

SLASHER

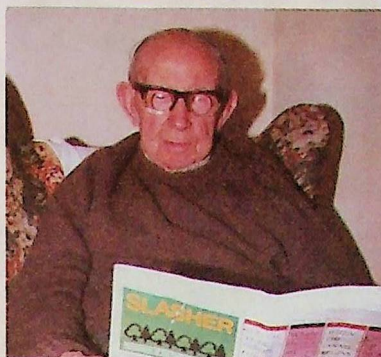


Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

Issue 328

APRIL 1987

READ ON . . .



STILL an avid reader of "Slasher" is Jack Rebbeck who worked at Savernake and West Woods from 1941 to 1962 and who recently celebrated his 89th birthday.



FOR HOOTS . . .

See page 8.

Super spruce attraction for industry

THE success of Sitka spruce in British forestry was highlighted at a tree planting ceremony to mark the start of building work on the new £215 million Caledonian Paper plc paper mill at Irvine, in Ayrshire.

Caledonian Paper plc is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Kymmene-Stromberg Corporation of Finland and the Irvine project is the largest single inward investment ever made in Scotland, creating 480 jobs and securing another 400 in timber harvesting, haulage and supporting industries.

At the planting ceremony Lord Glenarthur, Minister of State, Scottish Office, emphasised that the availability of 200,000 tonnes of timber a year, 50 per cent from the Forestry Commission, had led to the decision to establish the plant in West Scotland.

He said: "In the wake of recent developments in Shotton, North Wales, and Highland Forest Products, Inverness, the Irvine project represents another excellent

opportunity for forest growers to market their timber profitably in the United Kingdom."

In particular, the Finnish company needed spruce. Sitka, with its long fibre length and brightness, is very advantageous to the production of lightweight coated paper.

To coincide with the official start of construction at Irvine the Forestry Commission published "Sitka Spruce — the Super Tree," a booklet setting out the impact that Sitka has had on British forestry since it was first introduced from North America in 1931.

"The availability of Sitka spruce has played a major influence in attracting £600 million of investment in wood-based industries to Britain in the last four years," said Steve Quigley, Director, Harvesting and Marketing. "It produces good quality sawlogs from which sawn timber for the very important construction market can be produced. And it is particularly useful in making mechanical pulp because its fibre contributes strength and brightness to the final paper product."



Lord Glenarthur, Scottish Office, and Mr Casimir Ehrnrooth, Chief Executive, Kymmene-Stromberg, at the Irvine tree planting ceremony.

Farm Woodland Scheme

WIDESPREAD interest has been aroused by the Government's proposed Farm Woodland Scheme which aims at 36,000 hectares of planting in its first three years, starting in 1988.

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr Michael Jopling, told Parliament that in the face of European Community surpluses in the main agricultural commodities, there was a need for a new balance of policies which would encourage alternative uses of land, provide more response to the claims of the environment and more diversity on farms and in the rural economy.

One of the main planks is to be a scheme to encourage the development of farm woodlands to take land out of agricultural production.

He said: "This will build on the existing forestry grant schemes, but also provide for annual payments to cover the gap between planting and the likely first income from most types of timber."

"The payments will vary by area in recognition of the fact the agricultural income foregone from planting trees on farms will be higher in some areas than in others, but the maximum rate of aid will be £125 a year per hectare."

"The aim is to plant up to 36,000 hectares over the first three years of the scheme at the end of which the scheme will be reviewed."

Following the announcement, a Consultation Document was issued by the Agriculture Departments and the Forestry Commission seeking the views of a wide range of interests by 21 April.

BASIS FOR ANNUAL PAYMENTS

A number of options have been listed. The Favoured

SCHEME'S AIMS

- To divert land from agricultural production and thereby assist in the diminution of agricultural surpluses.
- To enhance the landscape, to create new wildlife habitats, to encourage recreational use, including sport, and to expand tourist interest.
- To contribute to supporting farm income and rural employment.
- To encourage greater interest in timber production from farms.
- To contribute to the UK's timber requirements in the long term.

option is to use the existing area classifications of Disadvantaged, (DA) Severely Disadvantaged (SDA), and Other (mainly lowland). Under this option the annual rates of payment would be:

Other	£125 per hectare
DA (Disadvantaged)	£60 per hectare
SDA (Ser. Disadvantaged)	£30 per hectare

It is proposed that annual payments should be made for 20 years in the case of conifers and mixed woodland and for 30 years in the case of exclusively broadleaved woodland.

MINIMUM/MAXIMUM AREA

The proposed minimum area is 3 hectares per agricultural holding, with a minimum area of 1 hectare for each individual block of woodland, while the

maximum area is 20 hectares, or 40 hectares in disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged parts of the country.

BROADLEAVES

The intention is to achieve the planting of about one-third broadleaves overall, if necessary by giving preference to applications with a high broadleaves content.

Speaking at a meeting in Edinburgh on March 11 "the Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr Malcolm Rifkind, said: "The whole range of forestry is to be widened to provide new opportunities with the aim of a better balanced planting programme overall. The move 'down the hill' as it is described, will offer higher rates of return from forestry investment, better integration with agriculture, and an opportunity to lessen some of the tensions between foresters and conservationists. "Farm forestry is not intended to replace traditional forestry but it will supplement it."

● Minister of Agriculture Mr Michael Jopling, MP, made a visit to Alice Holt Research Station in Surrey where the Forestry Commission has been undertaking a number of new research studies into the potential for growing both conifers and broadleaved trees on better quality land than is normally available for commercial forestry.

This research is now to be extended as the opportunities increase for farmers to plant trees as alternatives to other agricultural crops. Arrangements are being made to identify areas in Britain where demonstration plots of farm woodlands can be grown.

NOTES FROM WESTMINSTER

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 9:

Mr Robert MacLennan: Asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, on what grounds the Forestry Commission bases its advice that conifers should be planted at least 15 to 20 metres back from main watercourses; what account is taken of local geography in reaching this assessment; and in what ways the Forestry Commission establishes whether this advice has been observed by planters.

Mr John Mackay: The Forestry Commission's advice on this matter is published in its leaflet "The Management of Forest Streams," a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House. This leaflet recommends that, depending on the land form, the area to be kept free of conifers at each side of the watercourse should be about ten times the width of the watercourse up to a maximum of 30 metres. This is to avoid dense shading which would block out the sunlight that is essential if water plants and fish food organisms are to flourish. Such areas also provide ground through which water from drainage channels can be filtered to remove silt, space in which broadleaved trees can be planted for landscaping and to improve stream habitats, and easy access for anglers and walkers. The Commission monitors whether such advice is being observed in the course of inspections of planting for which grants have been claimed.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 17:

Baroness Jeger asked Her Majesty's Government why a felling licence was granted for Tyrrel's Wood in Norfolk although the area includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest and an area of ancient woodland.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Lord Belstead): Permission for some felling and restocking in this wood was given by the Forestry Commission in January 1986. This followed consultations and agreement with the Nature Conservancy Council and the local authority.



HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 25:

Mr Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list the areas of the Forestry Commission's plantable reserve in the flow county of Sutherland and Caithness;

(2) if he will list the areas proposed for planting by the Forestry Commission in the flow county of Sutherland and Caithness in 1987-88.

Mr John McKay: The information is as follows:

Location	Area of Plantable Reserve (hectares)	Area to be Planted 1987-88 (hectares)
Dyke/Strath Halladale	80	80
Tannach Hill	298	240
Stroupster	950	—
Carn Nam Muc	380	—

Mr Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list forestry grant applications approved in the Western Isles in the last three years.

Mr John McKay: The information is as follows:

Scheme	Area Approved for New Planting (hectares)	Area Approved for Restocking (hectares)
Eishken, Lewis	47.8	—
Gleann Gheireasdaill, North Uist	524.3	—
Scheme	Area Approved for New Planting (hectares)	Area Approved for Restocking (hectares)
Stornoway Trust Lewis	7.0	—
Borve Lodge Estates, Lewis	7.2	2.3
Stornoway Trust, Lewis	—	1.9
Achmore, Lewis	1.5	—

Mr Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the Forestry Commission proposes any new planting in the Western Isles; and if he will make a statement concerning its view of the forestry potential of that area.

Mr John MacKay: The Forestry Commission has no plans at present to carry out new planting in the Western Isles. A range of trees will grow successfully on the islands, particularly where there is some shelter. The scale of planting in the future will depend mainly on private sector interest.

Foresters' protest



ACTION LOBBY AT HQ

MORE than 400 foresters from all over Britain gathered at HQ on 11 March to protest over certain issues regarding the pay and working conditions of forest officers. John Sheldon, General Secretary, Civil Service Union, said: "This is a genuine dispute which we have been unable to resolve so far by negotiation. It is no solution for the Commission to disregard the strong feelings of staff and impose the offer unilaterally. That can only give rise to a lengthy and damaging dispute. 'We have exhausted every avenue for a negotiated settlement before taking today's action and we hope the Commission will now enter into discussions with the two unions with a view to resolving the dispute.'"

Director General Gwyn Francis spent almost an hour in the HQ forecourt talking to foresters and said: "The negotiations on the amalgamation of the two classes of forest managers have resulted in a large measure of agreement between management and the Unions, but in a very complicated settlement some genuine differences of view remain."

"Nevertheless there will be pay increases of between 6 per cent and 14 per cent by 1989 (on top of any normal annual pay awards) for 800 employees of the Forestry Commission. Since these increases were implemented new proposals have been made nationally and the implications of these are now being examined."

We're sailing . . . Death of Sandy Rose

FOR those of you have never sailed offshore or are completely new to sailing, then the Civil Service Sailing Association offers the opportunity to try a new, exciting pastime or just to have a "lively" weekend amongst the estuaries and coastal waters of the Greater Thames Estuary.

The East Coast Yacht Division was set up in 1984 as a part of the CSSA with the purpose of operating a cruising yacht for members of the Civil Service and their families. To this end, the ECYD bought 'SAOIRSE', (pronounced seer-sha) a six-berth Westerly Konsort to be based near Ipswich. At a little under 29 ft. Saoirse is equally suitable for cruising in the shallow estuaries or on longer passages to France and the Low Countries.

Perhaps the most important point is how little it can all cost. Don't be put off by the glossy image of the millionaire's yachting world, the price is probably much more reasonable than you think. The ECYD is not a profit-making organisation it only has to cover the running

costs and loans for Saoirse. This year we expect overseas cruising to be from £12/day. We are also offering a special 50 per cent discount to under 25s on their first trip. Typically, a long weekend (3 days) without a discount will probably cost about £40, including food and membership of the ECYD.

In addition to introductory courses the Division can offer longer cruises abroad and practical training approved by the Royal Yachting Association up to the standard of Yachtmaster. Regular newsletters, rallies and social events help to maintain contact between members of all ages and experience.

If you would like to know dates or just want to know more about sailing and the East Coast Yacht Division, then why not contact:

Betty McInnes, 145 Parish Lane, London SE20 7JH (01-659-2963).

Hilary Tyrell, 60 Lancaster Road, St Albans, Herts. AL1 4ET (0727 69775).

Mike Bentley Work No. 0923 674040, extn. 7219.

SANDY ROSE, MBE, a former head forester who helped revolutionise forest husbandry in the 1950s and 1960s, died on April 5, aged 81.

Educated at Nairn and Elgin, he trained at the Earl of Moray's Darnaway Estate and joined the FC in 1923 working at the Heldon and Newton areas of Morayshire.

After war service (attaining the rank of Sergeant Major, 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, and action at Dunkirk, Alamein, Anzio and the Elbe) he rejoined FC in Perthshire. In the following 23 years he was involved in developments such as the Ledmore plough, seed drilling and undercutting equipment which paved the way for extensive forestry developments.

Attraction

He was known for his model nurseries which were an attraction at the Royal Highland Show from 1949 to 1969, the year in which he retired from FC and in which he was awarded the MBE.

After a period as a consultant to the United Nations in Yugoslavia he finally settled in Bankfoot, Perthshire, to enjoy his hobby of gardening.

John's essay wins

THE WINNING entrant in the 1987 Forestry Commission Essay Competition is 23-year-old John Andrew Townend a second-year forestry student at Aberdeen University. He will join winners from other countries to represent Britain at a joint meeting of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the European Forestry Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The competition, aimed mainly at young people with a specialist interest in forestry, was open to British residents aged 30 or under. Entrants had to write an essay on 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. One essay, submitted by 11-year-old Victoria Todrayner, from Lower Gresham in Norfolk, attracted special praise. "A first-class little essay from much the youngest entrant," said the judges. "It went far beyond what can normally be expected from an 11-year-old." In recognition of her efforts, Victoria is to spend a day in Theftord Forest as the Forestry Commission's honoured guest where she will be shown a day in the life of a forester.

Other prize-winners are: 2nd — Mr E. D. R. Brierley, Hartford, Cheshire; 3rd — Ms Briony Penn, Dunbarney, Perthshire; 4th — Miss Linda Mackin, Martin's Wood, Herts.

The Essay Awards 1987 were organised in conjunction with the Timber Committee of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the European Forestry Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Judges were: Mr George Holmes, Chairman; Mr E. H. M. Harris BSc DIPFOR/FICFOR, Director, Royal Forestry Society; Mr D. Crawford OBE; Dr F. C. Hummel, MA DPhil BSc; Dr J. C. Hetherington, University College of North Wales, Department of Forestry and Wood Science.

Sponsors were: Highland Forest Products PLC, Inverness; Caberboard Ltd., Cowie, Stirlingshire; The British Timber Merchants' Association (England and Wales); Home Timber Merchants' Association of Scotland; St Regis Paper Co. (Sudbrook) Ltd., Newport, Gwent; Kronospan Ltd., Wrexham, Clwyd; Thames Board Ltd., Workington, Cumbria.

LET'S hear from you!

Your Slasher contacts are:

Editor, Roy Gregor.

Correspondents:

North Scotland —

Sheila Ferguson.

Mid Scotland — John

Mulheron.

South Scotland —

Chris Smith.

North England — Rita

Cunningham.

East England —

Pauline Marshall.

West England — Mary

Reed.

Wales — Brina Evans.

Alice Holt — Brian

Hibberd.

NRS — John Smith.

TUS — Ken Murray.



TIMBER TOPICS

JOHN OAKLEY

AUCTIONS are a major plan in the Forestry Commission's marketing strategy. Each year about 40 per cent by volume, of all sawlogs and 30 per cent of standing timber is sold at 13 auctions. These auctions are held throughout the year in every Conservancy except North England. As well as the auctions there are competitive tenders in every Conservancy. These, together with the auctions, provide a regular programme of competitive sales throughout Britain.

In this article I'd like to say a little about auctions and how they are conducted — especially for those readers who have never attended an auction sale.

Detailed planning for an auction begins approximately two months before the date of the sale, by which time Forest District Managers will have submitted and discussed details of Lots to be included in the sale, to the Conservator. There is now a fairly clear structure established for each auction. This covers the volume of timber: both standing and sawlogs, to be offered: the quality of sawlogs and the locations. Lot sizes vary with auctions but are generally not smaller than 100-200 cubic metres nor larger than 2-3000 cubic metres. However there are no hard and fast rules laid down and often the actual composition of the auction schedule is discussed at local marketing liaison meetings held during the course of the year.

Continuity

The overall aim is to provide a range of lot sizes and completion dates so as to provide buying opportunities for all our customers, both large and small. The range of completion dates provides an opportunity for overlap and hence continuity between auctions and tenders.

In the Conservancy office the lots are compiled into a catalogue together with any special conditions and the catalogue is printed. The compilation and printing should only take two weeks leaving six clear weeks for customers to view the timber on offer. Whilst this is going on an advertisement is placed in the Timber Trades Journal.

A few days prior to the auction the 'reserve prices' for each Lot are decided. These 'reserves' take into account current market prices and represent the price below which the Commission would not wish to sell. They constitute a bid by the Commission and are delivered to the auctioneer prior to the auction, in sealed envelopes.

Auctions are conducted by an independent qualified auctioneer, usually attached to a firm of estate agents or chartered surveyors. This ensures that the conduct of the auction is independent of the Forestry Commission and free from any bias, real or imagined. The auctioneer may, if required, make all the necessary arrangements for holding the auction, book the room, print the catalogue, etc., or these arrangements can be carried out by conservancy staff and catalogues printed 'in house' at Headquarters.

Corrections

The auctioneer is paid for expenses incurred and also a fee which is subject to negotiation before the sale. This fee is based on a sliding scale according to the total value of the sale eventually achieved.

On the day of the auction there is a meeting between conservancy staff and the auctioneer to discuss any last minute changes or corrections to the details of lots published in the catalogue. (Timber merchants will have been told of any significant amendment when they view the lots in question). This pre-auction meeting also provides an opportunity to brief the auctioneer on the market generally and any particular problems which might arise during the auction.

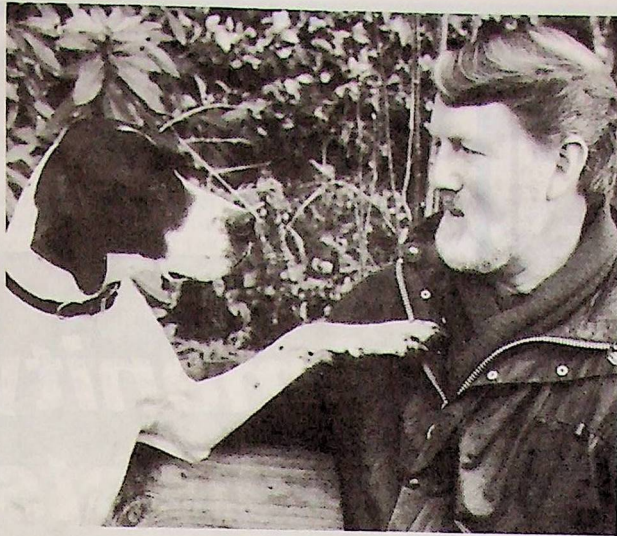
At the appointed hour the auctioneer commences the proceedings with general announcements on the way that the auction will be conducted and draws attention to catalogue changes, if any. The Conservator often says a few words of welcome and encouragement as appropriate. In many conservancies the auctioneer has visited a number of Forest Districts and so is familiar with particular parcels of timber. This enables him to provide a useful commentary of each lot and to comment on the quality, access or other detail. It all helps to set a good 'mood' during the sale.

Reserve price

The starting level and increments between bids are a matter for the auctioneer to decide. In the event of simultaneous bids his decision is final. When the bidding stops the envelope containing the 'reserve' price is opened and provided the last bid equals or is higher than the 'reserve' the lot is 'knocked down' to the bidder and his name is announced. In the event of the highest bid being below the 'reserve', the bidder has an opportunity to negotiate with the Commission in the sale room after the sale.

In law, a legal contract exists when the hammer falls. However to avoid any uncertainties at a later date all purchasers sign a Record of Sale in the sale room. Should there be any misunderstandings they can be cleared up there and then while the proceedings are still fresh in peoples' mind. Fortunately misunderstandings are rare.

After the auction, summary and analysis of the sale is prepared, the results are published in the various trade papers and the auctioneer's fee is calculated. Within a few days the formal documents called a Memorandum of Agreement is sent to each purchaser.



Head ranger appointed

ROBIN KHAN has been appointed to the new post of Head Ranger (Conservation) to cover Avon, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

Brought up in the foothills of Northern India, where he acquired his strong interest in wildlife, he has spent the past 30 years in the West Country.

Robin's association with the Commission goes back to 1960 when he studied birds of prey in Cornwall. Later he became a ranger for Exeter Forest, advising on wildlife surveys and conducting guided walks.

His particular interest are birds of prey, dragonflies, butterflies and reptiles. Having created two major butterfly reserves on Commission land in 1983, Robin was awarded a Churchill Travelling Fellowship and studied the migration of butterflies through the passes of the Pyrenees.

Trade Union team had the answers!



NAME the Committee that set up the Forestry Commission?

When were Conservancies introduced?

Who was the first Director General?

These are just some of the questions that faced the finalists in the last round of the HQ Sports and Social Club general knowledge quiz. Twenty-six teams entered the competition in November last year and tackled over 1000 questions compiled by quiz master Ron Elliott.

The winners of the Sports and Social Club Shield were the Trade Union Side team with Data Processing Division runners-up.

Photographed (from left) are Richard Green, Boyd Glen, Stuart Fletcher and David Stewart, captain, of DPD, questionmaster Ron Elliott, and the winning team of Ken Murray, captain, Ted Radford, Jan Anderson and Cathy Conway.

If you thought the first three questions were easy here is a chance to win a special prize if you can answer the ten alongside.

Send your entries to the Editor, Slasher, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT by May 20, 1987.

EYE projects

THE Forestry Commission is finalising details of more than 50 projects being undertaken as its contribution to European Year of the Environment. The emphasis is on practical projects highlighting the Commission's commitment to conservation of the natural environment and improving life for the urban dweller.

It will concentrate on three main themes — ancient woodlands, land reclamation and urban forestry and improving bird habitats.

In Sherwood Forest we are creating a traditional oakwood in the shape of a 'Map of Britain' to be managed in future purely for conservation and recreation purposes.

On land reclamation and urban forestry research projects will be announced to find new ways to achieve a rapid return of eyesores to pleasing green sites. This will include restoration of former mineral and industrial workings.

During the year much work will be completed to improve forest habitats and encourage bird populations and on 24 May, European Bird Watch Day, the Commission open new birding trails.

1. Who composed the march 'Semper Fidelis'?

2. What is the common name for *Galanthus nivalis*?

3. What engineer constructed the locks of the Panama Canal?

4. In horse mythology who was Tyr?

5. Who is president of Iceland?

6. Which author mentioned a drink called 'tennis shoes' in his books?

7. What is the highest mountain in Canada?

8. Name the three wise men?

9. What is the world record for the men's mile?

10. Who is the new Doctor Who?

Name

Address

Charity drive raises £2678

THE efforts of Forestry Commission staff during 1986 raised £1678.54 on behalf of the Civil Service Benevolent Fund, writes Brian Aweil, *Wellfare Office*. To that sum the Commission added a contribution of £1000 taking the total to £2678.54.

The general collection throughout the Commission brought in £1008.04 and thanks are due to the local organisers and collectors for their efforts and for persuading members of staff to become permanent contributors through regular deductions from pay.

The remainder of the money was raised by individuals taking part in special sponsored events. From HQ, Keith Ball, Ewen Cameron, Garry Duncan and Bill MacLachlan raised £417 by running in the Edinburgh Marathon and David Niven raised £101.50 by joining in Operation Pipeline from Berwick to Dunbar. Carol Derrick, Iris Jenkins (and husband Eddie), Mike Little and Elliot Parry of Aberystwyth raised £152 in a sponsored walk.

Worthy efforts for a worthy cause which, having served for 100 years, will continue to require funds. New permanent contributions are always welcome!



AREA Land Agent Mr K. K. Firth (Lundavery Forest District) meets Miss Whiplash. When Mr Firth plotted to surprise the Conservancy Land Agent, Mr D. I. Williams, the tables were turned — Miss Whiplash was Miss Sarah Policy, Conservancy Office Wales.

Get Snapping!

IN conjunction with Pentax we are organising a new photographic competition to run throughout the year with the ultimate prize a super Pentax Compact Automatic PC 333 Camera.

All you have to do is send your best recent colour print or transparency — with a theme related to forestry — to the Editor, *Slasher*, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT by 26 May.

The prize for the winning photographer is an exhibition-mounted enlargement of the entry PLUS £10 worth of colour film.

The competition will run in all editions of *Slasher* this year so there is ample opportunity for ALL readers to submit new, seasonal entries.

At the end of the year the winners from all editions will be judged together to decide which photographer wins the super Pentax camera.

Get snapping!



THREE masts and six spars have been felled in the Forest of Dean for the Kenavo, built in France in 1948 as a sailing Crabber and now being renovated as a late 18th century two masted schooner to be used mainly in film work.

ACTION PLAN FOR ISLE OF ARRAN

STORY: ROY GREGOR
PHOTOS: ISOBEL CAMERON

Amenity projects will aid tourism

ON the Scottish island of Arran in the Firth of Clyde a new industry has come into production and it has led to another. With the first commercial harvesting of thinnings by the Forestry Commission and the virtual completion of plantings, the ten-strong squad on Arran are turning their attention to more detailed work on conservation and recreation.

The first planting on Arran was started in 1951 and now extends to some 7500 hectares, almost a fifth of the island's land area.

On an island that is extremely popular with tourists the Commission is excelling itself in its attempts to create new facilities for visitors while improving the existing footpaths and picnic sites.

The first thinnings have created five jobs for local contractor Stewart Lambie who is contracted to ship 10000 tonnes to the Caberboard factory at Irvine this year. For the operators of the ferry service from Arran to Ardrossan this is a taste of business to come when full production is under way in the 1990s and timber is being hauled out for the new Caledonian Paper Mill, also at Irvine.

"Before clear felling of sawlogs is under way some 12,000 cubic metres are due to be thinned," said Bob Selmes, Cowal Forest District manager.

The man in charge of the day to day operation is Kerr Robertson, a native of the island, who knows what the islanders feel about forestry and what the vital tourist industry requires.

We are planning a massive input of footpath improvements, upgrading of picnic sites and the tidying of new bridges across some local beauty spots," he said.

In the lower slopes of Goatfell mountain oak birch are being planted and natural regeneration of broadleaves trees is being encouraged and the footpath that thousands use every year is being improved.

Other footpaths within Commission ground are being improved and plans are being set out for the tidying of access to beauty spots such as the Spin Falls which until now have been seen by those who know them. This will require the construction of a path from the forest road at the falls down to the lower pools.

Elsewhere on the island there are plans for using miles of burnside which at present are not enjoyed by visitors or wildlife because of fence undergrowth, and tree crops planted to replace them.

Vild rhododendron is one of the biggest problems for Kerr Robertson and he came up with a

novel scheme for tackling it. He invited the local community to pay for the rights to clear certain areas of the shrubs and take away the wood for fuel. Already more than 20 such contracts have been signed and bushes which date back more than 100 years have been cleared exposing and revealing old woodlands.

Of vital importance in this programme is the creation of nesting sites for nightjars. It is believed that Arran boasts more nesting pairs of these rare birds than anywhere else in Scotland.

"Where clearance work is being undertaken we are leaving sites that will encourage nightjars to settle and the local community are behind us all the way," said Kerr. On an island where there are no foxes, stoats or weasels, voles are a major problem. But together with ranger Bob Logan, Kerr Robertson encourages the hawks, buzzards and eagles that nest on the island.

Squirrel damage is another problem for Bob Logan and he also has to keep close control of the rising deer population, with an annual cull of 60.

"I feel that our close co-operation with the island tourist board and the emergence of commercial harvesting has made forestry an acceptable part of Arran's economy and our planned developments on improved access and visitors' facilities will demonstrate that we will help to support the island's economic future," said Kerr Robertson.



ABOVE: The first timber leaves Arran bound for Ardrossan in Ayrshire.

LEFT: Larry Keeney, Andy Currie and Robin Irving work on a footpath.

RIGHT: Kerr Robertson beside an old Scots pine previously surrounded by dense rhododendrons.



ABOVE: Dhepin Fall . . . soon to be a more accessible beauty spot.

BELOW: Time for a break round the picnic table.



Lloyd Jones retires



LLOYD JONES started work in February 1954 when planting and nursery work were the major winter jobs. When production started in the 1960s he operated extraction winches and drove tractors for haulage of timber. In latter years he was the handy-man and was always willing to turn his hand to anything that was asked of him. At a gathering of his colleagues at Aberystwyth Forest District office he was presented with a watch and Forester David Legge presented him with his Long Service Certificate for 32 years service.

Farewell to Mary Clark



On 30 January staff in the Forest of Dean bid farewell to Mrs Mary Clark (Clerical Officer) after more than 20 years' service with the Forestry Commission.

Many students passing through the Forester Training School will remember Mary, for it was there she started work for the Forestry Commission in 1967.

When the school closed in 1971 she took up an appointment as CO at Crown Office in Coleford where she continued up to leaving. During a farewell buffet lunch at the office Mary was presented with a watch by Mr Roger Busby, acting Conservator.



Owen served for 50 years

FOREST Craftsman, Owen Jones, BEM, retired recently after over 50 years service at Gwydyr. This period was broken by War service in a forestry company of the Royal Engineers.

Owen spent most of his service at Gwydyr on harvesting duties. Conservator, Mr D. Y. Robertson, presented him with his Long Service Certificate, then Chief Forester Bill

Taylor presented him with a workbench on behalf of the staff at Llanwrst Forest District.

Owen Jones was awarded his BEM in the New Year Honours List in 1983, has been a Branch Secretary of the TGWU for many years and is a very active member of the Maelgwyn Male-Voice Choir.

Owen is pictured with his wife.

Glasgow party

After 34 years' service in the Forestry Commission, over 70 friends and colleagues said farewell to Arthur Ross at a retirement party in the French Quarter in Glasgow.

At the party Arthur was presented

with an electronic keyboard by John Anderson, A&FO.

Arthur has always been a popular figure within Mid Scotland, especially during the last 12 years when he acted as Welfare Officer for the Conservancy.

WEST ENGLAND Conservancy said goodbye to A & FO Brian Tipping and Conservancy Mechanical Engineer Ian Mathew at the Christmas Party in December 1986. Current and former colleagues from England, Scotland and Wales gathered in Keynsham to wish them both a long and happy retirement, and Mr Tipping was presented with a framed antique map of Somerset, which happened to show both Keynsham where he worked and the village to which he retired. Mr Mathew was given a large cardboard cut-out grandmother clock holding a contribution towards the real thing.

FOREST Craftsman, Jim Chelmick of Bishop's Castle has retired after 46 years, prematurely because of failing eyesight. A large gathering of his workmates came to Marches Forest District Office to say farewell to Jim and wish him a happy retirement. Roger Busby, the Operations Manager for West England, presented a Long Service certificate on behalf of the Forestry Commissioners, and a carriage clock from his colleagues.

MANY friends and colleagues met at the Anchor Hotel, Tintern, Gwent, to wish Joe Rhead, Foreman Mechanic at Tintern Workshop, a long and happy retirement. Mr Robin Waddington, Mechanical Engineer South, represented the Forestry Commission and presented Joe with his Long Service Certificate which spanned 35 years of loyal service to his employers.

GLYN Hughes had for many years expressed his intention to work for the Commission until his 65th birthday but because of his wife's ill health he decided to retire slightly ahead of time. Even so he served the Forestry Commission for 29 years, all these at the Tarenig beat of the now Aberystwyth Forest District. In his retirement he will still be busy attending to his small-holding, while he will also spend more of his time in training sheepdogs.

JACK HOPE retired recently for health reasons, from Llandrindod Forest District after 37 years service. Following a period working on local farms he joined the FC, at Coed Sarnau where all his career has been spent on Forest Management. Jack's colleagues, including four retired from Coed Sarnau, met at the Happy Union, Abbeystwyr, for a farewell drink and presentations.

BOB KEMP retired in December after nearly 40 years with the Commission. He joined the Commission at Mendip in July 1947, attended the Dean school from 1949 to 1951 and remained in the Forest until he went to Education Branch in 1953, where he notched up an astonishing 24 years as an instructor, first at Gwydyr then in the Borders. His arrival in the New Forest in 1977 to take charge of harvesting and marketing plunged him into the aftermath of the controversies surrounding the Commission's felling policies, and he was able to develop a harvesting programme acceptable to the conservation lobby whilst meeting the needs of the trade.

RON EVANS, Forester with the Forest Survey Branch in the Banchory area retired in December after more than 38 years with FC. He worked at Tillyfour and Kirkehill before going to Glentress training school after which he was posted to Shin to which he returned after other North Scotland postings. He joined the Field Survey Branch as it was then in 1976 and moved to Banchory in charge of the local team.

RITCHIE JONES began working in Taliesin Forest 32 years ago which, with other areas added to it is now Rheidol Forest, when planting was at its peak with 500-600 acres being put under trees annually in the locality. At a gathering of fellow workers on his last day of service he was presented with the Long Service Certificate in recognition of his service by the Assistant Conservator Operations, Mr A. J. G. Hughes.

JACK MOFFAT (Forest Craftsmen) who recently retired from Newton Stewart Forest District, Glentool Beat, first started work at Kirroghtree Nursery in 1940. After war service he returned to Newton Stewart and had a short spell of wood cutting for a contractor before returning in 1948 to the Forestry Commission at Glentool. After 22 years on all Management duties, Jack, although in his late forties, volunteered for Harvesting work. He was involved in the first Forestry Commission thinning, and eventually, in the first clearfells over some of the same ground he had planted in his early years at Glentool. He returned to management duties including marking and tariffing and before retiring had the satisfaction of once again planting those same areas — at slightly enhanced rates of course.

RETIREMENT OF MIKE LOCKE

A vintage farewell

THE MAIN boardroom in Headquarters may be the scene of much weighty discussion, but on Friday, 20 March, there was a lighter note on the occasion of Mike Locke's retirement.

In the presence of a large number of friends and colleagues Commissioner David Foot and former Managing Director of SWOAC Denis Crawford paid tribute to the professionalism and integrity with which Mike had performed his duties over a long career.

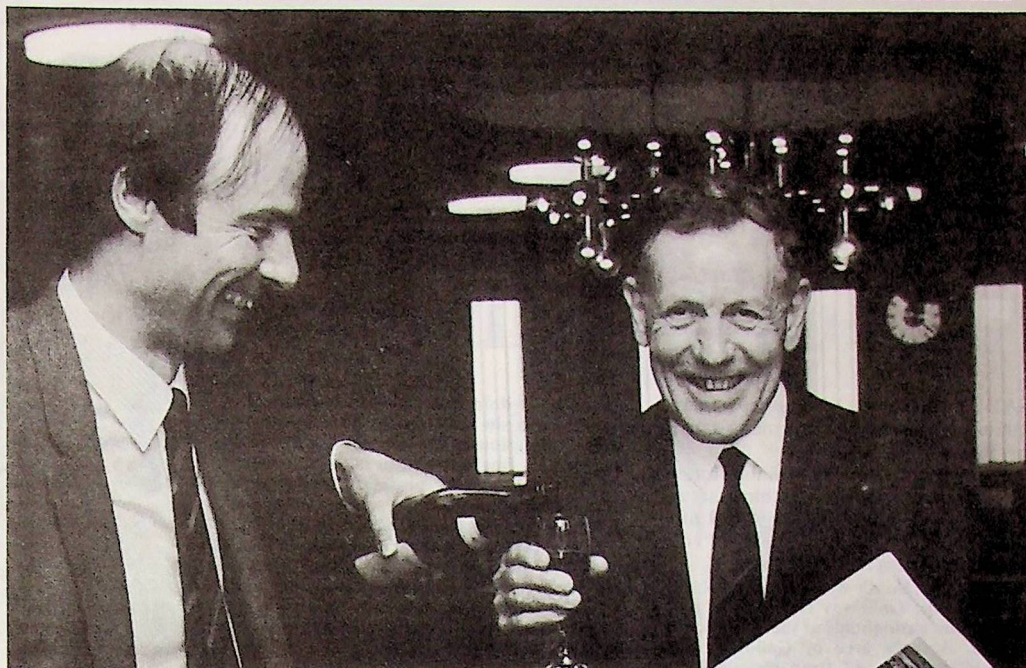
Mike joined the Forestry Commission in 1948 and immediately started work on the then Census of Woodlands. In time he acquired such a depth of knowledge combined with his facility with figures

that he became too valuable to transfer to field duties.

His entire career therefore has been involved in various facets of survey and census work, providing advice and statistics to both private and public sectors of the forest industry.

Following presentations by David Foot and Denis Crawford of various gifts and a cheque, Mike replied in vintage style combining serious comment with dry humour.

Mike looks forward to spending more time on fishing, visiting some of Scotland's distilleries and more sober stately homes and in helping to preserve our heritage of paddle-steamer.



● Commissioner David Foot pours a glass of wine for Mike Locke.

Kenny Munro calls it a day



AFTER 37 years of continuous service and eight previous years as a juvenile Forest Worker, Kenny Munro retired from the Lael Section of the Easter Ross Forest District on 2 March.

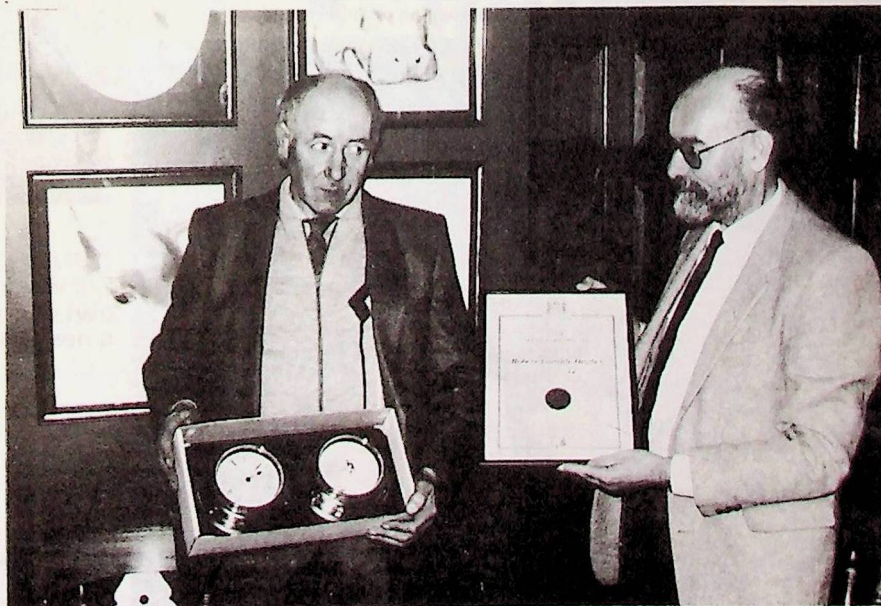
Kenny is pictured with his workmates after a presentation at the Braemore Hall, holding his long service certificate and one of his farewell gifts.

In addition to the walking stick he was presented with a rams-horn table lamp and a wallet containing some notes.

He is wished well in his retirement by everybody in the District.



Raymond "Bud" Dinnell has retired after 31 years service with the Forestry Commission. Most of his service was as a mobile operator and his cheery personality was well known throughout South Scotland. Colleagues gathered at Fleet Nursery to see him presented with a long service certificate by the Conservator, Mr George Taylor and a crystal decanter by his friend Mr J. Jamieson. Our photograph shows "Bud" with Long Service Certificate and Conservator George Taylor.



BOB HUGHES completed 34 years service and to mark his retirement a buffet lunch at the Goat Inn, Maerdy, was attended by over 35 of his colleagues in Ruthin Forest District. His early years were spent on establishment work and he can remember planting a crop of Omorika spruce in Castle Wood, Ruthin, which is now thought to be one of the best stands in Britain. Assistant Conservator, Mr Gwyn Hughes, is seen presenting a "new-look" Long Service Certificate to Bob who received a combination wall clock and barometer from his colleagues.

'FAMILY' ROLE FOR PLASTIC DRUMS

Help for the Barn Owl

Nest-box project aids breeding

SADLY, the Barn Owl has become an increasingly rare sight in many parts of Britain. Its decline has been attributed mainly to loss of habitat and a shortage of nest sites. In most areas it favours deserted buildings and old fashioned farm steadings for breeding (writes Andy Dowell).

At present, South-west Scotland — and especially the Galloway region — is one of the main strongholds of the barn owl in Britain. A large area of Galloway has been afforested, and from observations made in the Galloway Forest Park during the 1970s, it became apparent that barn owls were breeding mainly in deserted buildings. Sadly by the 1980s a good number of these buildings were decaying and becoming unsuitable for the owls to breed in.

In an attempt to reverse this situation, Newton Stewart Forest District along with Edinburgh University decided to embark on a nest-box project. This aimed to provide barn owls with nest sites in different habitats within the forest. Besides trying to encourage existing pairs to vacate decaying buildings in favour of a nest-box, it was also hoped that additional pairs would be enticed to nest within the forests by the provision of nestboxes.

The project started in early 1985 and attempted to encourage the birds to nest in three different habitats within the forest, namely, young plantations of part afforested and restocked sites and along the edge of mature plantations. Initially 20 sites were proposed in each of the above habitats.

Several designs for boxes were put forward by Dr Iain Taylor of Edinburgh University, including a wooden wedge-shaped box, and a modified ten-gallon plastic drum. A small number of the wooden wedge boxes were sited, and although the design was good, it quickly became evident that the excessive weight of the boxes made them very difficult to erect. Therefore, the lightweight plastic drums were favoured.

Two drums were erected at each site, one placed vertically and the other horizontally (see diagram), at heights ranging from 12-18 feet above ground level. The distance between sites was usually a minimum of 1½-2 km depending on the structure of the various plantations.

By April 1985, 33 nestbox sites were

established within the Newton Stewart district. Each site was inspected on three different occasions, once in May, again in June, with a final inspection in July. As well as recording any nesting attempts, any evidence of barn owl presence such as pellets and feathers was noted.

Despite the 1985 drums being erected almost at the onset of the breeding season, three pairs managed to nest in them. Unfortunately, extensive rainfall during July and August reduced the brood sizes of each pair.

Additional drums were erected during November 1985 bringing the total sites available for the 1986 breeding season to 39. The spring of 1986 once again brought heavy and prolonged rainfall. This weather together with a suspected low vole population adversely affected several nesting attempts.

By the end of this second year, barn owls had shown interest at ten different sites, although only four pairs nested. The poor food supply and weather may have deterred other pairs from nesting. There is no evidence to suggest that they roost in the drums outside the breeding season, and any drums used for nesting were cleaned out after the breeding season to reduce the accumulation of pellets from preventing further attempts the following year.

As was expected, tawny owls also showed a liking for these drums. This species often nests in holes in trees, but as most conifer plantations lack these, they can use a wide range of other sites and have nested on the ground in the Forest Park.

There is some evidence that all tawny owls and barn owls prefer to nest in the vertical drums. This may be the result of vertical drums having a much darker interior compared with the horizontal drums, thus giving the owls a better sense of security.

One problem which has taken a lot of time has been finding a supply of 10 gallon plastic drums, as they are an unusual size. Staff at Newton Stewart would welcome any assistance in finding a supply.

FOOTNOTE: The Barn Owl is listed on Schedule One of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A Nature Conservancy Council licence is required to photograph or inspect occupied nest sites.



ABOVE: This 7/8 week old barn owl was reared in a nest box.



LEFT: A vertical drum in position in a tree.

