SLASHER

Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

AUTUMN 1986 326

ROYAL ASSENT

THE Forestry Commission exhibit at the Black Isle Show was given The Royal approval by Her Majesty the Queen Mother. On a visit to the centenary show Her Majesty spent 20 minutes studying the wildlife conservation display organised by North Scotland Conservancy.

After meeting Conservator Jim Atterson in the crowded alleyway adjacent to the marquee, she spent time chatting with wildlife ranger Tony Hinde comparing points raised in the FC exhibition with her own experiences at Castle of Mey and Balmoral.

Tony Hinde said, "She was very knowledgeable, particularly about game, and was delighted to see the efforts being made to provide artificial nesting sites in the area."



Research puts the accent on our wildlife

THE Forestry Commission and the Nature Conservancy Council have announced that two new initiatives have been taken on research into wildlife conservation in forests and woodlands.

The first is a study focusing on the large spruce forests of the England/Scotland border and its objective will be to investigate how management practices can be modified so as to improve upland forest for wildlife. A record of the fauna and flora will be taken at a random selection of sites in the forest and this will form the basis for describing more general vegetation types and successions.

The research project is for three years initially.

Andy Neustein, the Commission's Chief Research Officer. (North) said, "This project presents a tremendous challenge. The Commission recognises that upland forests can, with careful management, become more diverse ecosystems encouraging a wide range of wildlife. The project will help to provide practical guidance for managers."

The second initiative relates to management practices within broadleaf woodland. For the past year the Nature Conservancy Council has been reviewing the literature related to the effects of changing woodland management (the species composition, age structure and silvicultural system) on the wildlife. A *particular aspect of this study is the effect of conifers when grown in mixtures with broadleaves rather than as pure* crops.

This is a common forestry practice which has long caused considerable concern to the Council. The Commission will now examine their records to identify mixtures of conifers and broadleaves which might be suitable for detailed study of the effects of this practice and the Council and the Commission will jointly consider a programme of studying changes under mixed woodland.

● During a visit to the Royal Norfolk Show, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh dropped into the Forestry Commission exhibit where he was welcomed by Gerry Haggett, District Forester, Thetford.



Lost opportunities, says Minister

VITAL ROLE OF FARMING

FARM forestry will have a vital role to play in both supplementing more traditional types of forestry and as an important alternative source of income for farmers.

That was the message from Mr John Mackay, Minister for Agriculture at the Scottish Office, to delegates at the Farming and Forestry Conference at Loughborough University.

Mr Mackay said that over the years there had been comparatively little integration of farming and forestry — "in many ways it has been a tale of lost opportunities."

But with the continuing agricultural crops surplus crisis, timber was appearing as "a bright star in the firmament of possible alternative crops."

The Minister said that Government looked for forestry to expand at the rate of some 25,000-30,000 hectares a year to supply increasing volumes of timber for modern industry and to produce that timber, in terms of quality and price, which is competitive in world terms.

Turn to Page 4.

SPORTS CLUB CRISIS LOOMS

New appeal to all members

DEREK BENOY, Chairman of the FC (Edinburgh) Sports and Social Club, has appealed for more all-round support otherwise a special general meeting may have to be called to decide the club's future.

Despite a personal plea by the chairman and office-bearers' reports and papers outlining the crisis faced by the club, only 33 members from a total of 370 attended the annual general meeting in July.

In a subsequent message to members, Mr Benoy said: "The bar and club can only continue if all club members are prepared, in addition to paying their subscription, to give some real, positive (not just promised) ongoing financial and physical support to all the club's activities."

He appealed for assistance (unpaid) in manning the bar, more custom for the bar and ideas and help in running and attending functions and events.

It was indicated that some extra level of support would be promised and it was agreed by a majority vote to increase to £2 per annum the club membership for 1986-87.

The committee agreed to keep going until later in the year when the financial / support situation will again be reviewed.

Commission backing for new information centre



145,000 VISITORS ARE EXPECTED

WITH financial assistance from the Forestry Commission, New Forest District Council has opened a new information centre in Lyndhurst to replace the existing caravan, which was originally donated by the Commission. The English Tourist Board has also contributed.

Our photograph shows Recreation and Range Manager, Roy Hughes, third from the left, and Head Forester Martin Fletcher (right), with some of the District Council staff and Tourist Board at the centre.

The Forestry Commission will be supplying information and expertise to the new centre, which is expected to deal with 145,000 visitors a year.

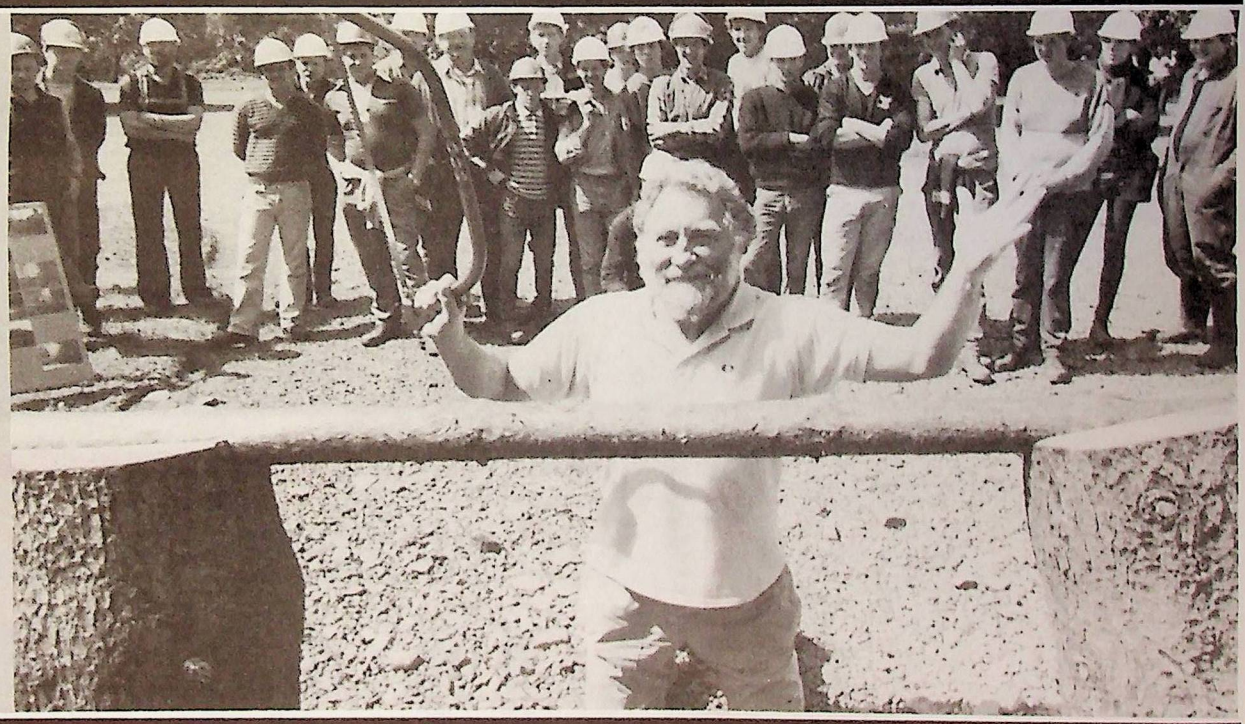
BELLAMY ON HIS KNEES TO OPEN A PICNIC SITE

DAVID BELLAMY opened the Hamsterley Forest Grove picnic place — a new public recreation area.

The work was done entirely by the Community Task Force sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission in accordance with a development plan prepared by local Forestry Commission staff. The project employed a CTF team of local youths for about 18 months. They supplied the manpower and we provided materials, signs and a new forest walks leaflet.

This is part of an ongoing programme of recreation and conservation work done by Community Task Force with the full co-operation of the Transport and General Workers Union who were represented at the opening by the beat steward Bill Wigston.

David Bellamy, who lives nearby, takes a close interest in developments in the forest. The Forest District Manager, Malcolm Shirley, asked him to open The Grove by sawing through a pole, which he did expertly after praying to "Allah" for guidance.



OPEN HOUSE

LAMMERMUIR House opened in May 1986 and some permanent residents have moved in. On July 30 the Queen officially declared the house open.

Among the 250 guests were Ron Brown MBE and his wife Christine, Caroline Jones and her husband Tony, and Brian Atwell, Departmental Welfare Officer. Ron is Chairman of Osborne House Committee (the Fund now manage Osborne House on the Isle of Wight), Caroline is on the Lammermuir House Committee, and both had the honour of speaking informally to the Queen after the ceremony.

Places at Lammermuir House are available to Civil Servants and their dependents: residential places are still available and convalescent places can be arranged. For details, contact Caroline Jones.

If you would like to visit, and look around, Lammermuir House, contact Caroline Jones. The matron welcomes visitors and you can have tea and enjoy the fabulous views from the dining-room . . . for a modest charge.

Brian Atwell, Forestry Commission Co-ordinator of the Civil Service Benevolent Fund Centenery Year Appeal, hopes that all Forestry Commission staff and pensioners have a greater awareness of the aims of the Fund. This year, staff have been asked for donations and have been invited to become subscribers to the Fund. In return, as well as Homes, the Fund does offer ongoing financial help to Civil Service pensioners suffering hardship and to staff on long-term sick leave or facing an unexpected financial crisis. Brian and Caroline can testify that the Civil Service Benevolent Fund has helped Forestry Commission staff and pensioners.

IT'S A DEAL



THE Commission and the British Herpetological Society have signed an agreement to protect some of the last surviving patches of countryside in Devon inhabited by all six British native reptiles. Martin Orrom, Environment Officer for West England, said, "Forest management now has a lot of conservation requirements built into it. They are not bolt-on extras anymore."

The Commission has agreed to leave areas of Wareham Forest clear of trees to encourage all three British lizards and the adder and grass and smooth snakes. Keith Corbett of BHS said, "We welcome this agreement as the sort of heathland favoured by reptiles used to cover a vast part of Dorest but is now reduced to a few remnants."

PICTURE: Martin Orrom (right) and Keith Crobett sign the new agreement.

TIME TO STOP THIS WASTE

THE Tree Council is concerned about the lack of attention being given to thousands of acres of derelict waste land in and around Britain's cities and towns as well as in the countryside.

It says: "These areas, the result of neglect and caused by the rundown of industry, the disposal of refuse, the tips from mimes and the rundown of railways, could become valuable recreation areas if they were landscaped and planted with trees."

During National Tree Week (November 29 to December 7) the Tree Council is demanding that a start be made to rehabilitate "these derelict and disgraceful eyesores."

CALL FOR ACTION

SIR Derek Barber, Chairman of the Countryside Commission, has called for a "new and imaginative" approach to forestry which would benefit recreation, landscape and nature conservation as well as timber production.

Presenting the Countryside Commission's annual report, he argued that forestry needed more inspired designs in more imaginative places. "This could mean planting substantial forests in the urban fringes and creating major new multi-purpose recreational forests," he said.

LETTER FROM AFRICA

ANYONE wish to be a penpal to a fatherless 15-year-old African schoolboy? He wrote with his request to the information Division of the Commission in Edinburgh. If anyone cares to write to him, would you please also enclose a photograph of yourself.

His name is Fodayba Jaiteh and his address is: Brikama Secondary Technical School, Brikama Town, Kombo Central, Western Division, The Gambia, W/Africa.

SHOOTERS ON THE MARK

THE second rifle shooting competition at Malton Rifle Club attracted teams from North Yorks Moors and Yorkshire Forest District Offices and the N(E) Conservancy Office. Team winners of the Yorkshire Challenge Shield were Conservancy Office. Individual trophies were won by Charles Critchley (men)) and Penny Clark (ladies).

IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POND!



Glynn Price and Mike Webster.



Martin Lipscombe and Tim Sawyer.

WHEN considering what might be done as a special effort for National Tree Week, the thoughts of Marches Forest District staff turned to the large-scale fellings at Whitcliffe resulting from Dendroctonus micans.

The major portion of the clearfelling had already been re-planted but the old peeler site remained. During the Dendroctonus operation some 15,000 m of material was peeled; an additional requirement being that the bark should be buried — all 2,500 tonnes of it.

The result of all this work was an area of industrial dereliction of about 2.5 ha in a very sensitive area frequently visited by the public. Nothing is ever all bad though, during the operations an articial pond was formed. Open water is a rarity in Marches Forest District and in conjunction with Civil Engineering Branch, plans are being made to landscape the pond and turn it into an attractive feature.

The surround to the pond will carry a crop of oak with some ash and alder and the planting of the first of these trees was formally undertaken by Glynn Price, a pupil at Ludlow School.

Glynn was chosen for the honour because he had previously spent two weeks working in the forest as part of a scheme co-ordinated by the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative in South Shropshire.

The scheme was selected as our contribution to National Tree Week because of the ease of building it into the larger scheme of things. There are a number of forest walks at Whitcliffe and some of these will be re-routed to take advantage of the new feature.

CLUES ACROSS:

1. Wader in Plank? (4).
3. Quiet French island makes the driven post (4).
7. Forest animal could sound like a Scottish rodent (3).
8. and 6 down. Yes Ron, my sceptre is ordered for the seaside tree (8 and 7).
9. Timber for playing cards? (4).
11. Breathed by trees in Fair Isle (3).
12. Found in trees and in pure singers (5).
14. Joiners use these shellfish and afterthoughts (6).
15. This timber had gone ripe on mixture (6, 4).
20. Fifty from the smallest points to the rising sun (4).
23. and 5 down. Re-super pole compound for medicinal preservation (8 and 9).
24. She was left by a poor brasher (3).

CLUES DOWN:

1. This forest was 60 in 86, so it must be 61 in 87 (7).
2. In Goa known as a tree (3).
3. First put light on, then sound disgusted at cultivator (6).
4. These roots all tear when blown (7).
5. See 21 Across.
6. See 8 Across.
10. Flowers the visitor to Hawaii might receive (3).
13. Smart tree! (6).
14. Seed container (4).
16. What the beater-up seeks to avoid (4).
17. This stake must be made from whitewood! (4).
18. This organisation and its numbers are important in Paris or here (3).
19. The end often presented in extraction (3).
21. Wood record! (3).
22. Just Look! — But not alright (2).



FOREST OPEN DAY SUCCESS AT WENDOVER

A BEAUTIFULLY sunny day drew hundreds of interested visitors into Wendover Woods for an open day. This was the first event on this scale since the Commission's Golden Jubilee in 1969 and it proved a tremendous success.

The open day was organised by Chief Forester Keith Wallis, ably supported by a band of enthusiastic helpers. Interest focused on conducted walks and static exhibits. More than 400 people were treated to guided walks lasting about an hour and a half.

Demonstrations were given of tree planting (stressing that this was out of season!), mechanical weeding, tree felling (safety emphasised), clearing saws and wildlife protection (the ferrets proved to be a real attraction!). A high level of interest was shown by the public.

It is probable that more than 1000 people walked round the exhibition, housed in a marquee. As well as demonstrations of forest tools and machinery there were displays of forest produce and a special wildlife diorama. The latter appealed particularly to the children, who found the stuffed animals irresistible. A model of a badger set, made by forester Andrew Medhurst (out of paper mache!) was particularly effective.

The total cost of the exercise was minimal, made up of overtime wages for forest craftsmen, and advertising. A number of local papers carried features as well as eye-catching adverts and two local radio stations took up the story.

Considering the success, it would seem that the money was well spent.

The interest shown by visitors and the positive feedback that was received, has prompted the Chilterns Forest District staff to consider another open day in 1987. With a catchment of some hundreds of thousands of people in close proximity to the woods, there is certainly plenty of scope to promote the work of the Forestry Commission in the area.

VITAL ROLE

From Page 1.

"This suggests that much of the expansion of forestry will continue to be achieved through traditional types of planting and that farm forestry will supplement this, not replace it," he said.

"I am not suggesting, of course, that traditional forestry itself should escape the process of change. Far from it. It is already changing to meet heightened public perceptions of the need to protect the beauty and quality of our countryside. But beyond this, the opportunity is now opening up — and the pressures are building up — for a higher proportion of new forestry to come 'down the hill' onto better land. Not only will this mean more productive forestry, but it will offer much greater opportunities for introducing a greater variety of species into our woodlands — for moving away from what many see as monotonous, blanket forestry — and for a better blending of forestry into the existing pattern of land use.

Decisions

"Let there be no doubt about it, the Government is anxious to encourage farm foresty but important decisions have to be made on how best that might be achieved.

"Any proposals will, of course, have to be justifiable in economic as well as social terms. No doubt there will be many an argument over just what that means, but clearly savings in agricultural support costs and the contribution that farm forestry can make to meeting the demands of our timber-using industries must come into the reckoning.

"There is no guaranteed future for any scheme that does not make economic sense, and I very much want to see farm forestry become part of our traditional forestry scene."

New mill proposed

AN application from the Finnish company, Kaukas, to build a £200m paper mill at Irvine, Ayrshire, has been approved by the New town Development Corporation.

Kaukas is expected to make a final decision on the proposed investment before the end of the year and is not engaged in final feasibility studies.

PROMOTIONS

CONGRATULATIONS to two Forestry Commission staff who have received individual merit promotion.

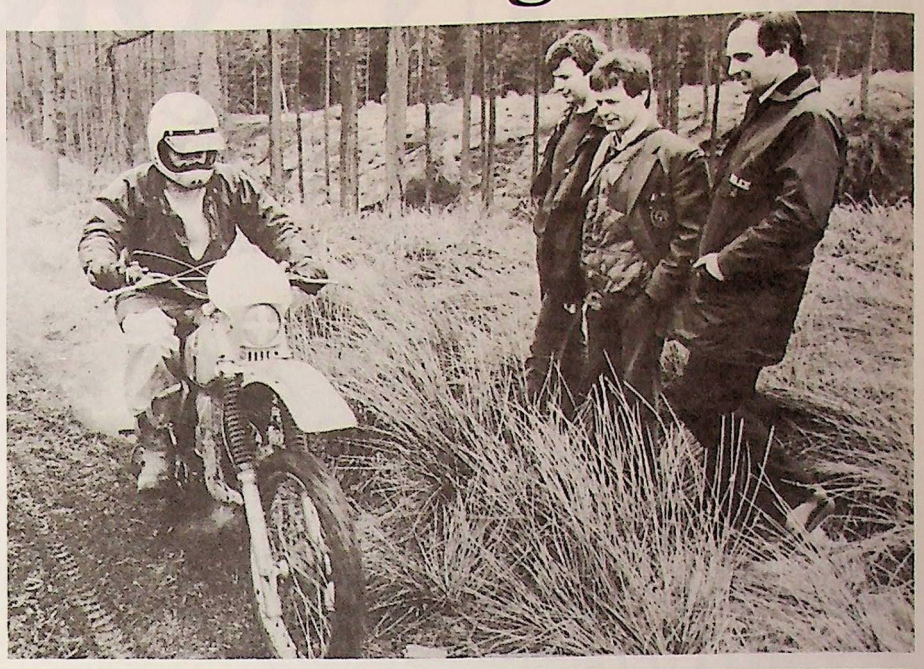
Dr Clive Brasier, Principal Scientific Officer, Mycologist, Research Division, is particularly recognised for his work on Dutch elm disease but his other research work has also earned him a reputation both at home and abroad. Dr Michael Coutts, Principal Scientific Officer, Physiology, NRS, has led projects which are fundamental to the silviculture and breeding of commercial forest-tree species and their protection against insects and diseases.

DON'T . . .

IF anyone is about to throw away copies of the Forestry Commission Journal Nos. 1-16 and 18, Bill Wittering at the Conservancy Office, Cambridge, would be glad to have them.

Head Forester Dave on right track

SCRAMBLE COURSE TO HELP BEAT THE WRECKERS



THE man on the bike is head forester Dave Williams out for a spin on the scramble course gifted by Llanwynno FD — the first forestry to gift a slice of land to bikers in a bid to stamp out illegal motor-cycle scrambling.

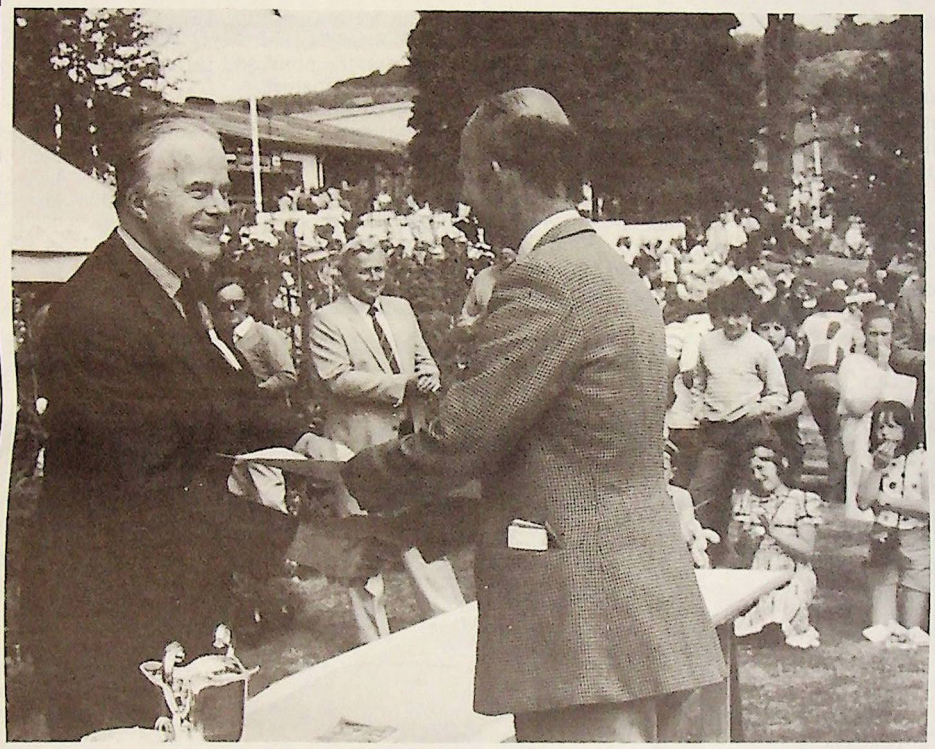
Illegal motor-cyclists cause a headache for foresters and people using the woodland for family walks. They break down fences, destroy young plants, frighten horse riders and hikers.

Now, deep in the heart of the forest, they can race around the course — disturbing no-one. Credit for the course goes to Head Forester Dave Williams and community policeman Brian Griffiths.

Work on the project started last April. A bridge has now been built over the stream on the advanced scramble course by members of the new scramble club.

But even with the new course some people are still riding roughshod through the forest. Earlier this year forester Alan Bath found two stolen bikes hidden in undergrowth. One was worth £1000.

Mr Williams said: "It is very much an experiment and other forestries are keeping an eye on how the scheme is progressing."



Lord Gibson-Watt to retire after 10 years

THE Rt. Hon. Lord Gibson-Watt is to retire after ten years as a part-time Forestry Commissioner. He lives in Doldowlod, Llandrindod Wells, where he is a farmer and woodland owner.

He is seen here presenting the Forestry Awards at the 1986 Royal Welsh Show, held in Llanelwedd, Builth Wells.

Also in the picture is Mark Yorke, Forest District Manager Dolgellau, who received a Certificate of Merit for the Duke of Cornwall's Award for Forestry and Conservation for Penaran, Dolgellau.

COACH TRIPS IN TOP GEAR

FOLLOWING numerous enquiries from the public and a request from Mid-Glamorgan County Council, John Griffiths, Community Forester at Llanwynno, has organised another series of coach trips enabling the public to have an insight into the work of the Forestry Commission in the industrial South Wales Valleys.

Originally designed as part of the FC participation in IYF last year, the tours sought to provide a day of interest and to highlight three elements. Initially, the route has been devised to include spectacular and impressive views of the landscape, both afforested and unafforested, varying from the Brecon Beacons to the Rhondda Valleys. Secondly, to provide a visit to a working harvesting site, and finally, to demonstrate how the FC in the area are manipulating crops to improve landscaping and provide recreation and leisure facilities for a wide range of interests from car rallies to orienteering.

VISITOR CENTRE

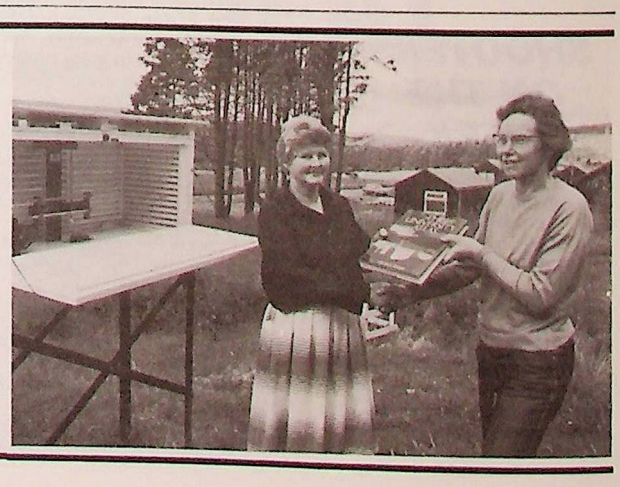
Each coach has been accompanied by a Forester "courier" who has provided all the essential information and answered the wide range of questions asked by the visitors. In order to provide visitors with an opportunity to acquire a souvenir of their day out, the tour includes a stop at the Garw Nant Visitor Centre with its shop and splendid views of the adjoining reservoirs.

This year's tours have been even more successful than last year and, in addition to having to put on additional coaches, the number of tours has been increased to provide for the weeks when many more people have sought bookings than could be accommodated.

WRITE AN ESSAY — WIN £300

A MAJOR forestry essay competition for young people has been launched by the Forestry Commission. It is linked to the 40th anniversary of the Timber Committee of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the European Forestry Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Known as "The Forestry Commission Essay Award 1987," it is open to British residents aged 30 and under. The winner will receive £300 and will spend a week in Geneva in October 1987, at the joint meeting of the two bodies. Essays should not exceed 8000 words and be within the general theme of "the contribution that forestry and the forest industries can make to the material and social well-being of people in the next century."

Atlas for observer Grace



MRS GRACE Russell, CO, was presented with an Atlas by Miss Marjory Roy, Superintendent, Meteorological Office, Edinburgh, at Mull Forest District Office as an appreciation of over 15 years as an observer at Mull Forest Meteorological Station.

AND SO IT'S GOODBYE TO OUR 'GUESTS'

HIP . . . HIP . . . HIP. But, sadly, there was absolutely nothing to cheer about — except a surge of anger — at the mess the "hippies" made when they invaded the New Forest in their "peace convoy".

The pictures of some of the scenes at Stoney Cross hurt and shamed the eye.



Miscellaneous artefacts in the camp, including (right) a harmonium.



Covered in Commission litter bags . . . They kept the rain out!



Morning has broken — and a deserted campfire is visited by one of our four-legged friends.



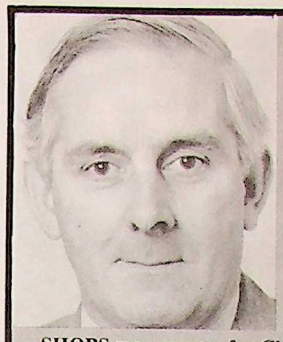
"WELCUM" says the mis-spelled sign . . . but they weren't!

THE pictures were taken by Tony Russell and Robin Allen.

Labour MPs visit Straiton FD



PICTURED on a recent visit to Straiton FD (Ayrshire) are Scottish Labour MPs. From left: Tam Dalyell (West Lothian), David Lambie (Ayrshire Central), John Home Robertson (Berwick and East Lothian), William McKelvey (Kilmarnock), John Maxton (Glasgow Cathcart), Mrs McKelvey, Michael Martin (Glasgow Springburn), FC Chairman Sir David Montgomery, Alan Howarth, Secretary of the Scottish Group of Labour MPs, George Foulkes (South Ayrshire), George Taylor, Conservator South Scotland.



TIMBER TOPICS

JOHN OAKLEY

SHOPS may prepare for Christmas in October or even late September, but for foresters Christmas starts in earnest in November. This is the time when they turn their thoughts to the retail sale of Christmas trees (sales to the trade have already been arranged and all that is left is the trees to be cut and despatched). Therefore attention can be given to the needs of the local sales centre — huts are swept out, temporary fencing erected and maybe a string of lights are tested.

There are times when I wonder if we are not in danger of being too complacent and following too blindly the routine which appears to have served us well in the past. Let us stop for a moment and consider what we are trying to do.

During the past few years, the real Christmas has made a comeback. This is possibly because the public are more aware of natural goods and products. But it has also been influenced by the soaring costs of artificial trees and a more or less static price for real trees in real terms. There has been little change in real tree prices, because in an estimated market of 4 million, 1.7 million trees are imported.

It is important not to underestimate the effect of these imported trees. Generally speaking they are good quality, specially grown, freshly cut and despatched direct from the grower to the wholesale market by lorry; they can be available to the final customer within a week to ten days of being cut. Prices are reasonable and in many areas it is the imported tree which is setting the standard. Families are now beginning to question the need for a trip to the forest to buy their tree.

This poses a challenge for home producers. It is important to remember that people buy a real Christmas tree for sentimental rather than rational reasons and we must appeal to their sentiments when selling. A trip to the forest to buy the family tree must be made an event rather than a necessity.

There are several points which we should bear in mind. It goes without saying that we must offer fresh, good quality trees at reasonable prices but I think we must concentrate more on providing an "experience" to the whole family when they reach the forest. We are selling entertainment as well as a tree.

The quality of our trees starts many years earlier with the choice of planting sites and the provenance of the seed. Quite frankly, we have now reached the stage where we can no longer rely on being able to supply the market from ordinary forest plantations established at close spacing and thinned out to provide Christmas trees. To compete effectively we must grow Christmas trees specially for the market. The choice of species is not restricted to the traditional Norway Spruce. Indeed, I would suggest that it is probably one of the least suitable trees to use.

We should, however, increase the proportion of pines, especially Scots and Lodgepole Pine, and of the *Abies* species, of which *A. Procera* and *A. Nordmanniana* are probably the best. The reason for this change is based on the result of market research in 1981 which showed that the principal objection to the real tree is on the grounds of needle drop. Norway Spruce drops its needles whereas pines and *Abies* do not — so it would seem clear where our efforts should lie.

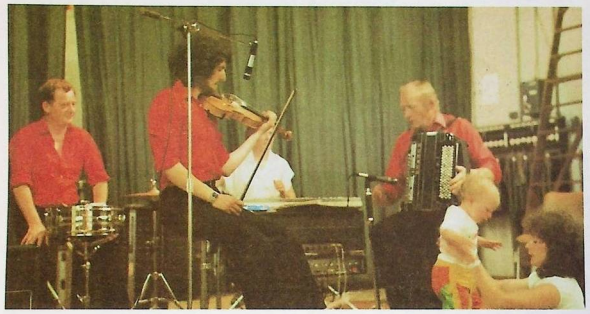
One of the disadvantages of pines is that they are not always a good shape and have fewer branches on which to hang decorations. This disadvantage can be overcome by the initial choice of seed or by shearing a few years before harvesting. The effect of shearing is to encourage the growth of a number of shoots from each cut branch thereby producing a more compact bushy tree. At the same time a tree which is unbalanced in its growth can often be improved by selective shearing. Costs per tree are low in relation to the value of the end product.

A word about sales centres. These are our shop windows. A bright cheerful centre will encourage people to buy, and what is more to tell their friends to come and buy. It is these recommendations and return visits which we must encourage. A great deal of effort and ingenuity is displayed at our centres but I would like to mention some of the more obvious points which can be overlooked. Local advertising is well worthwhile to let the public know the opening hours of the centre — and please do open at weekends! Make certain that sign-posting is comprehensive and start at the main roads leading to the centre. If cars have to travel long distances over a forest road to reach the centre, even if there are no turn-offs, do consider the use of repeater signs just to let the driver know that he has not been abandoned! If parking is difficult use marshalls at peak times.

It helps to keep trees in relatively small batches separated by temporary fencing. This will reduce the "battlefield" effect which results from hundreds of people picking over the trees. However, at the end of the day there will always be trees which get damaged or which were below standard to start with. These can still be sold but in a special "cut-price" area. It is important not to mix these with quality trees — the use of "shop soiled" discounts are familiar to everybody.

Finally, I would like to mention ancillary sales and catering. These really do add a certain extra dimension to a visit. If it can be done "in-house" all well and good, but there is no reason why local charities or Wildlife Trusts should not be offered the opportunity to provide these services. It all helps the festive spirit and public relations!

THEY'RE ALL SPARKLERS AT KIELDER



Paul Hill-Tout gets the yompers under starting orders.



Party-time for all ages at one of the

IT WAS celebrations all the way when Kielder Forest staged its Diamond Jubilee folk festival / yomp / fell race.

Hundreds of people turned out to enjoy the folk music staged at the community centre and the village school on Saturday and Sunday and runners were out in force for the 20-mile yomp, and the fell race.

In the fell race, former Kielder head forester John Stannard, now with Kyle FD, was first home in 2 hours 42 minutes. Four minutes behind was Bruce Louden from Wark, with Ian White, Morpeth Harriers third.

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tions were hard, especially in the
ather.
out, who bore the brunt of the
aid the whole weekend had gone
than expected. "From the lessons
ed this year I would hope for
erned that we can make this an
he said.



Left to right Ian White (3rd) John Stannard (1st) and Bruce Loudon after the fell race.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Kielder WI — also the Parish Council — I would like to say how much the 60th year celebrations were enjoyed. We had two wonderful days — even the weather was glorious — and there is no better place than Kielder when the sun is shining.

The FC employees were very efficient and helpful. It has proved that people don't come to Kielder to have miniature railways etc. etc. but they love the countryside — its beauty and peace more than anything.

I have been asked by many of the residents and those who visited to ask if this could be an annual event. We used to have an annual May Day Celebration which was similar — they were always well attended and enjoyed.

I am sure the WI and the people of Kielder would co-operate. It really seems as though we are coming out of the doldrums. I can see the village improving — if only we could have even half a dozen young families in the houses standing empty — with workers it would make a big difference to the village life.

With our school and community centre we have marvellous facilities. It was a shame the WI could not do catering at the weekend — but we have catered for over 300 people visiting the forests this year in groups and as we only have 18 members, it has been enough. We were very grateful to be allowed to have a Prize Draw over the weekend and our funds have gained so that we can give away to help other local funds at Christmas.

Please — do consider having a similar weekend next year or in the future.

There are many improvements to be made, e.g. the litter was a problem and too many people joined in the catering so that really nobody was very happy with the profit — but these matters can be overcome.

The music was just wonderful — sports were good and could be extended. There could be craft displays etc. etc. So many improvements would add to the success.

If at any time you would like me to help we will do our best. I sincerely hope the Castle will be developed. Looking forward to seeing it restored!

Yours Sincerely,
Mrs E. Hope.
(Hon Sec WI and Parish Council Chairman),
Gowanburn, Kielder.

SORRY TO BADGER BUT YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

IN RECENT years, badgers have regularly featured as headline news due to the continuing saga of their connections with outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis and with moves to increase their protection under law.

With all this interest it would seem likely that most of the basic questions such as "... why do badgers appear in one area but not in another?", or even "... how many are there left in Britian?", had long since been answered.

In fact, we are remarkably ignorant about the basic needs of the badger and have only a vague understanding of the answers to these questions. Careful observation and radio-tracking studies have made considerable advances in our knowledge of badger biology; social group structure, their interactions, dispersal and diet are all the subject of intense, and long-term studies.

But what of the questions of how many, where and why? There is no doubt that in some areas the numbers of badgers appear to be quite high; equally it is apparent that in some areas they have reached dangerously low levels — and from what little we do know, they appear to be slow to recover and recolonise vacant areas.

In view of the lack of up-to-date knowledge of their whereabouts, and the many changes in farming practices, woodland and hedgerow removal, and persecution — all of which will have significant effects on numbers — the Nature Conservancy Council and Dr Stephen Harris of Bristol University set about organising a National Survey of badgers. The method they chose was one based on an earlier successful survey of otters. The aim is to get a wide coverage of all types of habitat based as much on their distinctive features as their geographical position (although the two are obviously linked), and to do so in a relatively short time span (approximately two years in the first instance).

This seems like quite a tall order considering the size of Britain, but the size of the problem can be reduced by sampling a 1km square from every 15km squares in a grid across the country.

The measurements taken while in the field exploit the fact that badgers live in groups and are territorial, often marking boundaries with latrines and well-trodden paths. Signs of activity are noted in the presence or absence of footprints, latrines and paths throughout the km square. When any holes are located, their position is marked on a large-scale map of the area, and they are assigned to one of 4 catergories of sett (main, annex, subsidiary, outlier) according to their extent and use.

We know from previous work that each social group contains one main sett. Since information is already available on the typical number of badgers in each group in different habitats, we can construct an overall, countrywide, picture of badger density. For squares where there are no setts, but paths, footprints or latrines, we can still register a level of badger activity.

Equally, by comparing all the features of the squares (from geology to land-use), in which badgers are absent with those in which they are present, we can begin to piece together their basic habitat requirements.

To this end a record of the vegetation in the 1km square is also noted down. This is in the form of broad classes such as conifer plantation, natural conifer woodland, broadleaved plantation, natural broadleaved woodland, clear-felled woodland, young plantation etc. For all the squares to be surveyed, maps, a record sheet, and detailed guidelines are provided so that everyone is clear as to what information is needed.



National survey is on the way

To cover such a wide area, a great deal of manpower is needed, so where possible we have volunteers surveying those few squares which occur near their homes of work places. As there is only one person (myself!) working full-time on this project, without the volunteers' help the survey would have no chance of being finished on time. If it is not carried out within the relatively short timespan allowed, the benefits of discovering the complete national picture, at a certain point in time, will be lost.

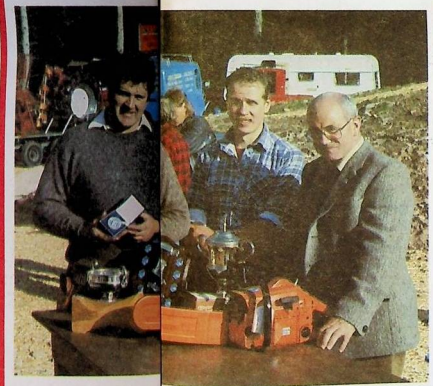
For obvious reasons the exact locations of any setts would never be published; the aim is to produce an overall density and distribution picture for badgers throughout mainland Britian. Without such knowledge as to why they select one site over another, we can have no real chance of making sure those needs are met, other than on a very small localised scale. And without being sure of their exact status, and likely fluctuations in numbers over the next few years, any changes in policy can only be taken (if not in the dark) within a narrow view-point.

So if you feel you could spare a day or two walking about the countryside looking for signs of badgers, please write to: Dr Stephen Harris, Zoology Department, Bristol University, Woodland Road, BRISTOL, BS8 1UG.

*It would help if you could indicate in which forest you work, and whether you might also be able to survey some nearby farmland.

BRENDA MAYLE

YOU'RE TOPS FELLERS...



Michael Grieve an

FORESTRY Commission workers and Hugh Duffy took first and se the National Tree Felling Contest South Scotland.

Sponsored by the Commission o Royal Scottish Forestry Society, attracted a full entry of 50 conte over Britain — 23 of them from the

According to the judges, the entrants set a high standard on and speed.

For Duncan Gillies, from Arg trict, it was his third victory having spot in 1979 and in 1982. Apart fro bumper selection of prizes include and safety equipment.

Of the championship trees at D Norway spruce) he said, "They w

uncan Gillies show off the spoils of success.

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spaced than at some previous events but the level site did not make things easy for any of us."

Runner-up was Hugh Duffy from Mull Forest District, winner in 1981 and 1984, who won a selection of clothing and equipment.

In third place and winner of the Forestry Commission Safety Medal for the lowest number of penalty points among the five finalists, was Michael Grieve, a self-employed forward driver from Nether Parkgate, Dumfries. Chris Levell, FC, Hawick, was fourth.

In the chainsaw carving competition first prize of safety boots and a £20 prize went to J. Potts, FC, Hexham.

It was the second successive year that the contest had been staged at Dalbeattie and with extended car parking space and a larger area for trade stand and demonstrations a record crowd attended.

CHIPS? THEY'RE VERY IMPORTANT

FOR a number of years British foresters have been looking at Scandinavian harvesting systems which utilise the lop and top from felling operations. The benefits are likely to be an increase in wood fibre production and fewer problems with brash when replanting.

Foresters in various parts of the country have recently been finding this out for themselves. There are now five chippers working regularly in FC forests harvesting lop and top from clear fell sites. The material being produced is being sold as a horticultural mulch in East Anglia and as a fuel for the Tormore Whisky distillery, Speyside, in Scotland. It is also used in paper making at Ashton Paper Mill, Gwent, and is being investigated as a possible source of raw material for particle board manufacture.

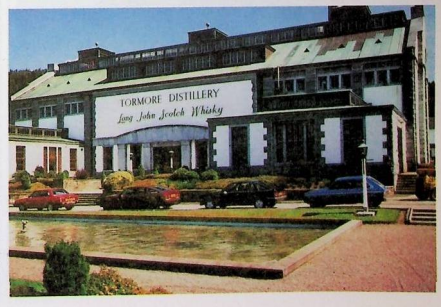
The pulp and particle board markets are potentially the most important as they will not only add value to a low-value product but also increase supplies of wood fibre to industries whose demands at present exceed supply.

Mobile chipping units are being used in three of the operations. The so-called "chipharvesters" consist of a chipping unit and hopper mounted on a forwarder chassis.

The other operations involve material being extracted to roadside where it is processed by a trailer mounted chipper or the material is chipped on site using a tractor towed chipper.

These recent developments have been market-led and the chipping is largely confined to pine and hardwood sites, where access and chip quality is good. Development of chipping in spruce crops has been slower because of fears about the ability of these large machines to work economically on soft soils, as they remove the lop and top carpet prepared for and used by other harvesting machinery. During the next six months Work Study Branch will be carrying out trials at Kielder to try to find practical solutions to this problem.





RETIREMENTS

THE MANY TALENTS OF A DYNAMO CALLED ROD

LIKE bee colonies, human organisations are powered by dynamic individuals who become centres of activity, and one such person has departed the Forestry Commission, a trifle reluctantly let it be said.

From his early days in the Forest of Dean through Savile Row, Lyndhurst, York and finally Cambridge, Rod Hewitt displayed that energy, tenacity and attention to detail that qualified him in the end not only for the top job in the gargantuan new East (England) Conservancy that was largely his own brainchild, but for the demanding and exposed chairmanship of the Management Structure Review Group.

That report set off waves of change lapping into the farthest backwaters of the organisation. And don't forget his membership of the important Broadleaved Policy Group.

As a native of the area and one who was returning to make his home there in retirement, Rod chose the New Forest as the location for his principal farewell, and it was fitting that it took place in the Verderers' Hall at the Queen's House in the presence both of our Director General and of Lord Manners, the Official Verderer. Rod Hewitt had a great interest in conservation and one of his most important decisions before retirement was to recommend the setting up of the New Forest Review Group to help to ensure the conservation of the New Forest itself and its traditional character.

In the course of a long and warm appreciation, Mr George Holmes reminded his listeners of some of the highlights of Rod's career. He referred to his achievement, so vital in the present climate of opinion, in establishing sound working relationships between our own staff and those of the Nature Conservancy Council, Countryside Commission, the county councils, the Game Conservancy and many others. In connection with private woodlands, Rod had personally dealt with all negotiations with the county councils on consultation agreements and also attended all the meetings arranged to explain the 1985 Broadleaf Policy to local authority staff. He took an active role in the E(E) Marketing Liaison Committee and was particularly involved in the initiatives to improve marketing by private growers.

As a manager, Rod Hewitt expected unstinting dedication to the task in hand and always gave full measure himself. Typically he plans a busy retirement but he will be able to spend more time with his wife, Theo, who has supported him so well over the years, and together they have set themselves a first task of bringing up to Hewitt standards their new home in the delightful village of Woodgreen where the Forest drops down to the valley of the Hampshire Avon. We with them both a long and happy retirement.



● *Our photograph, taken on the terrace of the Queen's House, shows Rod holding two of the presents he received — an antler thumb stick made by New Forest Keeper John Gulliver and a bowl turned from one of the oaks that went from the New Forest to the repair of York Minster. George Holmes is on the left and Lord Manners in the centre, holding a 15th-century deer sword which was a gift from Rod Hewitt to the Verderers.*

Aubrey puts a new life in train



FIFTY colleagues and friends gathered at the Ship Inn, Dunwich, to say farewell to Aubrey L. James, retiring Forest District Manager of Suffolk Forest District in East England.

Aubrey James was Forest of Dean born-and-bred and came from a well known forestry family. He started work with the Commission in 1940, but was soon called up into the Royal Marine Commandos and saw service in Europe and the Far East. On return, Aubrey went to the Dean Forester School and then to the New Forest as a Forester. He is perhaps best known for his seven years in training branch as Regional Training Officer South.

In 1976 he came to Suffolk, firstly as Chief Forester, Aldewood, and subsequently as Forest District Manager for Suffolk and Essex, a district with perhaps more than its fair share of private woodlands and plans health work.

Aubrey was presented with a coin cabinet by the Conservator E(E), Mr M. Dinning.

Glenbranter toasts a man called Macfadyen



A CEILIDH and retirement party was held in the Memorial Hall, Strachur, in August by the staff of the Forestry Workshop at Glenbranter, together with a large number of friends, to mark the retirement of Neil Macfadyen after 46 years' service. Neil was presented with a Long Service Certificate by the Conservancy Mechanical Engineer, Mr F. M. Compton, who also presented Neil with a sum of money in a new wallet, a model low-loader lorry as a memento of his last job with the Commission, and a hand-crafted walking stick made by a fellow worker from West Argyll.

RETIREMENTS

TONY LOOSEMORE

A SKILLED forest worker and ganger at Rheola Forest District since 1955, specialising in chainsaw and harvesting work. He has always been a popular figure, both with workers and foresters alike. Unfortunately he has been medically retired due to a neck injury. A farewell party was held at the Crown Inn, Glynneath, where Anthony was given a carriage clock and his Long Service Certificate. His wife, Julia, was presented with a bouquet.

R. W. THOMAS AND T. J. MEREDITH

FOREST workers Bob Thomas and Tom Meredith both retired from the Brecon Forest District recently. At a reception held at the Park hotel, Pandy, Abergavenny, both were presented with barometers. As well as retiring in the same month, both had served for 26 years with the Commission. Bob had spent all his time at the old Mynydd Du Forest. Well known for his talents as a handyman, he had been closely involved in the early development of picnic areas and forest walks at Mynydd Du. Tom, originally employed at the old Talybont Forest, had spent all his career on forest management duties.

TREVOR JENKINS

A FOREST worker, he spent 20 years with the FC. Originally employed at Brycheiniog Forest, Trevor had spent most of his service at the Coed Taf beat of Trecon Forest District. For the past ten years Trevor had been beat safety representative and was one of the original members of the District Safety Committee. He brought to this role a practical understanding of the problems involved in forest operations. On behalf of colleagues at Coed Taf and staff at Forest District office, Trevor was presented with a lighter by Forest District Manager David Evans.

GEORGE TOMLINSON

LEADING Research Worker, George retired in August after 36 years' service with Research Division at Wykeham and Broxa on the North York Moors. During that time he has helped to develop many significant improvements in forest practice. Friends and colleagues gathered at Broxa to pay their farewells and to present him with an original oil painting of a scene near Broxa. A book was presented by the Meteorological Office in appreciation of his long service as observer at the Silpho Moor climatological station since 1952.

DENZIL EVANS

STARTED with the Commission in what was then Coed Gwili Forest and worked mainly on harvesting duties until he transferred to Brechfa Forest where he has remained ever since, working on H&M duties either as a chainsaw operator felling and cross-cutting, or as a member of the reconversion team producing pitwood splits and fencing stakes until he was forced to give up work due to ill health. A small party was held at the Eagles Inn, Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, where his colleagues and friends met to wish him well and present him with a gift.

HAROLD WALKER

RETIRED on October 3. Harold joined the Commission in 1940 and has worked on most forestry operations in the Gosforth/Eskdale areas. He has seen many changes over the years both in technique and size of forest units. He is one of the few people to have seen the fruits of his labours — planting to felling. In 1953 he planted a silver fir at Blengdale on his daughter Linda's first birthday and this tree is now a major feature at the entrance to Blengdale. His hobby is gardening and he intends to help on his son-in-law's farm.

JACK GAVE UP INDUSTRY FOR THE FOREST!



Jack Ealing with his wife, son and daughter, Roy Hughes and New Forest keepering staff.

SELDOM can the New Forest Inn at Emery Down (fondly remembered by old Northerwood hands) have been so crammed as for the retirement of Head Keeper Jack Ealing after 24 years' service.

About 100 old friends and colleagues and New Forest personalities gathered to pay tribute to the man who came from industry to the Forest, fell in love with it (and with one of its daughters whom he sensibly married), and became as much a part of forest life as if he had been always a countryman.

Jack's first job on leaving school was in the aircraft industry assembling autogiros and on the outbreak of war in 1939 he moved to Supermarine to work on Spitfires. He also helped to man an anti-aircraft battery with the Home Guard. He was eventually called up in 1946 and took charge of a Royal Artillery workshop in Germany.

Returned to civvy street, Jack became a factory safety inspector, worked briefly in the motor trade and then went to Vickers where he was engaged on jet engines. It was while he was employed by Wessex Motors on high performance cars that he caught the New Forest bug and his life changed.

By 1951 Jack had married Margaret Bessant, whose father and grandfather were Keepers, and in due course Jack himself signed on as a Trainee Keeper, rising to Head Keeper in 1971. Now his son, daughter and son-in-law all work for the Commission.

Such is the esteem in which he is held that the response in gifts from fellow workers was greater than any known before. There were gifts, too, of a shield and tie from the Hampshire police, for whom Superintendent Harland said: "Over the years you've given us great assistance, and this is a thank-you from the lads at the nick."

From his fellow Keepers Jack received a painting of deer, presented by Keeper Harold Cutler who said: "We've all worked together as a nice little team and we are all sorry to lose you." There were also gifts from past and present colleagues and friends within the Forest. Roy Hughes, Recreation and Range Manager, spoke for all: "You have done a marvellous job. It is wonderful when a man leaves his print on the Forest and is held in such high regard inside and outside the Commission."

In reply, Jack spoke of his pride at having been part of the team involved in the New Forest conservation project, the biggest of its kind in Europe. He thanked the Keepers for their support: "I've never worked with a finer bunch of people."

Corris days over for 'Dick Bach'



RICHARD JONES (or Dick Bach as he is known locally) started with the FC at Corris in 1952 then went to work for Dovey Woodlands, the First Forestry Co-operative Society formed in Wales. After five years he was back with the FC in Corris where he remained until his retirement, the last few years being spent in the garage as a Mechanics Assistant and undertaking chainsaw maintenance.

JOHN'S ON CALL — IN THE GARDEN

STAFF from various parts of the country, including Scotland and Wales, gathered at the Management Training Centre in the Forest of Dean to say farewell to Land Agent John Gradwell.

John had been in the Conservancy since 1972 and the Dean had been "his patch" for most of that time. He had had previous spells at Woking and Lyndhurst and in South Scotland. A sumptuous buffer was prepared by four of the ladies of the Coleford Forest District Office and John was presented with a cordless telephone so that he and his wife can answer calls when in their garden; Elizabeth also received a very attractive flower arrangement.

● Staff at Conservancy Office, Bristol, were joined by Forest District and retired staff for a buffet lunch arranged by John Thomas, HEO in W(E) for 19 years, who has retired.

It was a very friendly and informal occasion and John was presented with a most unusual Seiko clock by the Conservator.

— McCormick.

35 YEARS IN THE FC

Mr Colin McCormick retired recently following almost 35 years' service to the Forestry Commission. Colin has operated heavy machinery almost all of his working career, the last 20 having been spent as a D6 and D7 driver in South Scotland's road squad.

RETIREMENTS



Joe says farewell to Clocaenog Forest

MR GUISEPPE ("Joe") Terzo retired after 38 years at Clocaenog Forest. After arriving in Britain in July 1943 as an Italian prisoner of war, he spent several years in farming before joining the FC in 1948. Plantations weeded by Joe at that time were subsequently thinned by him and have, recently, been clearfelled.

In the early 1950s he was one of five "Axe Men" with a rumoured individual output of 90 trees per day! Latterly Joe was best known as the Clocaenog "handyman", specialising in urea and fuel distribution to felling sites over the past three years. At a buffet reception, friends gathered to wish him well. Conservator Wales, Mr D. Robertson, presented Joe with his Long Service Certificate. Mr A. Phillips, Skilled Forest Workers and local Union Representative, on behalf of all Joe's colleagues, presented him with an engraved carriage clock. Miss Menna Evans (typist) then presented his wife, Mary, with a cheque.

TED SAUNDERS

TED'S career took him from the New Forest to Inchnacardoch, then to Boblainy, Glenloy, Achnashellach, Shin and finally to Glenmore, where as Forester for ten years he was involved in all aspects of forestry but particularly in the running of the Glenmore Campsite. Ted and Chrissy have retired to the small Shetland island of Fetlar (Chrissy's home) where they will be fully occupied renovating the crofthouse and running a croft with 40 sheep but, as yet, no trees. On behalf of colleagues, FDM Graham Gill presented Ted with binoculars and a wide-angle camera lens, useful for Ted's hobbies of bird watching and photography, and a cheque. Head Forester Alasdair MacLeod, colleague for many years, proposed a toast with the customary dram.

ANDY MILLER

RETIRED on August 15 due to ill health. Andy spent the past 33 years working almost entirely at Kershope Forest on H&M operations. The time he cut off and creosoted 1000 stumps in one day is well remembered. He is a long-term officer of the Agricultural Trades Union and was Chairman of the NUAAW North West Counties Committee. Andy is a keen gardener and hopes to write on the subject now that he has more time.

JOHN WYLIE

RETIRED on August 22 after 46 years at Kershope and Inglewood Forest. John joined the Commission in March 1940 and except for his army service 1942-1947 he has given the Commission many loyal years.

DAVID MOIR

RETIRED on August 15 after 36 years with the Commission. His service has taken him from Chester, where he started as a temporary District Estate Officer in 1950, to Bristol, Basingstoke, Edinburgh and Peebles. A small gathering of colleagues attended a lunch to wish him well and present him with a set of engraved glassware plus a supply of necessary "uisge beatha" to go with it.

FRED ROBERTS

RETIRED through health reasons after 35 years service at Gwydyr Forest. He was a harvesting worker for most of his time and, in recent years, was a Timber Jack operator. District Forester Bill Taylor presented him with his Long Service Certificate and an inscribed clock on behalf of friends and colleagues.

SHEILA SMITH

EIGHTY colleagues and friends turned out to mark the retirement of Mrs Sheila Smith, Llandrindod FD, at the Greenway Manor Hotel, Crossgates in July. She started with the FC in 1960 as District Office Clerk at Llandrindod Wells. Following her retirement, Sheila intends to continue her full and active life being Secretary to the local Society for the Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults, and active member of Animal Aid Group, a willing helper and comforter of anyone in need.

Sitting it out after 31 years as a craftsman



MR ISLWYN PRICE has retired after completing over 31 years' service as a Forest Craftsman / Ganger with the FC. He spent his entire service at Cilgwyn Forest working mainly on Forest Management operations. During his last three years, Islwyn has been Ganger in Charge of the Forest District Standing Sales Marking / Measuring team.

At a farewell party held at the White Hart Hotel, Llandovery, friend and colleagues presented him with a garden bench, on which he is sitting in the picture, shaking hands with Mr R. B. Donaldson, Forest District Manager Llandovery.

LINDSAY'S LEGACY

LINDSAY Proudfoot was best known for his work on the Isle of Arran where he pioneered afforestation and in his 14 years he helped make conifers acceptable to the inhabitants by close co-operation with them and by the skilful use of broadleaved species and the softer conifers such as larch. The results of his earlier work in searching for perfection in planting are evident at Coalsnaughton, Clackmannanshire, and Glendochart, Tayside. In Fife Forest District, he derived some satisfaction in knocking the forest management operational side closer to his ideal before leaving. His retiral was a quiet one.

CAMPING LIFE FOR JACK

FOREST worker Jack Featherstone retired after 33 years' service. Well known in the area, Jack was a most versatile operator having been involved with tractors, pumps and all types of Forestry Commission machinery during peak periods of major fires and the famous Stape Water Supply maintenance. He was also extensively involved in the development and maintenance of Keldy Castle Forest Cabins and Spiers House Campsite. Jack is to retire to his smallholding and campsite and will no doubt continue to be very active. A presentation of an electric drill was made by the Forest District Manager, John Mackenzie.

Trio total adds up to 106 years

THIS summer has seen the retirements of three stalwarts of Newtown Forest District with a combined service of 106 years.

CHARLIE HILLIDGE, ganger on the old Mathrafal forest, retired early through ill health after 31 years' service. He spent most of his service helping to establish the thriving plantations on the Breidden hills, this being a notable landmark on the Powys/Shropshire border. Charlie was presented with a carriage clock by Ivor Turner and Jim Weston on behalf of his colleagues and a Long Service Certificate by John Maisey, Forest District Manager.

Ganger JOHN ROGERS retired after 36 years' service having spent most of his time on the establishment of the old Bechan and Carno forests before their amalgamation with Ceri forest. Before his Commission service he was a timber feller in the Welsh Borders. John's expert knowledge of the locality proved invaluable during the Dendroctonus surveys of 1982-84. At a gathering of his colleagues at the Talbot Hotel, Berriew, he was presented with a pair of binoculars by Craftsman Jim Davies on behalf of the Forest District staff and with his Long Service Certificate by John Maisey, Forest District Manager.

The Talbot Hotel was the venue again in June to say farewell to craftsman CHARLIE JAMES of Kerry, who has taken early retirement after 39 years' service. Charlie joined the FC after service in the RAF and spent all his time at Ceri forest, being a production worker up until five years ago. He was presented with a carriage clock and tankard by Craftsmen Cyril Jones and Iorrie Davies, on behalf of his friends, and with his Long Service Certificate by Eifion Jones, Operations Support Officer in the Conservancy office, representing the Conservator.

RETIREMENTS

TOM PARRY

JOINED the Commission in 1947 and was employed on planting, draining and other general duties for several years before spending three years driving a tractor extracting timber. He transferred to the Roads Department in 1951 to drive a dumper before becoming a full-time tipper driver for the remainder of his working life. Tom has a wide range of interests including fishing, gardening, walking and horse riding. He was involved in breeding horses until five years ago and still has about six ponies which be breaks and trains. He was presented with an engraved Anniversary clock and a Long Service Certificate by Mr Spencer Davies, Area Engineer.

WILF STRATFORD

WILF retired on August 1, after 26 years working in Grizedale, mostly in the genetics branch. He is a skilled woodworker and stone wall builder. His last project was the building of a "hide" and viewing platform for the Liverpool Garden Festival. His hobby is gardening and he is an active member of the Rusland Horticultural Show Committee.

IAN TAY

A SKILLED forest worker at Coed-y-Rhaiadr forest since 1964. He was particularly involved with shepherding and part-time ranger duties. He was registered partially disabled from 1977 and has unfortunately had to take medical retirement. Ian has a small farm in the Brecon Beacons National Park which will now take up most of his spare time.

YNYS MEREDITH

RETIRED after 38 years service, 26 years of which have been spent in the Llanidloes area. Prior to retirement, he was brashing the same trees he had helped plant. By tradition and wish he left quietly and without ceremony — his Long Service Certificate was presented to him in the presence of his wife at his home in Llanidloes.

ALAN GUILE

RETIRED after 39 years service in the Commission. He started his career in 1947 as a Survey Assistant in South Wales, and for the first few years was forever on the move working in Cardiff (as DO II) Pembrey, Devizes, Bristol, the Isle of Wight, South-West England, South-East England then in North Wales and the (then) Headquarters in London before being made DO I in London. He came to North Wales Conservancy, Aberystwyth, in 1968 where he has remained as the Conservancy Acquisitions Officer (a slight misnomer these past few years but recently undertaking Disposals as well). He had expressed a wish to retire "quietly, without fuss" but all the same friends and colleagues met in the Seabank Hotel to wish him well and the Conservator presented him with a cheque.

M. J. REES

WHILE on holiday Moc, Aberystwyth Forest District, was collected from his home and taken to the Forest District office where a surprise party had been laid on. He was presented with a gift voucher with which he has purchased a fishing rod and tackle to help him pursue his lifelong interest.

MAGGIE THOMAS

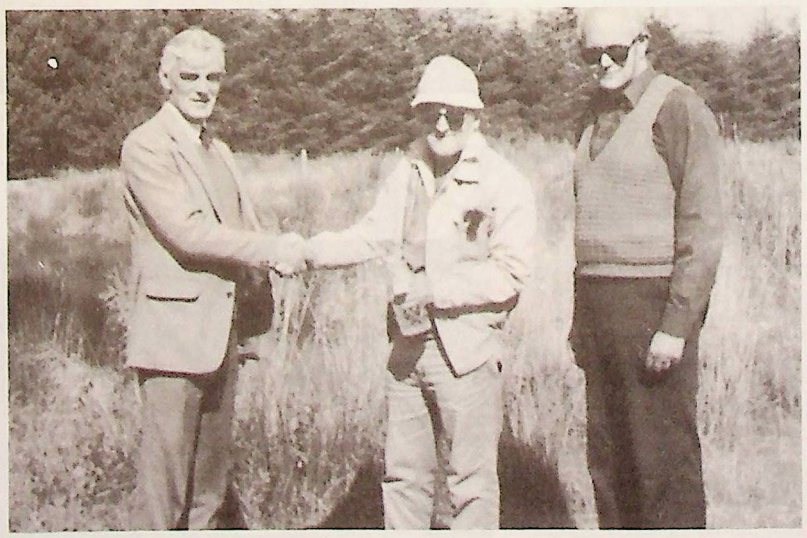
A LARGE gathering of her friends and colleagues congregated in the Glengower Hotel (next door to the office!) to wish Maggie Thomas a long and happy retirement. Although she had not been with the Forestry Commission as long as some, she certainly made an impact in the 12 years she served in the Private Woodlands Section. She was a warm, vivacious personality who endeared herself to all who came into contact with her; her refreshing honesty and directness and great appeal and many of the Private Woodland owners were taken with her strength of character and immense knowledge and expertise in Private Woodlands matters.

Goodbye to a skill in the forest



ANTHONY Loosemore has been a skilled forest worker and ganger at Rheola Forest District since 1955, specialising in chainsaw and harvesting work. He has always been a popular figure, both with workers and foresters alike. Unfortunately, he has been medically retired due to a neck injury. A farewell party was held at the Crown Inn, Glynneath, where Anthony was given a carriage clock and his Long Service Certificate. His wife, Julia, was presented with a bouquet. The photo shows Mr Loosemore being presented with his Long Service Certificate by Mr Jim Jones of Llandovery Forest District.

Talker Bob says cheerio



BOB PEARCE, Senior Ranger at Afan Forest District, retired recently on medical grounds. He was a Forester grade from 1950-60 but left the Commission to work for the Nature Conservancy Council in North Wales. He rejoined in 1967 as an industrial at the former Cymer Forest, was appointed Ranger in 1969, and moved to the Margram area. Over the years Bob accumulated an extensive knowledge of fauna and flora, and his talks on natural history were always well received. He will be missed by friends and colleagues alike, not least for his dry humour and sharp wit. At an informal presentation in a forest setting, Bob received a decanter from the staff at Afan Forest District to wish him well on his premature retirement.

SPORT



CRICKET WIN FOR NORTH

PICTURED above are the North England Conservancy cricket team who successfully defended the Place Trophy against the North East Timber Merchants at Borobridge.

Front row, left to right: G. Jackson, J. Richards, R. Little, A. Beardsley (capt.), A. Rix, J. Amor. Back row, left to right: R. Hodge, K. Stockhill, B. Atkinson, D. Ayre and J. F. Morgan.

GAME FOR A LAUGH ...

THE FC sports day in June attracted about 60 people who had a dress rehearsal for the Commonwealth Games.

Unfortunately, the Games selectors did not attend and the expected invitations to compete at Meadowbank in Edinburgh did not arrive — not even for Mr Derek Rutherford who wielded a mean hockey stick and threw at least one straight skittle bowl.

It must be said that the afternoon was such a success due to the tremendous efforts of DP Division and in particular Clare Cooney who, at the last moment, had to co-ordinate the whole event.

The following ditty will allow non-attendees to see what they missed and hopefully encourage capacity crowds for next year.

Oh! this year's sport day was such fun,
We ran, we frolicked in the sun;
Big Eddie (DPD) kept score,
So why first prize to the second floor??

We tugged of war and jumped and hopped,
We threw the wellie 'til we dropped;
We had no batons, we had no whistle,
But we are made of sterner gristle.

To miss next year's would be pathetic
So come along and be athletic;
This is a day not to be missed,
And afterwards we'll . . . go for a quiet drink somewhere.

SCORELINE

THE Aberystwyth branch of the Civil Service Sports Council team has won the Civil Service 11-a-side national competition. The team is composed of Civil Servants from the DHSS, Inland Revenue, UBO and the Forestry Commission — and no less than 4 of the 11 are from the Wales Conservancy office. They are Kevin Jenkins, Huw George Evans, Tony Meyler and Shaun Mather. They won all of the five games and scored 17 of the 28 goals and are now looking forward to the 1986/87 season.

CASHATHON

MRS GWENDA Purslow, typist in the Wales Conservancy office in Aberystwyth, recently completed the Western Mail Marathon in Cardiff. Gwenda has run many half marathons but this was her first attempt at the full marathon, which she completed in 4 hrs 25 mins. Through her efforts, Gwenda has helped to raise £90 in aid of Cancer Research.

KENNEDY AWARD IS WON BY ARDGARTAN

A NEW award scheme which reflects the increasing importance of good forestry in harmony with the environment was introduced this year by the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland.

The Forestry Commission presented the John Kennedy Memorial Trophy (in memory of the late Commissioner) for the class of woodlands or forests of any age of over 150 hectares and the winner was the FC's Argartan Forest, Argyll, with Glenurquhart Forest, Inverness-shire, runner-up.

Mrs Margaret Kennedy is photographed presenting the trophy to Mr G. W. Blake, Argartan, with, left to right, Mr Roger Larsen (ex FC) co-ordinator of the award scheme; Mr G. Paterson, Glenurquhart; and Sir David Montgomery, FC chairman.





Mr Rix accepts the gift of Easitrail.

EASITRAIL BONUS FOR DISABLED

EASITRAIL, a joint project between the Forestry Commission and Delamere Forest Round Table, was officially opened by the Duke of Westminster.

The idea, conceived by Jerry Gissop, then H&M forester and Round Tabler at Delamere Forest, was backed by the Round Table who agreed to raise the money. Discussions with conservancy office led to permission to build the facility in Delamere Forest, and an agreement to manage and maintain the trail following completion. This would appear to be a unique arrangement, where an independent body has funded and built a facility for subsequent ownership by the Commission.

A special appeal committee was set up, consisting of Round Tablers with District Forester Roger Coppock as Commission liaison officer. In only 12 months, £25,000 was raised by appeals to other round tables, ladies circles, parish councils, and local and national businesses.

The trail has been specially designed for use by disabled people, consisting of a 2-metre wide pathway, 1200 metres long, with a smooth free draining surface and gentle gradients which do not exceed 1 in 20. As it meanders gently through both broadleaved and conifer crops of all ages, the wide diversity of plant and animal life can be seen and heard.

Picnic tables and resting points have been provided at regular intervals to add to the enjoyment. Incorporated into the opening ceremony was the handover of the trail by Mr Peter Bell, a past president of the Round Table of Britain and Ireland, on behalf of Delamere Forest Round Table. Mr Alan Rix, Conservator N(E) accepted Easitrail on behalf of the Commission.

Following the opening, members of two local disabled organisations were accompanied around the route by representatives of many of the contributing organisations. Easitrail now provides the opportunity for some of the less fortunate members of the public to enjoy some of the sights and sounds of the forest.



The Duke of Westminster and Mr Rix lead the first walk on Easitrail.

Hazel legs it to her Scottish retreat

AND IT'S GOODBYE TO HQ

THERE was a sailor's hornpipe with a difference when Hazel (Pottinger) Clowes left Information Division after 14 years.

Hazel's typical hospitality after her presentation at HQ continued with staff and associates from the media at Edinburgh Press Club where she encouraged colleagues to "show a lively leg."

Following a distinguished journalistic career in Scotland, Hazel joined Central Office of Information, transferring to the Commission in 1972.

Commissioner Roger Bradley said: "She has made her presence and knowledge felt throughout the Commission and has been at the forefront of raising our public profile and improving relationships with all media."

Perhaps her most recent success was her involvement with the highly successful FC miniature forest at Liverpool Garden Festival — and it's nice to know that she will continue to assist in planning for the forthcoming Glasgow Garden Festival.

Hazel and her husband Peter have moved from Dunbar to the Island of Seil, south of Oban, Argyll, where they will be establishing new business ventures. The island is linked to the mainland by a bridge over the Atlantic.

Nearby (surprise, surprise) are two hostelries and visitors may be expected to row one of their boats down to a pub.

With money collected Hazel intends to buy high-powered binoculars to study the varied wildlife (including otters) that abound around her shorefront home. And watching for visitors to take captive for a pub-row!



Hazel gets together with Moira Kidd, Chris Hogg and Elma Smith for a "Show of Legs."

Day out for Alice staff



SOME of the staff from Alice Holt on their summer educational outing to Westonbirt snapped by Jim Bodkin of Instrumentation Section.

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