgrounds, BMX courses and other recreational facilities as recognised by the Borough.

Mr Griffiths is known throughout the valley as a snooker player, for which he has gained international honours.



John Griffiths

CHALLENGING YEAR AHEAD

1984 has been a year of considerable turmoil. After the upheaval of setting up the new Forest Districts with all the enforced moves and changes that this involved for many, there have been the uncertainties surrounding the Headquarters and Conservancy Review and last, but by no means least, the continuing problems of the disposals policy.

1985 has the promise of a much more settled and stable year. The new Districts are up and running, the new Conservancies should be operational by April and we have now got considerable control over the sales of our surplus assets and plantations.

All in all, 1985 looks like being an interesting and challenging year. There will no doubt be problems, resources will be scarce and in some cases non-existent, but we can now see more clearly than for some time the way ahead with all its opportunities.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for the future and in particular for 1985.

Sir DAVID MONTGOMERY,
Chairman.



MAN BEHIND
THE KIELDER
CAMERA

Page 3.

WINNERS
PARADE

Pages 4
and 5.



Keeping an eye on our wildlife

The Forestry Commission has appointed Dr John Morton Boyd, Director (Scotland) of the Nature Conservancy Council to be the Commission's first consultant on wildlife conservation. He will take up his new appointment on February 1.

Announcing the appointment, Commission Chairman, Sir David Montgomery, said: "We are very pleased to welcome Dr Boyd as our consultant. While the Forestry Commission has built up its own expertise in conservation matters and has considerable experience in developing its conservation policies, the time has come for us to choose someone of national and international repute in the conservation world as our independent consultant."

"There is now an increasing awareness of the need to integrate the requirements of forestry and nature conservation and the Commission will appreciate professional advice from someone of Dr Boyd's stature and experience to assist in the development of its wildlife conservation policies."

Election for the birdman

A long involvement with ornithology has led to Rod Leslie (Work Study, Thetford) being elected to the council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In the first RSPB contested election since 1974, he was one of seven candidates elected to five vacant places on the council. Rod has been a member of RSPB for 15 years and says his commitment to bird protection really started when he joined Rothbury as an assistant district officer. His keen interest in bird populations in restocked areas has continued since moving to East Anglia two years ago and among species he is closely watching are the woodlarks and the one pair of goshawks to be found in Thetford. "There is a far greater understanding between foresters and ornithologists than many people realise," he said. "Perhaps in the past there has been difficulty in countering the views that many naturalists hold on coniferous planting, but I believe we are all working much more closely together on conserving and improving wildlife in the forests."

SAFETY: Aiming for improvement

The number of accidents and the accident frequency (ie. the number of accidents per 100 employees) within the Forestry Commission in 1983 was the lowest since records were first kept but despite that forestry remains third in the industrial injury league behind coal mining and construction.

In 1983, a total of 7000 man days were lost due to accidents at a cost of £158,000. This compares with 9700 man days in 1982 at a cost of £213,000.

Donald Barty, Departmental Safety Officer comments: "The underlying downward trend of accidents over the

last decade is of significance. In the first-half (1974-78) the mean accident frequency was 8.0 whereas in the second half the figure went down to 7.4. This may appear to be only a minor improvement but in fact it represents a reduction of about 30 accidents each year averaged over the five-year period and that in turn means an annual saving in lost time of 750 man days."

The overall improvement in the reduction of accident in 1983 was shared in the three operation sectors with the most noticeable reduction occurring in harvesting, down from 224 in 1982 (19.4 per cent) to 191 (16.9 per cent). Forest management recorded 87 accidents, (5.9 per cent) compared to 97 (6.2 per cent) and engineering with 21 (4.1 per cent) showed a reduction from 32 (6 per cent).

In harvesting operations, the high incidence of sprains continues to be a matter of concern with 77 injuries recorded representing 35.6 per cent of all injuries and 40.3 per cent of all accidents. The spread of bench felling linked with a shortwood harvesting system is expected to bring about significant reduction in the number of sprains particularly in the stacking phase where sprains represented 57.6 per cent of all injuries.

The combination of better personal safety equipment, greater awareness of the "kick-back" danger and chain brakes with a faster stopping time have combined to secure a steady downward trend in the number of chain saw cuts in the fell, sned and convert cycle. From a

total of 52 in 1980, the number of these accidents, which tend to be serious, fell to 27 in 1983.

The frequency of accidents among the forest craftsmen grade continued to decline from 11 per cent in 1981 to 9.8 per cent in 1982 and 8.7 per cent in 1983.

"However, these figures are consistently around 2 per cent higher than the industrial average and a greater effort in accident prevention aimed at the forest craftsmen group could lead to significant benefits," said Mr Barty.

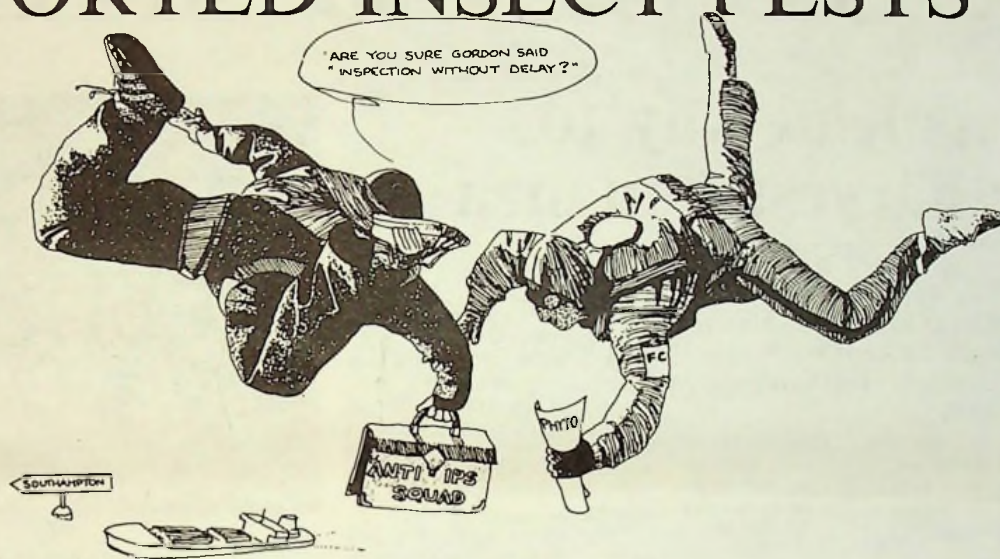
"Overall, almost all the evidence points to a continuing downward trend in the number of accidents and it is certainly the case that a lot of safety activity was generated in 1983. The initial influence of the HSE (Accident Prevention Advisory Unit) investigation and the continuing installation of organised felling methods are relevant examples. It is also known that in many areas the systematic use of safety check lists has been introduced.

NEW ORDER TO CURB THREAT OF IMPORTED INSECT PESTS

The Forestry Commission has taken further steps to curb the threat of insect pests being imported into Britain through controls announced in a new Plant Health Order which comes into force on 1 January, 1985.

New measures in the Import and Export of Trees, Wood and Bark (Health) (Great Britain) (Amendment Order) 1984 will require that all imports of coniferous wood, irrespective of the country of origin, shall either be stripped of its bark or, as a new option, be kiln dried to a moisture content of below 20 per cent and to be so identified by appropriate markings; there is also a total prohibition on imports of isolated conifer bark.

Plant Health Officer, Gordon Campbell said: "There is growing evidence that our conifer forests are under steadily increasing threat from a number of pests which have become established in Continental Europe, but which are not present in this country. Most notable of these



are bark beetles of *Ips* species, eg *Ips typographus*, which has the potential to cause widespread damage to our forests if it ever arrived.

"Consequently we felt that

there was a need to extend controls over wood and bark imports to cover all coniferous genera from any country in Europe. The provisions of the new Order, which are being

made largely in anticipation of agreed EEC legislative amendments, will bring our controls in Europe into line with those in force for non-European countries."

Obituaries

ARTHUR HAZZARD BEM, former forest clerk at Rhondda Forest, died on October 18, at the age of 66. Arthur had spent almost all of his service with the Commission at Rhondda and had watched the forest develop from the first plantings in 1960 to its present 3500 ha.

His knowledge of the culture and history of the Rhondda had been invaluable in helping to build up a close relationship between the forest and the community and he was very proud to have been involved in restoring some of the former colour and beauty to Rhondda's barren and scarred hillsides. He had regularly led guided walks in the Rhondda Forest Project.

He was a founder member and Past President of the Rhondda Society and had devoted considerable energy to the Rhondda boys' clubs, particularly the Treherbert Boys' Club of which he had been the leader for more than 20 years.

Arthur received the BEM in the 1979 New Year's Honours for his services to forestry and the community in general in the Rhondda as well as for his sterling work for the Treherbert Boys' Club.

The "Arthur Hazzard Trust" has been set up to honour his memory and a new building being added to the Treherbert Boys' Club will bear his name.

CLIFF CARTER, foreman mobile mechanic, at St Hilary until his retirement on health grounds in 1981 after 43 years' service.

Cliff joined the Commission in 1938 as a forest worker at Tair Onen, and after war service returned to the Commission as a mechanic. His work as a mobile mechanic took him all over the South Wales Conservancy where he was held in high esteem. He leaves a widow, son and daughter.

ROBERT PETERKIN. It was with regret that the staff at Speyside Forest District heard of the death at the age of 67, of retired forest worker Robert Peterkin, a popular former colleague who served at Speymouth Forest from 1951. He accepted early retirement under the Job Release Scheme in 1979 and continued to live in Fochabers, Moray. He will be remembered for his willingness, cheerfulness and loyalty under all circumstances.

FRED WALLS, who was the messenger in the NE(E) Conservancy office for the past five years, died on October 3. He came to the office in October 1979 as a temporary messenger and soon made himself indispensable by organising everyone to meet his deadlines. Fred had

cheerful tactful disposition. His main interests outside the office were fishing and the enthusiastic support of Yorkshire cricket. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

IAN MacDONALD, whose death occurred in October. After spending two years at Benmore Foresters Training School from 1930-32, Ian joined the Commission and started his long career in NE (England) Conservancy. He served at Kielder as foreman, forester and head forester and gained the great practical experience in forestry that stood him in such good stead on later years.

After being transferred to Yorkshire in 1947, he was promoted District Officer in 1951 and remained in charge of the Dales District until his retirement from the Commission in 1974.

Always hard working he was totally involved in forestry and continued the good work after retirement by setting up as a forestry consultant.

In over 50 years in forestry he not only made a notable although unobtrusive contribution to forest management and forestry practice but also earned the respect and friendship of all those who worked with him. We offer our sympathy to his widow and family.

IAN SUTHERLAND, who died recently. Although he retired in 1967 he was a familiar figure locally in Inverness remaining very hale and active until the end.

Joining the Commission in 1936 as a forest worker and seeing service with HPTD from 1941-46, he progressed from worker to Head Forester by dint of hard work, ability and enthusiasm and evidence of this is for all to see in Strathdearn and Contin where most of his work was done.

DINNES HENDRY, whose many friends in North East England and throughout the Commission were saddened to hear of his death on October 8, only three years after his retirement. Dinnes was Administration and Finance Officer in York for four years from 1977.

He started his career with the Commission in 1946 following service in the RAF and served in Conservancy offices at Aberdeen, Shrewsbury and Dumfries with a spell at Headquarters duties in London and Edinburgh. He retired in 1981 and stayed on in York for three years before moving to Carlisle in July of this year where his daughter now lives.

Dinnes will be remembered for his conscientiousness, his unassuming nature and his dry sense of humour. He will be sadly missed.

Late gift opportunity

Did you forget someone on your Christmas present list? Well it's not too late to send a gift of the Forestry Commission's 1985 calendar "Woodlands of Britain."

Twelve outstanding colour photographs capture the changing face of the countryside.

A few copies are still available at the reduced price of £1.00.

Or you could order "The Forest Fare Recipe Book" which lists 115 recipes submitted by foresters' wives and Commission staff. Still a bargain at £2.85.

Send your order to information branch, Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT.

Bunkered!

As anticipated, golfing stories were well to the fore at a dinner to mark the retirement of George Murray as Commissioner (Admin. and Finance). There was even a cake with its own iced-on bunker.

George was presented with a camera from FC colleagues and a chess set from former colleagues in the Scottish Office.

In his presentation speech Director-General George Holmes paid tribute to Mr Murray's achievements in his four years in the Commission.

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TRADE UNION SIDE
Ted Radford

Forest history — in black and white

The Forestry Commission has purchased a unique collection of photographs from one of its former employees Mr Valdemars Blankenburgs of Bellingham, which record the history and development of Kielder Forest.

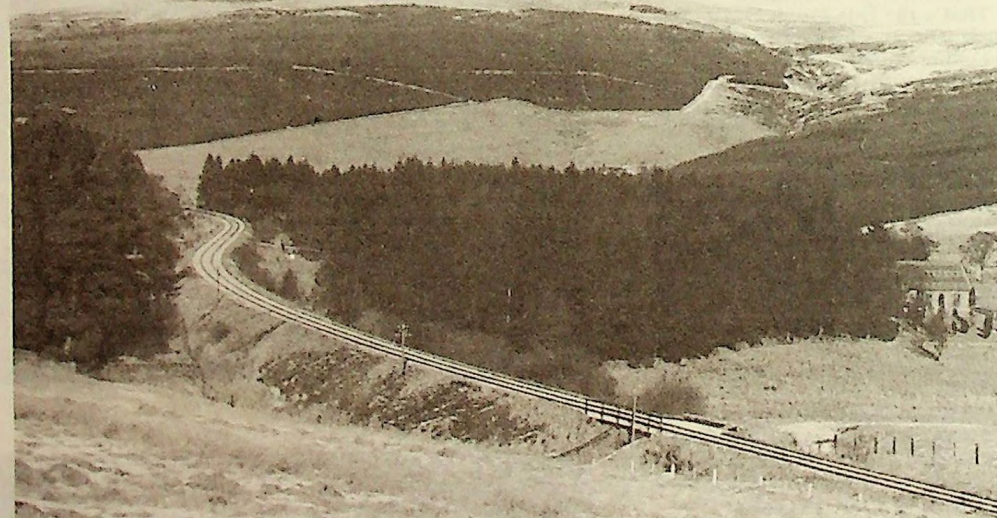
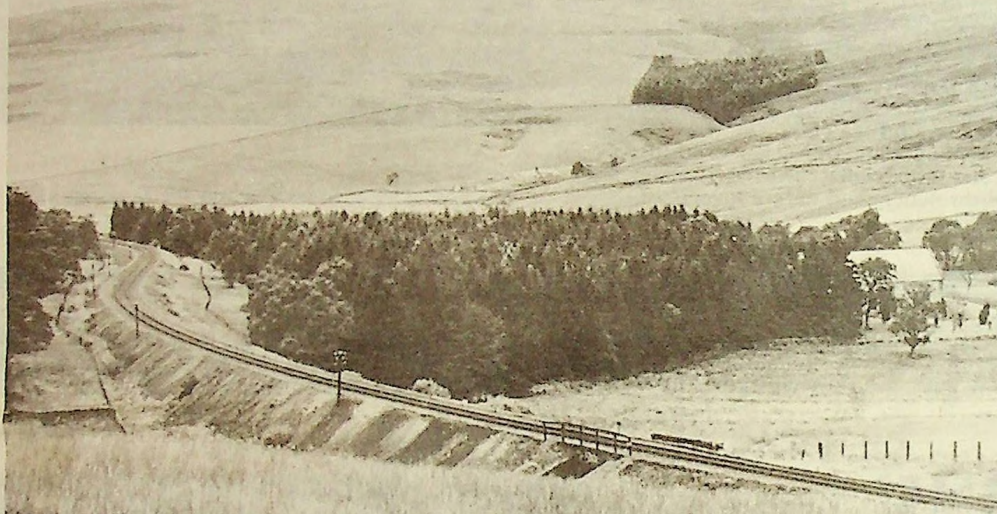
The collection of almost 10,000 photographs is to be stored in the Northumberland County Record Office at North Gosforth, where it will be catalogued by County Archivist, Mr Robin Gard.

The County Record Office has acquired a smaller collection of about 1000 photographs depicting subjects of general historic interest in the North Tyne area. The collection will be made available to the public for reference and research.

Reporter

HAZEL CLOWES

BELOW: The railway line between Kielder and Deadwater Station before the Second World War; and bottom, a different picture today as you can see from the amount of forest.



Kielder, Wark and Redesdale covered less than 15,000 hectares.

By the time he retired in 1971, there was a network of over 500 miles of forest roads and the Kielder Forests had more than doubled in area, with the new plantations covering over 32,000 hectares.

A familiar figure in the Kielder area Mr Blankenburgs, or "Blanks" as he is known locally, actually walked over almost all of the ground to be planted in the course of his work. A keen photographer, he was in a unique position to record all stages and aspects of the forest's development.

"I must have walked over 12,000 miles during my 23 years with the Forestry Commission," he said. "The terrain in Latvia is very flat and when I came to Kielder first I found I had to walk for miles over the hills to survey the area. It was quite strenuous but I soon became very fit!"

Although the photographs taken by Mr Blankenburgs date from 1947 he also made about 1000 reproductions of old photographs sent to him by North Tyne residents who learned of his interest in local history. His oldest photograph dates from about 1854 and shows the first Tyne Valley train arriving in Riccarton Junction. Another shows the Stationmaster and staff at Plashetts Railway Station in the 1920s.

The collection contains several examples of Kielder before planting with many of the former hill farms recorded by his camera. Forestry machinery and methods are also covered with contrasts between the use of horses for hauling timber until about 1950 with his later pictures of modern machines and self-loading lorries in use in 1971.

PLANTATION

He also recorded many of the historic events associated with Kielder such as the felling of the first tree planted by the Commission in Kielder by the Chairman of the Forestry Commission the late Lord Robinson of Kielder in 1948, the opening of Kielder Village in 1952, and children of Kielder Village school planting a Jubilee plantation to mark the Commission's Jubilee in 1969.

One of the most valuable sections of the collection is that relating to Kielder Forest before it was flooded to create Kielder Water. A keen naturalist he has managed to photograph much of the forest wildlife for the collection.

"To our knowledge he is the only person to have recorded so thoroughly the development of the forest and the transition from hill farm to forest for an extended period," said a Forestry Commission spokesman. "The collection is virtually an archive in itself and we are delighted that Mr Blankenburgs offered it to us."

Lord Robinson after cutting the first tree planted by The Forestry Commission.

It's 1949 and the scene is the Mounces where larch was being planted as a firebreak.



KIELDER — AND HOW IT STARTED

**60,000
people
a year
visit a
marvel**

The amalgamation of four forests — Wark, Falstone, Kielder and Redesdale in February 1984 — made Kielder the largest Forest District in the Forestry Commission. Kielder Forest District covers 50,679 hectares of which 40,176 hectares are under trees. The first plantation established at Smales in 1926 followed by the purchase of Kielder Castle and 19,000 hectares of land from the Duke of Northumberland in 1930 laid the foundation for an afforestation programme which has gained international recognition. Much of the work pioneered at Kielder was later adopted by the Forestry Commission in other parts of the country.

As the trees reach maturity timber production from Kielder Forest District is increasing dramatically. In 1983

Kielder Forest District produced 124,000 cubic metres (approx. 124,000 tonnes). Replanting of felled areas amounted to 400 hectares. Production will rise steadily almost trebling by the year 2000 when annual production will be sustained at 350,000 cubic metres. By then the replanting programme will have increased to 900 hectares.

The main reason for such a rise is due to the fact that although planting began in 1926, it expanded rapidly after the war so that 50% was planted in the period 1946-60 and as much as 25% in the five years 1951-56. It is these trees which will boost production when they reach the thinning or final felling stage at the turn of the century.

The majority of the timber leaves Kielder as pulpwood or sawlogs. The

pulpwood goes either to Scandinavia via Seaham Docks or to Thames Board Mill at Workington. However from next year Kielder will also be the largest individual supplier for the major new pulp and paper mill at Shotton, North Wales which comes on stream in 1985. Much of the sawn timber goes to the National Coal Board, but it also finds markets with sawmills for example at Cirencester, Hereford and Western Softwoods Mill at Newbridge on Wye.

The future for Kielder and the people who work in Kielder looks bright. Over 300 people are currently directly employed as a result of Kielder Forest, about 160 are employed by the Forest Commission and a similar number employed by contractors engaged in felling, extraction and haulage of timber from the forests. About 50% of all

timber harvested is worked by Commission employees, the remainder by private contractors. With expanding harvesting and re-stocking programmes Kielder will continue to provide employment opportunities for the foreseeable future.

The development of recreation facilities has brought large numbers of visitors to Kielder. Kielder Castle Visitor Centre attracts 60,000 visitors annually including over 80 school parties who use the centre as a base for educational outings. The two campsites at Kielder and Stonehaugh are very popular as is the 12 miles Kielder-Byrness Forest Drive. The Commission has laid out a network of forest walks and trails, picnic places, car parks and toilets recently adding several new facilities since the opening of Kielder Water.

PRIZE WINNERS ALL

Lochaweside captures Civic Trust commendation

The Forestry Commission's forest cabin holiday development and village hall at Lochaweside, Argyll, has won a commendation under the Civic Trust's Award Scheme for 1984.

It is the third award won by the Lochaweside development which already has to its credit a British Tourist Authority International Year for Disabled People Award, 1981, and a major commendation awarded by the Business and Industry Panel for the Environment in 1983.

First opened to holidaymakers in 1981, it has taken a couple of years for the full impact of the extensive landscape design and sensitive treatment of the cabin site and surroundings to take effect.

The Lochaweside forest cabins and village hall were financed by the Crown Estate Commissioners and landscape designed and managed by the Forestry Commission. In its citation the Civic Trust said: "One of the characteristic problems in beautiful countryside is to cater for visitors without destroying that which they have come to enjoy. Perhaps of all the agencies in the field, the Forestry Commission with its extensive woodlands in areas

of outstanding landscape has both a responsibility for, and an opportunity of satisfying, this need.

"At Lochaweside a real contribution has been made. Forty-four restrained, simple yet elegant timber cabins are disposed around the loch shore in such a way that the woods will soon grow back around the development making it virtually undetectable. Any temptation to overdevelop the site has been resisted with footpaths and access roads kept to a minimum."

"We are delighted to receive this recognition by the Civic Trust," said a Commission spokesman. "Not only has this been one of our most successful holiday developments, but also it has brought a source of employment to the forest village of Dalavich and a new community centre in the new village hall."

In the West Highland setting, the cabins have been ingeniously tucked into the edge of Inverliver Forest or cleverly built into banks or streambeds and some actually perched on stilts at the very loch edge. Some are modified for the disabled and a number of forest walks around the cabin site which have also been constructed to accommodate wheelchairs. Ideal for walking, fishing, boating and horse-riding nearby, the site is particularly popular with birdwatchers and nature lovers.



Lochaweside — The development that has won a third award.

Chainsaw Hugh sharpens his champion image



Chainsaw champion 1984. That's the title Hugh Duffy (34) earned at the National Tree Felling contest held at Boreas of Ayr in South-West Scotland. And as one of the judges commented: "He's in a class of his own."

Hugh, who works with the Forestry Commission in Mull, was notching up a unique second championship in the event organised by the Royal Scottish Forestry Society. His previous win was also at an event in Ayr in 1981.

Difficulty

Of the 56 entrants from as far away as Somerset, Hugh emerged clear winner, 46 points ahead of the runner-up, contractor Ewan Ferguson from Aberfoyle.

In the competition, at a level riverside site, Hugh was in the lead after felling his first round Norway spruce but when he was down his second tree he felt he would have difficulty in getting a good felling line. "At home in Mull it's all Sitka spruce and you have to adapt when you compete in events like this," he said after collecting his prizes, which included two cups, a chainsaw and safety clothing.

Another Commission worker from Mull who proved he could adapt was Donald McInnes who came eighth. The 1984 competition was sponsored by Forest Thinnings Ltd, and the 1985 event sponsored will be the Forestry Commission at another venue in South-West Scotland. And Hugh Duffy intends to be there to defend his title.

SUPERLATIVES BY THE HANDFUL



Model Forest is a topper

Fantastic... fabulous... enchanting... unbeatable... amazing. These are only a few of the superlatives used by some of the 600,000-plus people who visited the Forestry Commission's "Model Forest" at the Liverpool International Garden Festival.

And the judges agreed, awarding the "Model Forest" a major special award for the "most original theme" at the festival.

And as well as the special trophy, the Commission's exhibit also won one of the festival's Gold Medals awarded to gardens for excellence of landscape design and construction, visual effect, quality of plants and material and overall appeal.

It is estimated that 20 per cent of the total 3.3 million visitors to the Garden Festival visited the Model Forest, one of the Commission's most comprehensive and detailed interpretive projects. Set in a Lilliput landscape modelled from 1200 tons of earth and top soil, the 700 square yards was a scale model of seven square kilometres of typical mountain, moorland and forest scenery, demonstrating the best of forest design and displaying the latest forest management techniques and methods as practised by the Commission in most of its upland plantations today.

ENCHANTING

Visitors from 26 nations were enthralled by the exhibit finding it "imaginative... stimulating... restful... enchanting." And one signatory to the visitors' book commented: "Half an hour here after work should be compulsory."

The miniature forest, with its 30 model buildings including a village with its cottages, chapel and pub, has now been dismantled.

Almost a quarter of a million young trees were planted to make up the exhibit and these are being donated to organisations and schools mainly in and around the Liverpool area for educational, environmental and conservation projects.

Fifth form pupils from Fazakerley Comprehensive School curriculum strategies have been working with "Diggers" a small Liverpool firm of urban horticulturalists who are training them in landscape gardening, were given 500 trees. They intend to use the trees to create a commemorative garden within the school courtyard to mark the 50 years of Fazakerley School.

"There is no garden area near the school," said Miss Carol Bullock, senior mistress, "and we are delighted with the gift from the Forestry Commission which will benefit both the school and the local community."



A view of one of the picnic sites at David Marshall Lodge.

David Marshall Lodge wins top AA award

Four top awards in the Automobile Association's search for Britain's best picnic sites have gone to the Forestry Commission.

Leading the field in the competition, run in conjunction with the "Beautiful Britain" campaign, was the David Marshall Lodge picnic site at Aberfoyle, Perthshire.

It was selected as National Picnic Site of the Year — and features in the 1985 AA Camping and Caravanning Guide — after several visits by officials of the Association as part of a comprehensive inspection programme.

The AA regional award for the best picnic site in Wales goes to Bolin Nant-Yr-Arian, Rhedol Forest, Dyfed. The Bechenhurst site at Forest of Dean won

the regional award for South-West England, and in South-East England, the Bolderwood site in New Forest was the regional award winner.

"We are delighted that our continuing efforts to provide leisure facilities in our forests have been rewarded in this way," said John Kennedy, Commissioner Forest and Estate Management.

The awards were presented (below) at the National Camping and Caravanning Exhibition in London by William Hadden, general manager AA publications (second left) to Forestry Commission Conservator, South-West England, John Fletcher, and there to help display the certificates were Bill McLaughlin (FMI) and Howard Hart (Information Office).



Rhedol Forest's Welsh winner



Retirements

He helped create holiday homes at Dalavich

The well known Chief Forester George Francey MBE retired recently having served the FC for over 40 years.

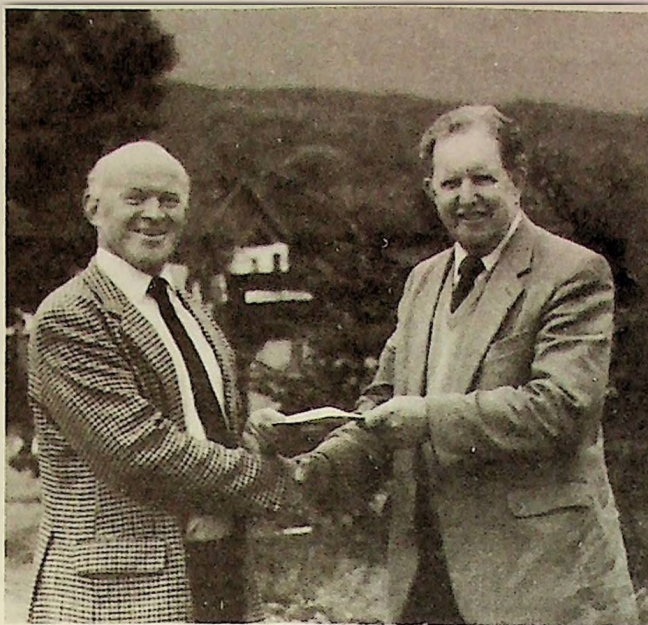
On his last working day George invited his fellow foresters on Loch Awe to lunch and afterwards was pressed into a final demonstration of how a tree should be planted. Assistant Conservator, FM Richard Toleman was rumoured to be satisfied with the end result.

At a formal presentation, after the summer rush of visitors to Lochaweside Cabins had subsided, the Conservator W(S), Mr J. Atterson spoke of George's time with the FC, how he started in the squad at Loch Ard, was called to Active Service on the European Front, returned to Loch Ard and eventually to

Benmore Forester Training School. George moved from Loch Eck, Loch Katrine, Ardgarten, Lochgoilhead, Inverinan and finally to Inverliver Forest to oversee the forest's felling and restocking; the Dalavich Holiday Houses, the Lochaweside Cabin Development and the pre school, sandwich and probation training of so many young foresters (a large number of whom were in the company).

Presentation

A presentation of gifts from colleagues and friends was followed by a meal and the evening was completed with a dazzling array of talent from the School children of Dalavich via singers and pipers to the talents of the Pied Piper of Loch Awe.



Dougie's delight

Dugald MacInnes retired after 33 years of service with the Forestry Commission. Dougie, as he was known to his friends, was renowned for his encouragement of felling contractors. The best of the excellent bench felling was subject to an instant Polaroid which was then offered to the contractor. A dinner dance was held in Dougie's honour and a presentation was made by Mr Alan Mackay (Asst. Cons. H&M). We wish Dougie and his wife Morag, all the best in retirement.

Real local cheers



A large assembly of colleagues and friends gathered at the Oakwood Hotel near Elgin, to mark the retirement of Struan Stewart, Forest District Manager of Moray Forest District. Struan was well known both in FC and private forestry circles in his capacity as District Manager at Moray and also to his CSU colleagues for the years he spent both in committee and as Forester Section Chairman.

Mr Taylor, Conservator E(S), reviewed Struan's career, after which a presentation was made of a voucher for golfing equipment also a set of crystal glasses. (Being virtually in the heart of Distillery country the means of filling them was not omitted!).

Struan certainly isn't planning allowing his professional expertise to vegetate. He is taking up post as Plant Procurement Officer with Fountain Forestry.

We wish them well

ERIC CROFTS, forester, Silviculture (N) Kilmun retired after 32 years' service with the Commission. An informal presentation was held at Kilmun when Eric was presented with a cheque by Dr A. J. Low P. Silv. (N) on behalf of his colleagues and friends and a Skean dhu by Robert Good on behalf of the Kilmun staff and local friends.

KEN McCONNACHIE, head forester, took early retirement after nearly 31 years with the Commission. A quiet, self-contained man, conscientious and helpful, he will be missed by both colleagues and public alike. Ken spent 60 per cent of his career in Glenlivet but he and his wife have chosen to return to their first love, the Scottish West coast, and have moved to Skye.

CHARLIE BATT, forester at Orlestone, retired recently after 36 years' service in SE England. He was presented with a power drill and two tickets to the Continent, which we trust will help his convalescence after a short illness.

BEATRICE STEWART, HEO in Estate Management Division, Headquarters, retired after a Civil Service career spanning 42 years, most of which was spent in the Commission. She was widely known throughout the Commission and her retirement was marked by a buffet lunch at which she was presented with a cheque and camera equipment. Simon Hewitt remarked that during her career Beatrice had incurred only 4½ days uncertified sick leave. Is this a record?

NOEL BLATCHFORD, principal Research Communication Officer, was feted in the Alice Holt Conference Room when Director (R&D) Mr A. J. Grayson presented him with a retirement cheque. His FC service as a Forest Officer began in 1953. He spent five years in S. Wales followed by seven years in Dorchester. Noel started pounding the corridors of Alice Holt in 1966 and enthusiastically introduced computerised technology to the Research Information Section which includes the main FC Library.



Wallet handover

Ian Paterson retired recently at Glenbranter Forest West(s) after having completed 17 years service. He started with the Forestry Commission at Lochgoilhead and later transferred to Glenbranter. He has always been considerate and helpful to his colleagues who gathered at the village hall to wish him a happy retirement. Forest Manager Bob Selmes, on their behalf, presented him with a wallet suitable filled.

Australia here I come . . .

An undistinguished little man, Between Lands End and John O'Groats he ran; Afforestating every day, For nigh of thirty-something year. Wind comes and blows it all away, So in the forest he accomplished just about the same; As any Director General you could name, (Except of course the current one, sir).

They're sending him to Australia, by air, To see if any of this trees came up there; Shouldn't be surprised, His former colleagues wish him — Well, they wish they could remember him Farewell to — er.

Mr G. B. Newsome (retired 30.9.84)

It's paints for Beri

Bert Maw, Storeman/Clerk at Dalby Workshops has taken early retirement after 36 years service.

Bert joined the Commission in 1948 after War Service with the RAF. After a reception at Dalby he was presented with a box of paints by his colleagues and his Long Service Certificate by Mr Tony Spencer, Conservator NE(S).

Sheila takes a soaking

When Clerical Officer Sheila Horsburgh left Lothian and Tweed Forest District, Peebles, after 13 years service, her colleagues decided on an unusual gift — a good soaking in the River Tweed.

Sheila has now taken up an appointment with the Peebles Hydro and we wish her well in her new job.

By the way, the water wasn't too cold and Sheila took her soaking in good part.



CHIEFS OF PERTHSHIRE

After a combined service to forestry of more than 80 years, the "Chiefs of Perthshire" have retired.

Mr Darcy Black, former Chief Forester, Dunkeld, started his forestry career at Cawdor Estate in August 1983 and shortly afterwards, in 1946, Mr Hamish Park, Chief Forester, Tummel, began his service in forestry. To mark their retiral, a joint "fling" (Highland of course!) was held at Scotlands Hotel, Pitlochry.

Guests at the function had the

pleasure of listening to a humorous and revealing account of the earlier years of the latterday chiefs from one of their tutors at Forestry School. Mr Tom Robbie (former Assistant Conservator) was chief Instructor at Glentworth Forestry Training School which Darcy and Hamish both attended (1946-49). To substantiate the talk, a range of photographs were presented for examination.

Conservator, Mr George Taylor, summarised their long

and varied careers which had involved service throughout the four Scottish Conservancies and presented Darcy with a Camera and Hamish with a cheque towards his new garden. Bouquets were presented to Mrs Black and Mrs Park by Rena Tarwinska, Forester, Tummel Forest District.

In our picture from left: Mike Green (F. D. M. Tummel), Hamish Park, George Taylor, Darcy Black, Arthur Cuthbert (F. D. M. Tay).

TOM SAYS GOODBYE TO HUNTLY

When Head Forester Tom Baird cleared his desk in Huntly for the last time, it signified the end of 37 years with the Forestry Commission.

When he left the forces after the war he went to Allean Forest in Strathmummel where he learned his craft before moving to Glentworth Forestry School, Peebles, where he completed his addition to silviculture and began his addition to fishing.

His first posting was to Glenurquhart under the aegis of George Munro who believed that a forester should know his woods like the back of his hand, that he should never ask anyone to do what he couldn't do himself, and that hard work never killed anyone.

He also believed that it was extremely foolish to be overawed by directives from on high whatever their nature or tone. He passed on these beliefs to Tom, who spent the following 30-odd years implementing them, first in Skye where he spent four years managing Glenbrittle Forest, then in Ardross Forest and latterly in Huntly which he joined as Clashindarroch and saw through the following amalgamations to its present shape.

Conservator George Taylor presented him with a cheque from his colleagues and friends to help him forget sitka in his new greenhouse.

Woodwork is Jack's hobby

To mark the retiral of Jack Riddell, Chief Forester at Culloden, after 37 years of service, many of his associates representing forest officers, forester colleagues and office staff gathered at a lunch at the Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness.

Complimentary speeches were made by Forest District Manager G. Dey and by a previous District Manager, F. MacRae, Clerical Officer Mary MacDonald presented Mr Riddell with some books, one of them on the subject of wood-working — one of the hobbies to which Jack now hopes to devote more time.

Retirements



Colin McLean gets down to the task of planting a *Sequoia sempervirens* at the Northern Research Station to mark his retirement.

Colin plants a tree and says farewell to Bush

COLIN McLEAN, Chief Forester, Genetics Branch, has retired after 35 years service with the Commission. He entered forestry as a trainee on the Forest Worker Training Scheme in Cornwall in 1948, then joined the Commission in 1949. After two years at the Dean Forestry School, he joined the Genetics branch in 1951 where his wife-to-be (Joss) had already been working for two years.

Based at Edinburgh and later at Bush Nursery, he spent much of this time on plus-tree and seed stand surveys throughout Britain and then on artificial pollinations and progeny-testing. He is a recognised expert on the native pinewoods and has played a prominent part on their conservation.

Friends and colleagues from all over Britain joined a farewell buffet lunch at Bush House, followed by a tree-planting ceremony at the Northern Research Station. Roy Faulkner, Principal Geneticist, thanked Colin for his long years of loyal service to the Genetics Branch. On behalf of his colleagues, Ian Dawson, Genetics Chief Forester, Westonbirt, presented Colin with a chainsaw, a useful tool for his involvement with the Scottish Wildlife Trust and other conservation work, interests which he will continue in his retirement.

Leader at Coed-y-Brenin

Cyril James started work with the Commission as a juvenile in the early 1940s. After service with the Royal Navy during the last war he rejoined the Commission in January 1947 and subsequently took a leading role in the full range of forest operations at Coed-y-Brenin — from nursery work to harvesting to restocking. In latter years he was involved in recreation management and, amongst other activities, acted as host and guide to numerous school and public visits to the Visitor Centre at Maesgwm, Coed-y-Brenin.

His wide knowledge of forestry, the local community and environment, natural history and agriculture made him an excellent ambassador for the Commission. He was always keen to point out the benefits of forestry in the uplands to the many visitors to Coed-y-Brenin, and in his role as local Parish Councillor and Trade Union representative.

He lived in the heart of the forest for all of his career, first at Tyminde and then at the Commission's smallholding at Dolfrwynog, which he managed very efficiently in addition to his full-time job with the Commission.

A number of local staff, including his daughter Evelyn, who was Forest Clerk at Coed-y-Brenin and is now Clerical Assistant at Dolgellau, joined Assistant Conservator Alistair Scott in the presentation of his 34-year service certificate. Gifts of a watch and shooting stick were presented by his colleagues in recognition of his major contribution to the work of the Commission in the nationally-renowned Coed-y-Brenin.

Because of late arrival a number of retirement notices have had to be held over until the next issue of 'Slasher'.

'Local expert' Ken feted by colleagues

A large number of present and past research colleagues gathered at Bush House for a farewell lunch to Ken Gabriel. After starting work at Benmore W(S) in 1954, Ken went to the Lynford Forester School and then straight to Wykeham to get his basic training in research under the watchful eye of John Weatherell. After 4 years at Mabie S(S), he returned to Wykeham where he soon became head forester and for the next 15 years was responsible for all Silvicultural research in the North York Moors and the Industrial Pennines. It was in this latter field that he quickly established a reputation as the local expert. Having helped to establish the 1959 trial plantations in the Hebden Royd area, he already knew the early experiments and soon had the satisfaction of seeing a new series successfully established and the first thinnings cut from the older plots. The importance of these key experiments was further emphasised when "acid rain" (no new phenomenon) suddenly hit the headlines.

● Ken is seen (right) planting a tree.



SLASHERSPORT



Rosebowl win for Steve

What will possibly be the last golf outing held under the auspices of the East Scotland Golf Club took place at Banchory Golf Club in October. Several of our friends in the timber trade attended and helped to raise the total present to 24.

A rosebowl, previously presented by Messrs James Jones & Son, Larbert, and held prior to the outing by Mr Graham Menzies, Research Branch, Newton, was won on best handicap score of net 63 by Forester Steve Stables of Speyside Forest District. His gross score of 68 was also the best of the day.

We would like to thank all those who have attended past golf outings in East (Scotland) and those members of the timber trade who have donated prizes so generously.

Perhaps the respective golf correspondents in North (S) and West (S) will get together and hold an annual event to play for the rosebowl. Steve Stables has been warned that he has not got it for keeps, though in his present form he may win it again!

MINI-FUN ON THE HILL WITH A VIEW

How many trees grow on Drummond Hill?

That was one of the questions to be answered by competitors in a mini-marathon organised by two Fife policemen and "walked" over eight miles of forest track on Drummond Hill, Kenmore.

The idea for the event followed on from the "Marafun" held by the "Sunday Post" from the David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle, early in August, when over 1000 people took part.

One of the prizes were won by a team from Dunshalt Youth Club, Fife.

Two local bobbies, Alan Buchan and David McLeod, who are joint leader of the youth club, decided to organise a similar venture, albeit on a much smaller scale, and chose Drummond Hill.

Teams were entered from

youth clubs, Boys' Brigade, Scout troops, and police — and, by special invitation, from the "Sunday Post."

There were 20 questions to be answered as well as following the route over and around the hill — with magnificent views in all directions.

The questions included references to the types of trees in the forest — and how many of them! head forester Donald Fraser had been asked to estimate the total.

The answers submitted varied wildly — from 300,000 to as much as 10 million!

Donald's guess was 1.6 million — though he's quite prepared to stand corrected if anyone wishes to go round and count every tree individually!

Apart from trees and super views, the forest produced such goodies as a buzzard continually circling overhead, roe deer

crossing the path, and some of the biggest, juiciest brambles you've ever seen!

The team from the "Sunday Post" were eventually judged to have come first — and were presented with a handsome trophy by Donald Fraser.

The cup was donated for the occasion by the Cupar Police Social Club, and will be available for annual competition.

Donald's not sure what he'll have to estimate next year — maybe the number of needles on a spruce!

● Our picture shows Mr Donald Fraser, head forester, Drummond Hill, Kenmore, with some of the participants at Drummond Hill. Mr Fraser presented the trophy to winning team (Jill Scott, Brian Wilson, Les Hunter and Ron Paton, from editorial dept, "Sunday Post").

Europe takes a fancy to our firs

EXPORT BOON OF NOBLES

The Forestry Commission is cashing in on a specialist export market which could eventually bring over £100,000 a year.

The commodity: Noble fir branches which are much in demand on the continent for festive decorations, wreaths and floral art work because of the colour and the capacity for needle retention.

In Germany alone, between 4000 and 5000 tonnes of Noble fir foliage go into the shops and Sandy Greig, Marketing Officer, is determined the Commission can fill a part of that lucrative market. "We have exported small quantities of Noble fir foliage for many years but now we are looking to expand on our share of the German market.

"Last year, 50 tonnes were collected by a squad of Danish merchants operating in Commission forests in North Wales. This year 200 tonnes have been cut and this should bring in some £20,000.

"We are now trying to identify the suitable stands for harvesting and while there is the scope for increased export, there is also the potential of a very worthwhile home market."

The Danish squad of three men were photographed operating in a 30-year-old stand in the

Ruthin Forest District of North Wales. They used a platform lift to take one man to the higher levels of selected trees to cut off one-metre branches from the fifth to the eighth whorl. These are bunched and wire tied. The team can usually gather three tonnes in a day and in this particular stand around 30 tonnes were cut from five hectares.

"The beauty of this particular operation is that it is difficult to detect those trees from which branches have been cut and yet this sort of quantity can be cut from a good stand every second year," said Mr Greig. "In Denmark, where they have developed Noble fir stand management for foliage over many years, they reckon they can average five tonnes per hectare per annum from the time the plantation is 10-years-old until it is clearfelled. There is probably some loss of timber production but this is totally outweighed by the value of the foliage harvest.

"Because of its attractive blue-green colour and excellent needle retention, the Noble fir is becoming very popular in Britain as a Christmas tree although it is still in very short supply. When you add on the potential market for floral art outlets, it is a species that could be a very worthwhile income earner."



A stand of Noble firs — from which branches have been cut. Could you tell?



Above: Selected branches being cut.



Weighing and tying bunches.



Marketing Officer Sandy Greig with foliage that will be on sale in Germany.