

SLASHER



Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

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INSIDE

**AND
IT'S
CHEERIO
FROM
ALL OF
THEM**

— PAGE 8

**THE
FOREST
OF
DEAN
— IN
COLOUR**

— PAGE 6

**IT'S
HOLMES
AND
AWAY
— IN
COLOUR**

— PAGE 12

**DAY
THE
EURO
VIPs
PAID A
VISIT**

— PAGE 6

PRIZE SCULPTURES — Page 6

£215m paper mill a boost for UK industry

BRITAIN'S forest industry has been given a massive boost with the decision by Finnish company Kymmene-Stromberg to invest £215 million in a new pulp and paper mill at Irvine, in Ayrshire.

The Forestry Commission has contracted to supply half the mill's requirements of 200,000 tonnes of spruce pulpwood annually with the balance available from private growers and harvesting companies.

The decision to opt for a Scottish-based mill in the face of competition from other European countries came almost four years after the Scottish Forest Product Development Group made first approaches to the firm Kaukas (now merged with Kymmene-Stromberg).

The £215m plant is the biggest ever single foreign investment in Scotland and brings the total investment in Britain's wood processing industry to almost £600m in the space of four years.

WOOD PROCESSING

Sir David Montgomery, FC Chairman, said: "This is the crowning achievement of the highly successful drive to promote new investment in the wood processing industry. This investment has been won thanks to the vision of

successive Governments who have consistently encouraged an expansion of forestry from which we now have increasing supplies of timber."

Erik Ollander, Managing Director of Kymmene-Stromberg, said: "After our years of preparation we chose Irvine and Scotland because of the reliable access to wood fibre from Scottish forests."

And Secretary of State for Scotland, Malcolm Rifkind, said: "This is vindication of the policy of expanding our wood resource."

The plant, on an 80 acre site, is expected to be in production by 1989 and will create 480 jobs with another 400

Continued on page 5



Talking shop on careers

AS part of Industry Year '86, the Forestry Commission took part in a major careers convention and seminar in Aberdeen. The event attracted more than 70 exhibitors representing a broad spectrum from aviation and energy to banking and broadcasting.

Over the four days, Calder Miller dealt with nearly 1000 enquiries ranging from simple requests for careers literature, to in-depth discussions with pupils, teachers and career advisors.

"Most of the enquiries and discussion centre on forestry and

many wanted to talk at length on current issues such as balancing conservation requirements with commercial forestry," he said.

"There seemed to be a high level of public awareness about the impact of forestry in the landscape. This, coupled with the need to present a positive outlook on career opportunities meant that the FC's presence at the convention was highly appropriate."

ABOVE: Calder Miller (left) discusses forestry careers with visitors to the Aberdeen convention.



Bridge to yet another award

Part of the reconstructed Puck's Glen forest walk in Argyll which earned the praise of the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland (see page 5). This is one of a number of awards which the Forestry Commission has won lately including projects in Grizedale, Kielder and Strathgryre forests.

Director General's reaction

THE decision by Kymmene-Stromberg is an event which crowns a period of unprecedented growth of new investment in the wood processing industries since those difficult times in 1980 when we saw a major part of our domestic market for wood disappear.

The list of these new investments, and the companies involved, is impressive by any standards. In the space of four years, and with this most recent addition, we have witnessed almost £600 million in new investment. All this stems directly from the foresight of our predecessors who created the forests we manage today. Nor would any of this have been achieved without the confidence of these companies in an assured supply of wood with the management and harvesting skills and resources to back it up — in this the part played by the Forestry Commission has been decisive.

This growth of the new industries is the clearest possible demonstration that the wood we grow is of the right quality for a wide variety of wood products that we need in this country. The new plants represent the most modern technology and this is reflected in the quality of their products. The companies involved, most of them from overseas, have a high reputation as leaders in their industry. The industry base which has been created will, I have no doubt, give rise to opportunities for expansion in the future. This will give added momentum and support for the expansion of forestry itself and to contribution to rural and industrial development.

To attract potential investors, to gain their interest and win their confidence has taken much hard work, persistence and skill by many people in the Forestry Commission. The results of their efforts are there for all of us to see. They deserve all our congratulations for the success which they have achieved.

NOTES FROM WESTMINSTER

House of Commons, Dec. 4, 1986:

Mr MacLennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest available figure for total receipts from the Forestry Commission's disposal programme relating to plantations and planting land.

Mr John MacKay: Receipts from the sale of Forestry Commission plantations and plantable land from the passing of the Forestry Act in July 1981 to 21 October 1986 amount to £54.2 million.

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House of Commons, October 24:

Mr Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to preserve current, and encourage future, new public access to Forestry Commission land and privatised forest sites.

Mr Rifkind: Subject to any legal or safety constraints, the Commission's forests are open to the public on foot.

It is not the Commission's practice to impose public access conditions on the sale of land, other than those which are already in the title; there is no evidence, however, to suggest that the majority of purchasers act unreasonably with regard to public access.

□ □ □

House of Commons, November 20:

Mr Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the area of forestry plantations in Scotland which has been killed by pine beauty moth.

Mr John MacKay: The total area of forestry plantations killed by pine beauty moth is estimated at 650 hectares — 0.07 per cent of the total conifer area in Scotland.

□ □ □

House of Lords, November 6:

Lord Kilbracken asked Her Majesty's Government: Whether estimates of the worldwide supply and demand of hardwood timber in the coming decades give cause for concern; and if so, whether they will take further steps to stimulate the planting of hardwood trees.

The Earl of Dundee: Concern over the continuing decline in tropical forest cover was expressed at the Ninth World Forestry Congress in Mexico City in 1985. Many countries, including the United Kingdom, declared that they would support a programme under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organisation to tackle the problem. The United Kingdom has also joined the International Tropical Timber Agreement, entered into by major producer and consumer countries, and intends to play an active part in its operation. One of the objectives of the agreement is to encourage the development of policies aimed at sustainable utilisation conservation of tropical forests.

As regards the planting of hardwood trees in this country, the Forestry Commission introduced a Broadleaved Woodland Grant Scheme on 1st October 1985 which offers significantly higher rates of grants for the use of broadleaved species on their own. This scheme has had an encouraging start, with over 3100 applications being received in the first year. These covered nearly 23,000 hectares, both of existing broadleaved woodland and of land proposed for new planting.

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House of Commons, December 19:

Mr Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will alter the practice under which the Nature Conservancy Council is consulted only if planting of trees is proposed on a national nature reserve or a site of special interest;

(2) if he will alter the practice under which the Countryside Commission is consulted only if the planting of trees is proposed on a national scenic area.

Mr John MacKay: The Forestry Commission's procedures for consulting the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission for Scotland on forestry proposals are based on mutually agreed arrangements. These are kept under review and adjustments made from time to time.

□ □ □

House of Commons, October 24:

Mr Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will carry out a feasibility study concerning the establishment of a nature conservation and landscape strategy in relation to forestry and woodlands in Scotland.

Mr Rifkind: The Forestry Commission maintains close contacts at national and local level with the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission for Scotland, local authorities and a number of voluntary conservation organisations, with a view to ensuring that, as far as possible, forestry developments in Scotland are in harmony with the landscape and reflect the needs of nature conservation. The Commission also liaises on a regular basis with the Scottish Development Department. I am not persuaded that any new initiatives are required.



Moving on to Lockerbie

GRAHAM Haddock returned from Tanzania in 1968 and commenced a rather long "working tour" of the North of England via Falstone, Mounes, Kielder, Harwood, Ampleforth, Rievaulx, Hambleton and Don, which was reconstituted with others in 1983 to form York Forest District. His transfer to Lockerbie means that he will be greatly missed by his colleagues for his wealth of local knowledge and experience, his genuine courtesy and his puckish sense of humour. A luncheon attended by Conservator Mr A. Rix, the current York Forest District staff and many retired colleagues was held at the Black Bull, Escrick, to mark the occasion. Graham was presented with a pair of binoculars and a tiger plant, and his wife Roberta (seen in our picture) with a bouquet of flowers.

Fishing: lead is banned

THE Commission has banned the use of lead weights on its fisheries, so anglers will now be required to use non-toxic substitutes. No legislation will be required as all Commission fishing is let either by lease or day ticket.

Commission recognises angling as an important recreation within its forests and has recently created or improved a number of fisheries."

The Commission has the provision of recreational facilities as one of its statutory objectives and manages many miles of fisheries.

Response

Announcing the ban, Commissioner Roger Bradley said: "The danger of lead in the environment (in this particular case the serious effect on swans), is increasingly well known. We feel that any effort to reduce this threat is worthwhile.

News of the Commission's move drew an immediate response in the form of a postcard showing a swan and cygnets with these words:

"Because some of us are Mute does not mean I cannot take up my quill to pen you a word of thanks from us, and the human beings who have been worrying about us, for your drive against the use of lead weights. I think my cygnature must be (with renewed thanks).

A. Bewick."

Anglers

"However, we would certainly not wish anglers to interpret this as an attack on their sport. The

4-wheel-drive and Bert lends a hand

RESIDENTS in the Hillfoots area in the central Scottish Ochil Hills were somewhat confused to see a Commission Land Rover driving round their streets during the worst of the January snow storms. Had the driver lost his way in the blizzards?

No! Bert Campbell (53) of Loch Ard Cottages, by Aberfoyle and his Land Rover were loaned, free of charge, to the local Social Work Department in answer to a plea by Scottish Television's Help Line programme for four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Three days

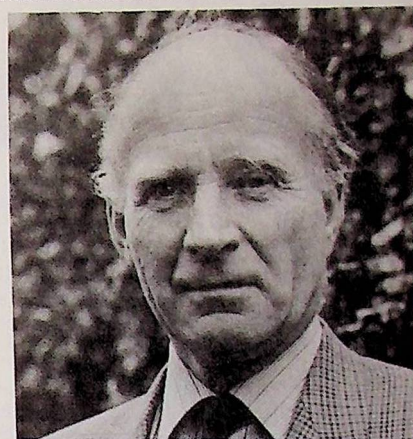
Bert, a forest craftsman with 19 years' service, is normally working in the forests around Aberfoyle so his short spell with the social workers was quite a change. He spent three days in the Alloa area, starting there at 10 am and finishing at 5 pm then travelling back to Kinlochard. "I have been driving since 1952

and I have never seen anything like it. I had to use four-wheel-drive and low ratio gears a lot and even then we did not always manage it. Sometimes we had to walk in the rest of the way," said Bert. Bert took Social Workers and supplies to elderly folk, mostly alone, without home help or telephones.

Groceries

"We carried in coal, electric heaters, groceries and even a little electric cooker. Some people had burst pipes so the Social Workers tried to organise plumbers. Ironically, we had to rescue one Social Worker marooned in her house in Glen Devon. Her grandfather had been a forest worker and her house was bought from the Forestry Commission," recalled Bert.

Bert enjoyed his short spell as a "Social Worker" but is now pleased to be back at his "real" work.



Chairman's new year message . . .

1986 was nothing if not an interesting year for forestry, particularly if measured by the number of reports, papers, articles and correspondence on the subject by a variety of people and interests. While a number of these have been critical of current policies and practices, many of them have been constructive. The major reports such as that of the National Audit Office and the Nature Conservancy Council's paper on conservation and forestry will involve much discussion and a Government response in 1987.

Last year brought a number of successes and encouraging signs. The Broadleaf policy has proved to be a success, as witnessed by the applications and plantings that have taken place. New planting by the private sector has increased, the wood-using industries have expanded and developed new plants and the market and prices of our timber products have strengthened.

Last year saw a number of changes in staff of the Commission, in particular the retirement of George Holmes after nearly ten years as Director General: a time which has seen many changes in forestry and in the Commission itself. In time to come, his contribution both nationally and internationally will undoubtedly be fully recognised, but in the meantime his experience, knowledge and not least his diplomatic skill will be much missed. 1986 also saw the retirement after ten years of Lord Gibson-Watt as a Commissioner, and his knowledge and experience, not only of forestry, but also of the political scene will be much missed by the Board.

In 1987 we look forward to a continuing expansion of forestry, whether along traditional lines, or as an alternative land use in the farming scene. Better land should become available to forestry as the agricultural criteria are relaxed. Production should increase and the prospects for demand and prices look good.

We in the Commission and in forestry in general are going to have to recognise the increasing pressures to combine good commercial forestry with conservation and other land uses. We will have to combat some of the ill-founded criticisms by demonstrating the facts: as well as continuing to practice what we preach. Increasingly this is becoming a publicity game, and we in the industry have got to get into it.

1987 looks like being another interesting year which is not without its encouraging signs, and I wish you all the best.

Orienteering — a sport with family and forest appeal

THE PUBLIC are increasingly using our forests for a variety of recreational purposes. From the urban centres, in particular, people like to sample the different environment they find on the fringes of our forests. The basic facilities which we often provide are much prized.

There are, however, activities such as wayfaring where families can venture at their own pace into the far corners of a forest and find new and exciting worlds far from their everyday experiences. Not so very far removed from wayfaring is the Scandinavian sport of orienteering.

This is a sport which can be highly competitive and at the same time incorporates the wayfaring philosophy in one event. There are many definitions of what orienteering is. One of the current favourites is that the sport is "competitive navigation on foot." It tends to be a family based sport and most of those who end up in its elite end started in low key events where their parents were also participating.

Today, there is an increasing awareness that fitness is an important PLUS in life. With increasing leisure opportunities sport can be an important vehicle in realising some of this PLUS. Orienteering certainly helps fitness — but the mental approach can be an element as important.

At an orienteering event, the course planner sets a series of navigational problems to be solved — normally in woodlands. If the orienteer is competitive, the course will be done at speed; if the orienteer wishes to enjoy the navigation or the countryside for its own sake then the course is taken at leisure.

With this type of approach orienteering is a sport which can

appeal to all the family. It is almost alone among sports in that it caters for both sexes and all age groups. There are a plethora of age classes which makes provision for the 9/10-year-olds upwards. At this year's World Veteran Championship in Norway there was an age class for women over 70 and for men over 80. It is not surprising that for many the sport becomes a lifetime's adventure and to not a few a way of life.

The Forestry Commission is in a unique position of owning forests scattered throughout the length and breadth of the UK and so can offer countryside facilities to the sport. The Commission have entered into a facilities agreement with the British Orienteering Federation — the sport's ruling body in the UK. This works well.

Since the early 1960s, the sport has been growing slowly and each year has seen a steady increase in the number of events taking place in our forests. Orienteers tend to have a genuine interest in the countryside. Those of you who have experienced orienteering in our forests will be aware of the surprising lack of impact on the terrain that several hundred competitors can have. In Sweden the sport has sponsored university research into leisure activities in forests. In Scotland, the Scottish Orienteering Association has had much of this work translated. Discussions on this research have taken place with interested conservation bodies.

This article is being penned in Inverness and perhaps it would be fitting to comment on some of the major events which have or are about to be staged over Commission land nearby. On May 25, 1986, the British Championships were held over a section of Torrachilly Forest adjacent to Contin village in the Easter Ross Forest District. This is a superb piece of countryside with the hilltops, natural hardwoods and commercial forest all being used to find out

who were the 1986 champions. The competition at any "British" is always for "real" although even at the "British" wayfaring type courses are on offer for those who just want to enjoy the countryside.

Big orienteering events get more and more sophisticated. On site results computers are now deemed to be a necessity. This year's "British" provided a video display unit which gave for each competitor the name, club, class and time taken in colour as they crossed the finishing line.

The local territories provided radio controls around the 11 sq. km. competition area so that split times could be obtained quickly. Camp sites, event centres and special bus services are extras to the basic organisation which are also now expected. The Forestry Commission in 1986 were able to provide a superb area for what was a memorable championship.

In 1987 the forests around Inverness are hosting the biennial Scottish Six-Day Event — Highland '87. This mammoth organisational undertaking can attract up to 600 from the Scandinavian countries alone. The Easter Ross Forest District is providing part of three areas being used, Creag Ulladail and North and South Achilty while Inverness Forest District is providing a fourth at Inchriach between Aviemore and Kingussie. Private estates are providing areas at Cawdor and Novar.

All this activity adds to the quality of life of UK citizens. Our woods are helping the tourist industry. Scandinavians and many other visitors from abroad will be coming to the Highlands just to visit our woods!

If there is an orienteering event in your district why not go down and see the trees from a new angle. They will look different — and welcoming.



A party of schoolchildren and their teacher on one of the easier orienteering courses which start from Whinlatter Visitor Centre.



A family wayfaring in Achray Forest

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT RED DEER

CONSERVATION Forester John Livingstone has provided us with some interesting facts involving red deer in Galloway.

"A tagged hind, shot by Ranger R. Heaney at Tunskeen, Carrick Forest, on 28.11.86, turned out to be an animal tagged at Starr, Carrick Forest in 1966. This makes her 20½ years old.

"The carcass weighed 89 lbs. and she had a small calf at foot, which was also shot, which weighed 40 lbs. She was running with a large stag and in the Ranger's opinion had just been rutted.

"This is 1½ months later than the normal rutting period. This late rutting phenomenon has been reported in older hinds on the island of Rhum. This hind is, to the best of our knowledge, the oldest red deer ever shot in Scotland.

"Another interesting matter on red deer was the sighting of twins by Senior Ranger R. Creevy who witnessed the phenomenon on his Kirroghtree beat. This is thought to be only the third time twins have been recorded in Scotland.

"Both these facts reinforce the belief that the Galloway red deer herd has the highest reproductive rate in Great Britain."

Great cash effort for Blue Peter

NRS Sports and Social Club held a "bring and buy" sale in aid of Blue Peter Sight-savers Appeal.

The sale lasted from 12.30-1.30 and the response was amazing; items included bric-a-brac and home baking and in the one hour they managed to raise £124. Thanks to everyone who contributed.



RICHARDSON IS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

THE new chairman of the Tree Council is Major General Tony Richardson.

Since retiring from the Army in 1977, he has worked with the Tree Council and was Secretary of the Timber growers England and Wales until 1984.

He said: "Our main aim is to improve the environment by promoting more planting and better care of amenity trees; to disseminate knowledge about trees and their care, and to act as a forum for organisations concerned about trees."

Thanks to all from Lord Gibson-Watt

Letter to The Editor

The Rt. Hon. Lord Gibson-Watt writes:

"Might I say thank you to all those members of the Forestry Commission whom I have met while serving as a part-time Commissioner during the past ten years.

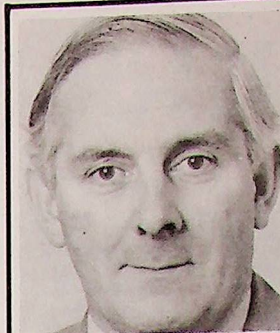
"Of all the organisations in which I have served the Commission comes very near the top. Whenever I have been on tour, in the forest, at forest district, at conservancy or at headquarters I have found a dedication and friendliness and a professionalism that cannot be forgotten. I first served on the National Committee for Wales in the 'fifties and since then there have been many changes in personnel and policy.

"We have the best enterprise of any European country and our relations with the private

side are close and supportive. There are of course many working in the private side who got their training with the Commission. Recently we have had a roughish time from certain quarters and great criticism from the Conservationists. But foresters are the Conservationists, the original ones. If we were able to ask the birds and animals, they would agree.

"My contribution has of course been limited but I shall continue to be a great supporter of forestry whether state or private (and I believe we need both) and through the Timber Growers and the Royal Forestry Society I shall be able to keep in touch with many of you: be it in England, Scotland or Wales."

GIBSON-WATT.



TIMBER TOPICS

JOHN OAKLEY

WHETHER operating as the Forest Authority or the Forest Enterprise the primary objectives of the Forestry Commission are to develop and ensure the best use of the country's forest resources; to promote and develop the wood using industry and to produce wood for that industry efficiently. In doing so the Commission must seek to get the best financial return from the timber it sells.

Our forest and wood processing industry is small by international standards and prices obtainable for timber are ultimately constrained by the levels set in world markets. So our sawmills must be able to produce sawn timber at prices which compete with the major softwood sawn timber imports primarily from Canada, Russia and Scandinavia. In turn this influences the prices which we can get for sawlogs. Similarly the prices obtainable for small roundwood are strongly influenced by the prices which can be obtained by the producers of particleboard, cartonboard and newsprint. Another important consideration is the relative currency exchange rates between Britain and the countries from which we import. Generally a weak £GB is favourable to the wood processing industry.

Viewed against this background of a relatively small domestic industry competing in a tough world market it is perhaps easier to understand the troubles of the early eighties and to appreciate the significance of the successful turnaround in the fortunes of the industry over the last few years.

To attract new industry we have had to be able to demonstrate that we had timber available, that we were capable of producing it efficiently and that we could provide security of supply in the longer term.

We sell our timber either as standing trees to be harvested by the buyer or as felled timber harvested by ourselves. At present some 64% of our sales are from Commission production with the balance sold standing. Over the years we have pioneered the use in this country of harvesting techniques and machinery which have their origins in Scandinavia. These modern machines are most effective when used in an integrated harvesting operation; which necessitates retaining control of the harvesting of substantial annual programmes conveniently located to our main centres of operation. On the other hand standing sales encourage the development of private harvesting resources and provide flexible buying opportunities for industry.

COMPETITIVE SALES

To ensure that we achieve the best possible return we aim to sell by competition wherever possible. Overall about 75 per cent of timber is sold competitively either by tender or auction. There is no clear cut advantage between tenders and auctions, both types of sale have their advantages and disadvantages. The timber trade and ourselves accept the use of both methods, therefore in most Conservancies there might be about two auctions and two major tenders evenly spaced throughout the year in order to give our customers the opportunity to obtain supplies regularly.

While we expect to increase the volume of competitive sales it will always be necessary to continue with some proportion of negotiated sales particularly to the major users of small roundwood where the capital cost of wood can be guaranteed. Our ability to enter long term contracts for supply of small roundwood has been a major attraction to the new industrial investments which have occurred in the last few years. That investment has been just under £300 million in total.

Today the wood processing industry saves about £365 million of imports annually. With a total annual import bill for timber products of £4.5 billion there is considerable scope for further growth of the forest and wood processing industry.

In the year ending 31 March, 1987, our sales of timber will be £62 million for a total volume of 3.2 million m³. By the turn of the century our volume of sales will be about 5.5 million m³.

SPORT

Innes hits a double

THE annual Forestry Commission Golf Championships were held at Silloth-on-Solway Golf Club in Cumbria.

For the second year in succession the two major trophies — the Open Handicap Championship Cup and Tom's Tankard, for the best scratch score — were won by John Innes, a forester from North Scotland. John's superb gross 6-under-par score of 66 (nett 61) left him a clear winner in both sections.

First prize in the Sutherland Cup, a stableford competition, was won by Stephen Stables, a research Forester M(S), with 38 pts. The team trophy was won by North Scotland, who comprised John Innes, Don Holmes and Len MacRae.

In 1987 the venue again returns to Scotland with Ladybank in Fife being a possible choice.

North York shoots ahead

NORTH York Moors Forest District staff won the Malton Rifle & Pistol Club Business House Cup for 1986. Thirty-two teams from various local businesses participated. Members of the winning team were John Mackenzie, Charles Critchley and Andrew Cameron.

The Conservancy Office team of Brian Mahony, Frank Clough and Debbie Clough reached the semi-finals and the highest score of the competition (95) was shot by Frank Clough Conservancy Civil Engineer, York.

Nice one, Richard

OUTRIGHT winner of the national Garlon 4 competition was Forester Richard Barker of Forest Management Section in the New Forest.

Richard was entertained to a presentation lunch at the Crown Hotel, Lyndhurst, and presented with a voucher for a weekend break holiday, which he intends to use to visit Devon.

The competition took the form of a list of questions on the product, and Richard picked up a copy at the machinery exhibition at Clumber Park. He was no expert on Garlon 4, indeed he had never used it. How did he manage to answer the questions? "Oh, I just read the advertising material. It was all there."

Steve's Ace of Clubs

THE East England section of the FC Golf Society notched up a double when guest player Steve Lawlor, son-in-law of George Marshall, scored a hole in one at the autumn outing at Flempton — a feat he achieved in the spring outing at Bury St Edmunds.

Winner of the FC Matabele Cup at Flempton was John Redford with Mark Southgate runner-up. The spring meeting winner was Lewis Hunt with Jon Redford runner-up. Steve Lawlor won both guest trophies.

Science is golden

AMONG other forest industry people recognised in the New Year Honours List was Dr Bill Binns, Principal Scientific Officer, Research Division, who was awarded the OBE.

In recent years he has been deeply involved in the subject of air pollution both in Britain and the Continent and his work is highly regarded internationally.

An MBE was awarded to Ifor Peters, foreman at Clwyd, where he has worked for the last 36 years. He is closely involved in a number of major landscaping, planting and community support projects.

Gerald Blunt, foreman, Forest of Dean, was awarded the BEM. He joined

the Commission in 1941 and apart from his work involvement in training he is an active member of the St John's Ambulance Brigade.

And involvement with the St John's Brigade has led to a BEM for Mrs Florence Edmonds, of Kidlington, a district clerk with FC for 17 years. She has run many first-aid courses in east England since her retirement in 1977 in her role as a qualified lecturer.

Morton Boyd, former director of the Nature Conservancy Council, Scotland, and now a consultant to the FC, was made CBE.

An OBE was awarded to Michael Harkey, President of the Royal Forestry Society and former president of Timber Growers England and Wales.



Roger Lines, Principal Scientific Officer at NRS, pictured with his wife, Jane, after receiving his OBE, awarded in the 1986 Birthday Honours.

DG DEFENDS POLICY

DIRECTOR General Gwyn Francis faced one of the toughest tasks of his new job on 4th February when he was cross-examined for 2½ hours by the House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee.

Committee Room No. 16 in the Commons was packed when the hearing began at 4.15 pm on a Wednesday afternoon. The Public Accounts Committee is often called "Parliament's spending watchdog" and their job is to make sure that Government departments are spending taxpayers' money wisely.

The hearing was the result of the report produced by the National Audit Office on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. The NAO report was especially critical of the estimates of return on investment in

forestry and this was one of the main issues on which Mr Francis had to answer questions.

The main thrust of the MPs questions centred around the lack of reliable data on the financial costs and return on investment measured for each individual plantation. The DG stressed that the cost of keeping such information for every plantation throughout its 60 year rotation could not be justified, but he did reveal that it was the Commission's intention to monitor new plantations on a sample basis. The data collected on costs in the first ten years of the plantation (the establishment phase) would provide a check on the assumptions made in the acquisition modelling appraisal.

The other big issue was, not surprisingly, the continued afforestation of the "flow country" in Caithness and Sutherland. One MP spoke of "destruction of a national heritage" and others questioned the justification for planting there.

The DG told the Committee that he believed it was justified in terms of creating a forest resource and new jobs in a fragile rural economy. But he stressed that both the Commission and the private sector recognised the conservation argument, and that the TGUK voluntary code of practice had been welcomed by NCC. It was essential, nevertheless, to obtain a balance between the interests of people and the interests of conservation.

"I firmly believe that when we have the conservation needs clearly identified we shall be able to get a balance and create a resource which is worthwhile in both economic and conservation terms," said Mr Francis.

As the "Scotsman" reported the DG mounted a full blooded defence of his strong counter argument forestry policy and the Commission's record; and was particularly effective as he outlined the demonstrable benefits of investment in afforestation by describing

the recent successes in attracting inward investors such as Kymmene-Stromberg and Shotton, and the major expansions in sawmilling and other wood processing industries. There was also one highlight when the DG was asked to defend the growing of Sitka spruce. He strongly disputed the suggestion that Sitka was a bad choice of species.

He told the Committee that the pulp mills at Shotton and Irvine will use almost exclusively Sitka spruce wood as the raw material for their high quality products and it was the papermakers' first choice for its "brightness factor" and its other qualities. Sitka had also performed extremely well in stress testing as a structural load bearing timber and there was, he said, no doubt that it was a prime raw material.

He was able to echo the words of Secretary of State Malcolm Rifkind who said in Glasgow that the availability of a secure wood supply for new investors was a significant factor in attracting them.

New techniques in pollution probe

THE effects of atmospheric pollution on trees are being studied by the Forestry Commission in specially designed "greenhouses" at three research sites in south east England, north England and Scotland.

The open-topped chambers, designed by Commission scientists, will allow a constant current of either 'clean' or polluted air to be passed up through the crowns of a number of tree species. Examination of the trees will give objective measures of whether and, if so, how much the air in the immediate locality is influencing the condition of the trees and hence their growth and health.

The Commission's new approach to research into tree health will run in

conjunction with studies of trees in the forest. But field observation cannot provide a really objective route to detecting pervasive air pollution damage owing to the many other effects of site, insect or fungal disease or climate which have an influence on the appearance of trees. They are however a necessary tool in studies of possible impacts of air pollution on trees.

Studies carried out in 1986 on the health of beech and of conifers are published in December, show that there is no sign, so far, in the tree species surveyed, of the forest decline which is of such great concern in central Europe.

Mr Arnold Grayson, Director of Research of the Forestry Commission, said: "Though the third year of survey of

trees of three sorts of conifer, Norway spruce, Sitka spruce and Scots pine, shows that the condition of these trees was apparently worse than in 1985, the report on conifer health shows how far the results may be influenced by the conditions of a particular season.

"The coldest February in England and Wales for nearly 40 years, combined with drying winds, killed needles on many trees, while a needle fungus on Scots pine seriously damaged the foliage of that species in many parts of Britain.

"Over and above these natural causes of needle loss, more intensive training of observers in 1986 led them to be more severe in their marking of tree condition. While these three factors explain much of the apparent worsening in the condition

of the conifers, it is possible that other influences have affected the appearance of the trees' crowns. However no evidence emerges from analysis of the results of observations on needle loss, needle colour or needle life to indicate that air pollution is a cause of the current variation in the condition of tree crowns" said Mr Grayson.

In the study of beech health, which was begun in 1985, the observations show that the condition of tree crowns is generally as good as in 1986 and better so far as leaf yellowing is concerned. The report also refers to work still in progress on detailed analysis of the extension of leading shoots and short shoots which it is hoped will help to elucidate reasons for variation in beech health.

Massive boost for UK industry

From page 1

in timber harvesting, road haulage and supporting industries. It will produce annually 170,000 tonnes of high quality lightweight coated paper.

It is the latest in a series of developments that have reversed the wood processing industry's recession of the early 1980s.

• It has been reported that Highland Forestry products have been so successful since they started 18 months ago they need to expand production facilities. The factory achieved a break-even point in one year and demand for their product is so great that a decision on extending production facilities is expected later this year.

UNIONS SUPPORT STAFF COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

ARE you completely satisfied that you get all the information you need from the Commission in clear, concise terms, to do your job effectively? Is it true that you never receive any confusing or irrelevant information that you don't need? If the answer to both these questions is a resounding "Yes" then don't bother to read on.

On the other hand, if you feel that there is some scope for improvement in the way that the Commission's management communicates with staff then the new staff communications survey team at Head Office would like to hear from you. During the next few weeks you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and you may be asked to take part in face-to-face interviews with members of the survey team.

When you receive the questionnaire or if you are asked for an interview, say the team, please help. "Our intention is to recommend action to improve things," says Doug Goddard, leader of the survey team. "Not to collect a load of statistics and brood on them. There is no point in collecting data like this and not making good use of it."

The survey has the full support of the unions, too, following consultations at the planning stage. "It is high time that the Commission did something like this," Kenny Murray, Chairman of the Commission's Trade Union side claimed. "We will be pressing management to take action on the survey's findings and recommendations and I hope that all members will co-operate fully," he said.

Arthur Mills, Secretary, FCITC, said, "We are all aware of poor communications and if we don't get involved in the action to improve them we will not have anything to moan about."

In the meantime, even if you are not interviewed yourself, let *Slasher* know your views and we will pass on your letters to the survey team. Indeed, if any really interesting comments or stories emerge, we will print them in the coming issues!

Projects in the running for a prize

FORESTRY Commission conservation projects have been shortlisted by Prof. David Bellamy and his panel of judges for one of the Conservation Foundation's British Conservation Awards and are also in the running for the top European prize.

£2000 each

The awards, supported by Ford Motor Company, are worth £2000 each for the six category winners and £5000 for the overall winner which will go forward to the European Conservation Project of the Year judging in Paris in March.

Based on KIELDER FOREST is a scheme to provide artificial nests throughout north England and north Scotland. During 1986 over 2000 artificial nests were provided in a joint FC/RSPB project which also involved volunteer conservationists and school children. FC Conservation Officer Rod Leslie said: "It is the biggest project to provide artificial nesting places for birds ever undertaken in Britain involving species such as goldeneye, osprey, merlin and long-eared owls."

Good management

"We are obviously delighted that it has been recognised by shortlisting for this award."

STRATHYRE FOREST impressed the judges for the way that good management ensures that both its timber production and tourist attractions are equally maintained through a project team, including a landscape architect, to plan all work in the forest. The end result will be a diverse forest which blends with the landscape yet remains a highly efficient timber producer.



Setting up one of the nest boxes which have been installed throughout Northumberland and northern Scotland.

Puck's Glen is a big winner



THE Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland has given a prize to the reconstructed Puck's Glen forest walk in Cowal Forest District.

Puck's Glen, near Benmore, has a history of pathways dating back more than 100 years but due to storm damage, became impassable. Now, through FC sponsorship involving a Manpower Services Commission community programme many paths have been cleared and new ones created in the glen.

The Commission was praised for the

use of local material in the project and FDM Bob Selmes was delighted to receive a third prize in a scheme which normally honours buildings rather than nature conservation project. "Already the public are coming back in large numbers to take advantage of the walks in what is one of the most beautiful areas in Argyll," he said.

Photo shows John McKay, MP, Under Secretary, Scottish Office (right) presenting the award to Bob Selmes (left) and H&M F Tony Rees.

YOUR "SLASHER"

AS from now, "Slasher" will be published six times a year instead of quarterly. This means more space for YOUR news. That means more work for "Slasher" correspondents. And you can help by letting them know about events that might interest all readers. It might be a retirement, a social or sports event, a story about the Forestry Commission that has appeared in your local newspaper, or an amusing photograph.

And if you wish to air a special point of view a letter to the EDITOR could provide you with the right platform.

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NRS, John Smith
TUS, Ken Murray

AN ART SPECTACULAR IN THE FOREST

THE FORESTRY Commission has been widely praised for its involvement in further support of art, this time in the Forest of Dean.

Last summer, in conjunction with Arnolfini of Bristol, an internationally acclaimed educational charity, it launched The Forest of Dean Project, involving a number of leading artists.

The chief motivator was Martin Orrom, FF&EO, West England, who first proposed encouraging artists to contribute to understanding of the forest through art and to incorporate that with the forest's nature trails.

The project was set in motion with a grant from the Elephant Trust and a vital contribution from the Commission. The Henry Moore Foundation and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust were also involved.

SPECTACULAR

Sculpture projects were sited at the centre of the forest near the 17th century Verderer's Court (now the Swoech House Hotel) and the Beechhurst picnic site. The sculptures were sited on a circular walk described by Arnolfini as "One with undulating slopes, spectacular views and variety of trees that provides an effective experience of the forest and will hopefully encourage people to explore other parts of the forests for themselves."

Included in the artists whose works were commission are David Nash, Magdalena Jutelova, Kevin Atherton, Peter Appleton, Andrew Darke and Keir Smith.

In addition, three artists in residence worked on a number of projects including a series of workshops, while special exhibitions were sited in the Arnolfini Gallery, Rupert Martin, Gallery and Project Co-ordinator, said: "The sculptor's role in this project is to concentrate our attention on the forest itself, to reveal aspects of the forest to our jaded perceptions, to awaken the sense of sight, touch, hearing and smell, and thereby to enhance our appreciation of a forgotten realm."

PRIVATE

John Fletcher, West England Conservator, said the exhibition was the result of a desire by the Commission to encourage artists to interpret the forest and to enhance the experience of the area's half a million visitors each year.

"The forest is both a public and a very private place and offers artists a unique opportunity to contribute to the landscape in a way that captures the public imagination, in the same way as the Grizedale project in Cumbria," he said.



Left:
David Nash, Fire and Water Boats.

Right:
Jeff Carter, Sue Tomlinson and Martin Orrom study Magdalena Jutelova's 20-foot chair.



• ANDREW DARKE (Sliced Log Star).

SECURITY TIGHT FOR GRIZEDALE'S VIPs



• No stone was left unturned by security personnel.



GRIZEDALE forest district office was the scene of intense security checks when European farm Ministers called in during a visit to the Lake District.

Brian's agriculture Minister, Michael Jopling, is currently the President of the European Commission's Agriculture Council and he invited his colleagues to Cumbria for an official meeting.

After a morning at High Wycombe farm, seeing the best of the north of England's livestock on display, and then lunch at Holker Hall, the two bundles of Ministers, their wives and officials drove up to Grizedale.

The buses were met by Forest District manager, John Voysey and Chief Forester, David Hawkes, who guided the Ministers on a short tour inside the forest. At the district office, Mr Jopling planted a sessile oak to commemorate the visit. Ministers were the first guests in the new shop there and they then climbed the stairs to the Theatre in the Forest, before leaving for a sail on Lake Windermere and dinner. Prince Charles was guest of honour at the dinner and the following day sat in on the Council meeting.

PREPARATION

It was a brief visit to the forest, but Mr Jopling expressed his pleasure at what he had seen and heard.

But for Commission staff at Conservancy, Forest district and Headquarters it was the nail-biting culmination of months of preparation.

Alan Rix, Conservator (NE) told SLASHER:

"As usual, unexpected things happened. The Belgian Minister flew home on Sunday night and back on Monday afternoon, and arrived at Grizedale before anyone else. So we chatted to him — he spoke perfect English of course. Two things he said stuck in my mind. The first was that he had just calculated that for every person alive in the world today there was 1 lb. of butter in the EEC mountain, and the second was that the Greek Minister had muttered to him that "if this was a 'Less Favoured Area' goodness knows what the 'Favoured Areas' were like."

"But, quite seriously, no praise is enough for the excellence of local staff in getting the new Grizedale Centre ready in time. Their laid-back, unflustered sang froid made the whole affair worthwhile."

Forest District manager John Voysey sent SLASHER his own report from the front.

"Jim O'Hare, Clerk of Works, had managed to drive the bulldozers off the site and the recreation staff had filled the new shop with goodies. Then the security men moved in and turned the place upside

down. Each room being sealed after a search. Anyone without an identity badge was locked up and the forest workers were spirited away into the forest. Rumour had it that a wildlife ranger was seized upon in the forest by the SAS, caught red-handed with a rifle. The back was searched and the pillar box gagged!

"At midday there was a hail while people twiddled their thumbs and nervously wagged the delay between the Ministers leaving a big lunch and arriving at the Wall in Green gate, but arrive they did. Not many were dozing and those awake were initiated into the mysteries of Grizedale by David Hawkes and John Voysey as the two coaches with all mod-cons wound their way through the forest to the visitor centre."

"Here Michael Jopling introduced our Chairman who welcomed the party and with customary banter prevailed upon him to plant a Lake District oak with appropriate plaque. Alan Rix then expounded the Grizedale ethic and invited them all into his parlour, the exquisitely-appointed shop converted out of the garage built by the previous owner of Grizedale Hall in about 1906."

Both awards were collected by North England Conservator Alan Rix.

THEATRE

"When all climbed up into the Theatre in the Forest where ex Chief Forester Bill Grant, who dreamed it up, held forth on the wonderful reality of it all which included a fine exhibition of pottery and weaving. A farewell from the Chairman and they were off."

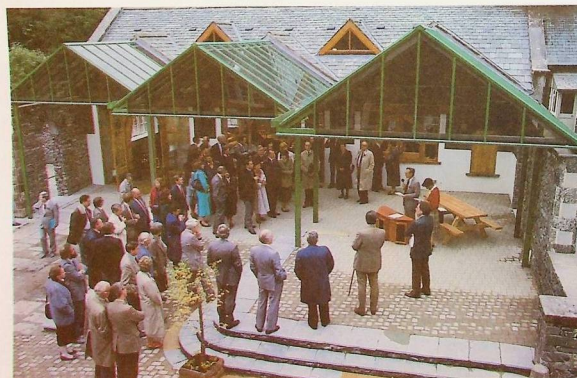
South Lakes District staff who were "on parade" for the day also included District Forester David Hawkes, recreation ranger George Iles and shop assistant, Olwyn Hilton. The remainder of the Grizedale staff bravely carried on trying to work normally!



• STUART FROST (Bracken Forms).



• KEVIN ATHERTON (Cathedral).



• Our European VIPs gather at Grizedale for the start of their tour.



Bill Grant (left) beside Alan Rix collecting the Art in Works award.

RETIREMENTS

A hearty farewell for two stalwarts

HAROLD WALKER (65) retired from Blengdale (North England) after 46 years, all spent at the forest apart from war service. The magnificent Douglas fir along the Bleng were scrawny young trees when Harold first started work. He always enjoyed his work but is looking forward to retirement which he expects to be no less busy. His wife and seven daughters will see he has enough to do. Retiring at the same time was Jack Ellwood (64) who had spent 24 years at Blengdale where he had a holding at Scalderscaw which he recently bought. He says: "What's retirement?" No doubt he will be able to take things a little easier, though. At a splendid evening at the Bridge Inn at Santon Bridge, Forest District Manager Mike Scott, presented Harold Walker with a pair of binoculars and Jack Ellwood with a craftsman-made Shepherd's crook.



Cheerful Joe will be sadly missed



AT a gathering of friends at Headquarters, Charles Simmonds presented Joe Russell with a farewell card and cheque from his many friends throughout the Commission.

Through his work in Personnel both at Basingstoke and in Edinburgh, his post as Welfare Officer from 1977 to 1981, and his work in Superannuation, Joe is a well-known and well-liked personality.

Always cheerful, helpful and friendly he will be missed by colleagues.

Joe intends to spend his cheque on a carbon fly rod which will enable him to pursue even more effectively his hobby of fishing. His retirement will, at last, give other Commission fishermen a fair chance at the Challenge Cup!

Driver signs off



JOHN MORRIS or "Jack Fedw Deg" as he was known, retired due to ill-health. He had worked as a tipper driver with the Roads Department since 1960. Mr D. J. Killer, the Area Civil Engineer, presented him with a wall clock on behalf of his friends and colleagues in the Roads Department at a small get-together in the Llanrwst Roads office.

Held in high esteem



MEIRION WILLIAMS was employed by the FC for 40 years at Corris Forest District but was forced to retire early on health grounds. In recent times he worked on Forest Management but, during his early days, he was held in high esteem because of his prowess as a Cable Crane operator and during this time he assisted with a lot of training of other winch operators in North Wales. He is pictured with Mrs Gillian Thomas, the CO at Corris FD.

RETIREMENTS

Remarkable record for 50-year Danny

LAST AUTUMN saw the retirement of two Craftsmen, each of whom had given over 30 years' service to the Commission and both of whom had achieved reputations as "characters."

PAT LYONS planted some of the first trees at Bowland forest, starting there in 1952 after leaving the merchant navy. He soon lost his sea legs but not his splicing skills, his independent and original views nor his passion for the Times crossword puzzle.

DICK WILKINSON also started at Bowland, 1955, and later moved to Dunnerdale forest where not only was he accomplished in all the skills of forestry but also a valued and entertaining member of the Local Consultative Committee for very many years. His skill as a poet was also renowned, being a runner-up in a Sunday Times poetry competition. He retired early to devote his time to "creative indolence and reading poetry."

D. HENDERSON was given an informal send-off when he retired after 32 years' service. Formerly in NW(E) then latterly at Bellingham Engineers.

MR G. RIDLEY retired after 34 years' service. Gerry is retiring early while "he has enough life in him to enjoy it." His hobbies are fox hunting and following the hounds. An informal gathering and presentation was held by his colleagues.

P. F. LYONS retired after 34 years' service. Pat's hobby is reading but he is also a "Times" crossword expert. He was one of the first men (if not the first) engaged at the "old" Bowland.

P. R. WILKINSON retired after 31 years' service. Dick was a school teacher before joining the Commission in 1955 and is a keen debater. His intention after retiring will be "creative indolence." He has won the "Sunday Times" Poetry Competition.

W. T. PICKAVANCE retired after 49 years. He joined the Northumberland Fusiliers in 1939 and served in North Africa, Palestine and Greece. He was three years a POW in a mine on the Rhur Valley. He says he will spend his retirement recovering from working with his supervisors!

JIMMY "CO CO" NAISMITH retired in December after 32 years' service with the Aberfoyle road squad in Mid Scotland. He joined the FC when slate quarries for which he had worked since leaving school were closed in 1954, and at his farewell presentation Conservancy Engineer Pat Thomas referred to his remarkable attendance record which showed only a few days absence. He received a suitcase and a "going away outfit" from friends and colleagues to use in his plan to spend his retirement travelling with Malta first on his list — no doubt connected with his war service in North Africa and Italy.

TO MARK the retirement of Bobby Mitchell from the Forestry Commission after approximately 30 years' service, a social evening was held at Inverver Hotel, Tyndrum, at which many of Bobby's friends and colleagues were present. District Manager Malcolm Macpherson presented Bobby with a watch and a cheque on behalf of his friends and colleagues and wished him a long and happy retirement.

J. R. ELLWOOD, Forest Craftsman at North Lakes, retired after 22 years in Harvesting and Forest Management. Jack was also a good shepherd and was expert at removing sheep from plantations! Now that he has retired he will have more time on the farm he owns. His colleagues wished him a long and happy retirement at a gathering where he was presented with a gift to mark the occasion.

KASPER HEITZ retired from Glenbranter after 25 years' FC service. He was an excellent feller and winchman, much respected by his fellow workers. He received a cheque to buy either a fishing rod or stout walking boots.

ALEX REID, Head Forester, retired after 35 years' service. He joined as a forest worker at Midmar and most of his work was in Silviculture Research, latterly at Perth. He was presented with a cheque and the book "Decorative Trees for Town and Garden."



DANNY YOUNIE retired after serving a grand total of over fifty years with the Commission in East (latterly North) Scotland — a record few can equal. He started at Newton Nursery in 1936, later moving on to nearby Monaghty. After a spell with the Home Grown Timber Production Department he joined the 7th Seaforth Highlanders in 1943 and

was wounded in action at Arnhem. Since his demob in 1947 Danny's forestry career has been long and varied covering such aspects as nursery, establishment, harvesting and haulage. With his long association with Moray District Danny has been able to feed back his considerable knowledge and experience in many practical ways. Mr

Alan Mackay, Asst. Cons. Ops. N(S) presented Danny with his long service certificate and Lesley Hutcheson, CO, Moray, presented him with a watch, bowling bag and a cheque. Mrs Younie (second left on picture) also a CO at Moray, was presented with a brooch. On the left of the picture is Lachie MacCallum, Chief Forester Harvesting.



FARMING FUTURE

MORRIS HUGHES retired recently after 38 years with the Commission, the last 35 with the Roads Department. "Moi" has operated various machines during his career with the Commission; the last 15 years have been spent operating a motor-grader. He now owns his smallholding, and will retire to farming — he is a keen Agricultural Show competitor. Conservancy Civil Engineer, Mr T. P. Summers, presented "Moi" with a Long Service Certificate, and a barometer from his colleagues.



CLOCKING OUT

RICHARD ROBERTS, a grader operator, worked for the Commission since 1946 and had been with the Roads Department since 1950. He was presented with a Long Service Certificate by Mr D. J. Killer, Area Civil Engineer, at an informal get-together at Llanrwst Roads office. Mr Killer also presented him with an engraved carriage clock on behalf of his friends and workmates in the Roads Department.

Dennis started in harvesting



DENNIS WILLIAMS started work with the FC in 1950 as a harvesting worker and later moved to Forest Management duties and has spent all of his 35 years' service in Corris Forest District. Bad health has forced him to retire.

RETIREMENTS

Farewell gifts for 35 years



JOHN ARMSTRONG, A & FO N(E), retired at the end of September after over 35 years' service with the Commission including spells in Woking, Dumfries, Chester, Basingstoke and Edinburgh before his move to York in 1981. At an informal gathering of colleagues in the Beechwood Close Hotel, York, John was presented with a camera and a print of a York scene, by Alan Rix (Conservator). Mrs Armstrong received a bouquet of flowers.

Planting spade a star attraction



COLLEAGUES past and present gathered to pay tribute and bid farewell to Alan Weighell who had been a Ganger in the North York Moors Forest District (ex Cleveland, ex Osmotherley) for 30 of his 31 years' service.

Repartee wasn't the only commodity to flow freely and, amid laughter, Alan was eventually persuaded to produce — and be ceremoniously presented with — his ORIGINAL ISSUE "Spear & Jackson" Planting Spade that, with the blade now worn to about a third of its original length, he had jealously guarded and used ever since.

More formally, Forest District Manager John Mackenzie also presented Alan with a large, framed photograph of the typical agroforestry landscape to which he had devoted his working life.

MacPherson on the forest beat

MALCOLM Macpherson, FOI, retired at the end of September, after serving with the Commission since 1950. To mark his retirement the Oban Office Staff took Mr and Mrs Macpherson out to lunch. Some of their personal friends also attended and the Conservator, Mr Sandy Morrison, presented Mr Macpherson with a cheque. Before he retired, he expressed a wish to plant a tree in each forest beat and here he is seen with some of the Glencoe forest staff giving thought to the work in hand.



Charity raffle



NEIL BALFOUR came to the Forestry Commission in 1964 from Pittencrieff Park where he worked for the Dunfermline District Council. He had not been with us long when the forest at Blairadam blew down around his ears. Neil said at his farewell presentation: "While other members of staff took to chainsaws I still wielded an axe with a seven pound head because the FC thought I was too old to learn new tricks." He soon proved everyone wrong and became an expert chainsaw operator, retiring from the Blairadam felling gang after 22 years' of service. A raffle at Neil's farewell raised £40 for the Gordon Cottage Day Centre for handicapped children in Kelty.

His many relations and friends rallied round Neil at his farewell evening in the Masonic Hall in Kelty and his son Donald continues to work with the Forestry Commission in Fife as a processor operator.

Party for Andy



AFTER 40 years' service, of which 28 years were served with the Commission (mostly in Mid Scotland Conservancy Office), over 100 friends and colleagues said farewell to Andy Gallacher at a retirement party at Zaks in Glasgow. At the party he was presented with a video recorder by Mr J. Anderson, A&FO. Andy has always been a popular figure both with Commission staff and those he dealt with in the private woodland sector. His wealth of experience and knowledge will be a loss to the Commission. We would like to take this opportunity to wish him a long and happy retirement.

RETIREMENTS

HAROLD TURLEY, Forest Craftsman, Forest of Dean, retired due to ill-health after 30 years' service. He started his working life in the local coalmine and, after a short period with the CEBG, joined the FC in 1956. He carried out all forest operations but was employed on harvesting for most of his service, being on FM for the past few years. At a small gathering, he was presented with an electric ship frier and long-service certificate by FDM John Everard.

JIM CHELNICK, Forest Craftsman, Marches, is retiring after 46 years with the FC in Marches.

STEWART MacKENZIE retired after nearly 36 years which started as a mechanic in N(S) in August 1950. In 1966 he moved to Work Study Branch working at Kielder and then Alice Holt where he remained until 1983. He then returned to N(S) as Asst. CME. His knowledge of mechanical engineering work at all levels in the FC was exceptional and combined with a helpful and friendly personality made him well-known and liked throughout the Commission. At a farewell lunch in a local hotel his colleagues presented him with a cheque and more than a little liquid refreshment on what was a memorable occasion.

GERALD RIDLEY, Forest Craftsman, retired after 34 years. Greatly experienced in felling he used axes and cross cutting until chainsaws were introduced.

GEORGE MOON retired after 36 years' service with the Estates Staff at Kielder Forest. George joined the Commission in 1950 and has seen the creation of the three forest villages and the tremendous expansion of Kielder Forest in the Fifties and the Sixties and, more recently, the creation of Kielder Reservoir, all of which has transformed the area. For the past few years George has been the Estates Foreman and his reassuring figure in times of emergency will be missed by all.

RON EVANS, Forester with the Forest Surveys Branch in the Banchory area, retired in December after 38½ years with FC. After working at Tillyfour and Kirkhill in Aberdeenshire, he attended the Forester Training School at Glentworth for two years before taking up his first post at Shin. He spent most of his subsequent career in North Scotland at Farigaig, Glengarry, Balblair and Ardross before returning to Shin. He joined Field Survey Branch in 1976. At an informal gathering in Banchory he was presented with a gift and cheque.

MRS JEAN MORRIS left Marches Forest District staff after 28 years' service, 27 of which were in Wyre Forest Office and Visitor Centre with her last year in the Forest District Office in Ludlow. Her many friends from the old SW(E) Conservancy, past and present, in addition to current colleagues, contributed to farewell presents.

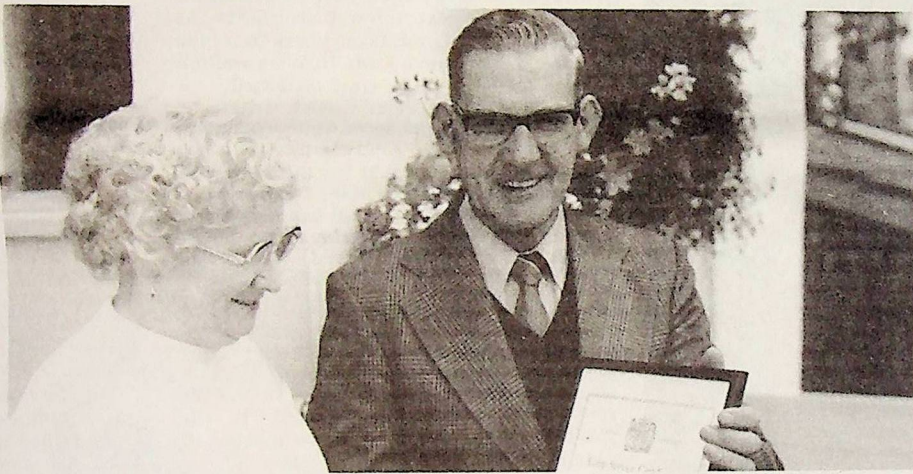
Colleagues gather to give Bobby a cheer



A LARGE company of colleagues, former colleagues and friends assembled at the British Legion Club in Cowbridge to wish former Ganger Bobby Beames and his wife a full and happy retirement. Bobby's service in the Commission extended over 44 years, much of which was served as a Ganger in Tair Onen and included the heydays of hectic nursery management when the area was supplying large numbers of plants to

meet the rapid expansion of the Commission's activities in the South Wales valleys. Tributes were paid to Bobby's loyalty, integrity and dedication, and these feelings were demonstrated by the gifts given to the couple. Further evidence of Bobby's popularity and past endeavours was highlighted when the Chairman of Mid Glamorgan Health Authority, Mr Bryn Davies, presented him with the Union's silver badge to mark the loyalty and service given to the movement.

Carry on caretaker!



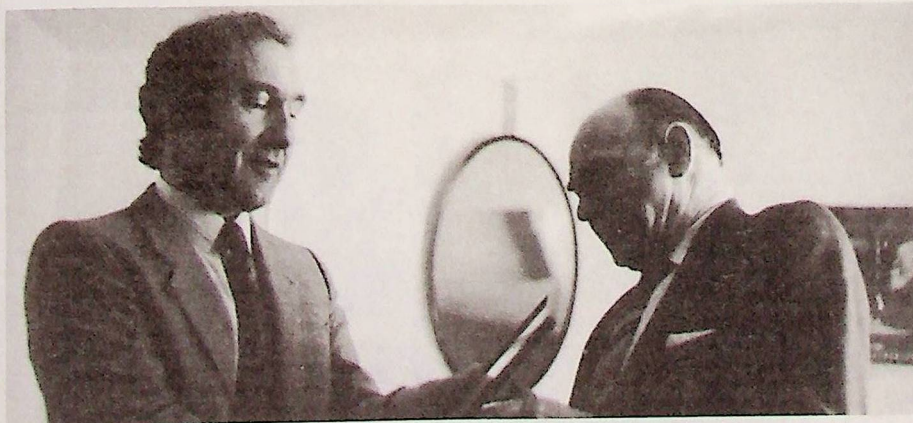
RHUFON Jones served in the Welsh Guards and was employed with the Great Western Railway before joining the Forestry Commission in 1949, going to work in Corris where he has spent the last 37 years.

He will be kept busy in his retirement as

caretaker of Machynlleth Community Centre and with his hobbies of clock repairing and making Shepherd's Crooks.

The Forest District Manager, Mr J. P. Hamilton, presented him with his Long Service Certificate and he is photographed holding it with his wife.

Austin notches up 39



AUSTIN Jones retired after 39 years' service. He has spent his whole life in the Bwlch Sarnau area and, following a period as a farm worker, joined the Commission in 1947 and has spent his career, including the past 17 years, as Ganger on forest management at Coed Sarnau.

At a gathering of staff and colleagues at the Happy Union Inn at Abbey Cwmhir, Austin was presented with the Long Service Certificate by Mr

Eifion Jones, Operations Support Officer, on behalf of the Conservator.

Mr Roy Jones, who was Head Forester at Coed Sarnau prior to the reorganisation, presented him with a watch and a bottle of his favourite tipple on behalf of colleagues and friends. It is hoped that in retirement he will be successful in adding to his large collection of cups, trophies and awards for darts, dominoes and choral singing.

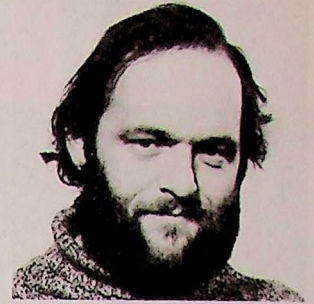
OBITUARIES

TRAGIC

DEATH OF

ROBIN

CARNELL



ROBIN CARNELL died suddenly at the tragically early age of 45. The son of Reg Carnell, well-known in the Commission in South West England, he came into research almost accidentally. He had worked for ICI at Jealott's Hill, then joined the forest squad at Bramhill, where George Cross noticed his intelligence and individuality and suggested he should try Alice Holt.

He worked for three years with Bill Hinson and David Fourt, then emigrated to Australia. In 1969, after three years in Australia, he returned to take a vacant job as an assistant experimental officer, again in Soils (now Site Studies), where he worked on soil physics, especially the theory and practice of forest drainage.

Two years ago he took over responsibility for liaison and briefing on forestry-freshwater interactions, both yield and chemical effects, and had made a clear mark both inside and outside the Commission.

JIM EMPSON, who died at Alice Holt Lodge where, up until his death, he had been caretaker since 1948. He lived in the flat with his wife Eileen and, as well as his caretaking duties, he was employed as a Clerical Officer and worked in all branches at Alice Holt until he retired in 1981 at age 65. He was very active in the social and sporting scene at Alice Holt and his lively personality, cheerful and obliging manner will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

KEN WILLIAMS, retired Forester at North York Moors. Ken had only been retired since December 1984 after 36 years' service.

DON WHIELDON, whose death shocked colleagues and friends. He was Chief Training and Development Manager of the Forestry Training Council. Don joined the Training Council from Fountain Forestry three years ago and was particularly involved with the YTS Scheme in Forestry. His reputation was well-known within the forestry world. He leaves a widow and three children.

THOMAS RIDLEY, known locally as Tucker, died suddenly at home. He joined the forestry Commission in 1953 originally working on ploughing then harvesting and for the last 10 years on Forest Management and DOT work. He helped clear the ground on which Whinlatter Visitor Centre has now been built. Both brothers based at Thornthwaite all their Forestry Commission working lives.

STEWART H. JONES, former HEO, South Wales, died suddenly after a short illness, aged 57. He had served with FC for 29 years, joining Dean Office at Whitmead in 1950 and in 1962 moved as EO on promotion to Aberystwyth on land acquisition. He was promoted HEO at HQ, Basingstoke, in 1972, then to Edinburgh in 1974. He returned to Wales in 1979. He left FC to take over a dairy business with his wife Hilda in their native Forest of Dean.

RETIRED Head Forester Frank Pemberton died suddenly earlier this year. He retired in 1980 after 37 years with FC. He studied at Parkend and Benmore FTS, and had spells in Wales, NW(E) and N(S) before coming to Wareham Forest in SW(E) in 1970. He leaves a widow and daughter Ann.

FRANK BARCHAM, formerly SEO, Acquisitions and Disposals, Basingstoke, died suddenly on holiday. He will be remembered by former colleagues at Basingstoke and Aberystwyth. He is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

LEARN THE SECRETS

"THE Secret Forest of Dean" is the title of a new book by Fay Godwin and we have two copies to give away to *Slasher* readers in a simple competition. All you have to do is find the answers to three questions, all of which are to be found in the columns of this issue, and send them to the Editor not later than 16 March, 1987.

1. Which gallery helped organise the art display in Forest of Dean?

.....

2. Which company is setting up a new pulp and paper mill in Scotland?

.....

3. Who shot two birdies?

.....

Name

Address

.....

THE RETIRAL OF GEORGE HOLMES

Party time in Edinburgh



Mr and Mrs Holmes with Gwyn Francis . . . presents galore . . . and time for a smile.

THERE were tributes galore to George Holmes when he retired from the post of Director General. Chairman Sir David Montgomery, speaking at a farewell dinner in Edinburgh, compared the work of Mr Holmes to that of Lord Robinson, the first chairman of the Forestry Commission.

"In the history of British forestry, the name Holmes will be as well-known as that of Robinson — jointly they have made the biggest contribution to forestry in this country. During his time in

office forestry has gone through difficult times imposed from outside," said Sir David.

Man of vision

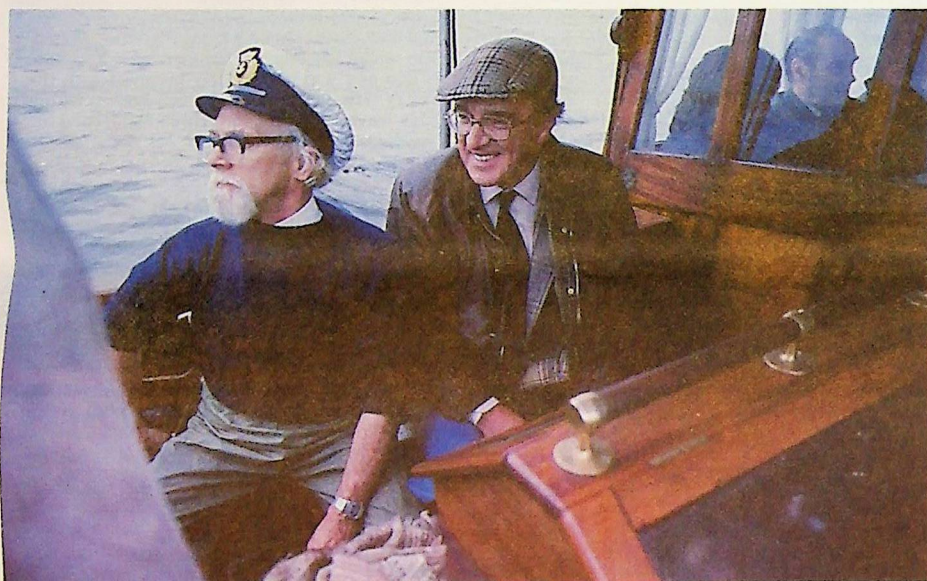
Tracing Mr Holmes' career, which started at Alice Holt in 1948 (returning there 20 years later as research director) Gwyn Francis, the new D-G, said: "Here was a man of vision who could look at the needs of forests in the future." Apart from being at the centre

of "tumultuous events" including policy changes, reorganisation and the new broadleaved policy, Mr Holmes was deeply involved in Commonwealth and world forestry problems.

Among the many gifts from colleagues and friends were golf clubs and trolley, a hostess trolley, a giant wooden fly and a clock from the New Zealand forest service.

Prior to his retirement Mr Holmes carried out an extensive conservancy tour and reports of two visits are reported below.

All aboard HMS farewell!



ON his farewell tour in Argyll, Loch Awe Forest District laid on a special surprise for boat-loving George Holmes. After visits to Whitegates and the new Cairnbaan workshops, the next stop was Inverliver. At Ford Pier, the D-G was taken aboard to see the wooden steam launch Lady Rowena waiting to take him and senior staff on board.

Loch Awe FDM Peter Quelch writes:

"I think there was some apprehension as we went down the slippery pier in heavy drizzle and mist (unusual for the area!) and the boat looked smaller than I expected! The D-G met the owner and captain, Harry Watson, and found a gathering of Loch Awe foresters, current and retired, wives, and Mary Ann Stewart, the Cabins' manageress.

"The weather soon cleared up and the boat chugged its way up the loch at a steady five knots. The views of both sides of the loch were magnificent with forests of all ages rising up steeply from the very shores. It was as revealing as aerial photography to the foresters (especially in regard to patches of failed restocking!).

"Beer and sandwiches were provided on board and the party eventually docked at Dalavich. On the pier George Francey, MBE, ex Chief of Inverliver, with his customary witty speech, presented Mr Holmes with a copy of the Royal Arboricultural Society Journal of the month of his birth and also an original old cash account from Inverliver in the early years of the Crown Estate Office of Woods (pre-FC). This quaint custom continued for several retiring Commissioners, the last being Dallas Mithen. A walkabout was taken in the now famous Dalavich Oakwood project.

"The party redocked, the boat loaded with more coal and peat and the sailing continued to the hotel at Portsonachan. After dropping the rest of the party on to the other side of the loch at Taychreggan, the Lady Rowena, a wooden Windermere launch built in 1927, steamed back to her home in Awe village."

For the retiring DG and the other staff it was a unique and enjoyable day and a memorable experience of the quiet beauty of Loch Awe and its forests.

English oak for Alice Holt

ON his last visit to Alice Holt as Director General, Mr Holmes planted an English oak in the paddock and nearby a tulip tree was planted by Mrs Holmes.

During the ceremony Mr Holmes, who was Director of Research at Alice Holt between 1968 and 1973, spoke of the continuing need for soundly-based scientific research in forestry, saying that while many changes are taking and will take place in forestry, there will always be a need for knowledge. "Knowledge is power," he said.

Superb

Another highlight of the visit was the official opening of the Sports and Social Club hut. At lunchtime Mr Holmes and his wife cut a cake to mark the occasion and joined staff in a glass of wine. The hut, an ex-army building, was purchased in late 1980

and a team of volunteers, headed by Martin Jukes, dismantled the original and converted the ensuing mountain of dirty timber into a superb building.

Friends

The hut will now be used for social functions and lunchtime recreation. The present facilities include table tennis, pool and darts, with a skittle alley nearing completion.

A dinner to mark Mr Holmes' retirement was attended by nearly 50 friends and colleagues in the area.

Mr Holmes was presented with one of the special Alice Holt "cards" produced by Photography Section; as well as containing the best wishes of all the staff, it depicted Mr Holmes at the helm of a sailing ship in rough seas surrounded by many colleagues, both past and present.

