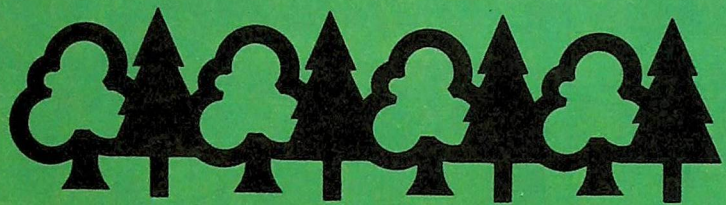


SLASHER



Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

Issue No. 337

October 1988

'WE'RE BEHIND YOU' PLEDGE

A PLEDGE that the Government "remains solidly behind, the expansion of forestry" was made at the end of October by Lord Sanderson of Bowden.

As Minister at the Scottish Office responsible for agriculture, he was speaking at Southport.

He said: "One thing that forestry has certainly not lacked in recent years has been its share of the limelight — indeed some would argue that it has had more than its fair share."

"It is part of a widespread growth in public awareness of countryside matters in general."

"Forestry has come under particular scrutiny because it is a major force for change in the countryside, and in order to achieve an increase in the forest area, we have to recognise the many interests which concern themselves with land use and the environment. I believe in this area we have to be proactive and not always reactive."

"There will always be change in a healthy industry but I hasten to assure you that the Government remains solidly behind the expansion of forestry. Our stated aim is to achieve some 33,000 hectares of new planting a year, with another 12,000 hectares under the Farm Woodland Scheme. We expect the bulk of this to be carried out by the private sector, but with the Commission continuing to play its part."

12 months after the Great Windblow

Praise from Minister: aid from Canada



Forestry Minister John MacGregor and Patrick MacAdam, Canadian High Commissioner, plant a maple.

TWELVE months after the Great Gales, the cleaning-up is still going on — and all is on target.

Down in Weald forest district, for instance, staff were faced with 15,000 hectares of windblow to clean.

More than 90,000 cubic metres — three times the annual cut — had been cleared by the end of September in Bedgebury Forest, Some going!

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr John MacGregor, went to see for himself and had an informal walk-about among the debris.

And there, on the same day, there was the symbolic presentation of a tree, given as a gift from the people of Canada. Appropriately, it was a maple.

In all, Canada has presented 26 million conifer seeds and 40,000 young broadleaves of various species to the people of South-east England to aid regeneration.

Commission chairman Sir David Montgomery and Weald forester Paul Vickers were hosts to Mr MacGregor and a party of more than 100 local woodland owners who toured the forest. A delegation from the Canadian High Commission was there, too, and Mr MacGregor planted the tree after receiving it from M. Patrick MacAdam, Minister-counsellor at the High Commission.

Mr MacGregor said that the Canadian gift would be given wide distribution within the counties affected by the storm.

"Strong forestry links between Britain and Canada were forged in the early years of this country's forestry renaissance when species — such as Sitka spruce and Douglas fir — were successfully introduced into Britain."

"It is all the more pleasing, therefore, to be able to see tangible evidence of these links with the establishment of a special Canadian section here at Bedgebury National Pinetum."

"As well as certain Canadian conifers, it is also intended to plant a number of your native broadleaved trees."

Later in his speech to woodland owners, Mr MacGregor gave special praise to the FC's efforts and commended staff's advice to woodland owners.

In particular, he gave special praise to two of our technical publications, "Farm Woodland Planning" and "Farm Woodland Practice."

"The night of 15/16 October, 1987, is assured of a place in history," he said. "The catastrophic gales that night brought havoc on a scale which had not been experienced in living memory."

"When the first full survey was completed — just one month after the gale — it became apparent that we had lost the equivalent of about 4 million cubic metres of timber. To put this into perspective, the destruction of that one night was equivalent to some 80 per cent of the UK's annual domestic timber production."

During his tour, Mr MacGregor also met Mark Dixon who had come

Forest of Sculpture

MANY are the strange and beguiling structures in our forests . . . and none more so than in the Forest of Dean.

It's a centre that has given much encouragement to artists, for the forest with its glades, hilltops and disused rail lines is well placed to show off its man-made (and woman-made) sculptures, and more than a dozen artists have helped to adorn the walks there.

The second phase of the Forest of Dean Sculpture Project has now taken shape, involving the commissioning of new pieces in materials indigenous to the area, such as stone, iron and wood (of course!).

Possibly the main item is the tableau pictured at the top of page — "Deer" by Zadok Ben David, which consists of seven deer each with an emblem rising from its head, back or tail relating to some aspect of secret animal or vegetable life in the forest. Zadok Ben David represented Israel at the Venice Biennale this year.

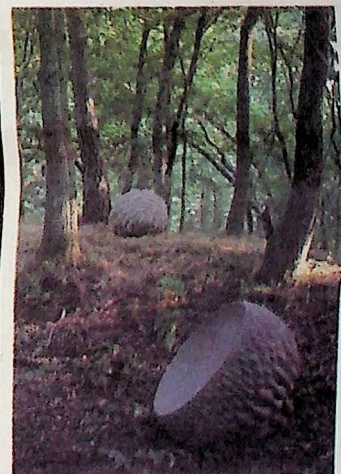
Another artist, Peter Randall-Page, who works near Exeter, has carved complementary works, "Cone and Vessel," based on the forms of a pine cone and an acorn (pictured below).

Cornelia Parker's contribution "Hanging Fire," is a crown of cast-iron flames suspended upside down, drawing attention to the forest as a sacred place and as a Royal forest.

Cornelia and Sophie Ryder have been artists in residence and in conjunction with S. W. Arts have been introducing teachers and pupils to "Sculptures in the Forest" during their residency, which has just ended.

Mr J. Carter of FC Crown offices at Coleford, Gloucestershire, tells us the new sculptures have been drawing many visitors to the forest.

Perhaps that's a cue for other districts.



Britain's No. 1 and No. 2

You could say that Duncan Gillies (Lorne, Argyll) and David Grieve (New Galloway) are artists of the forest, too — but in a contrasting medium.

They've just proved they are top of the tree (so to speak) in Britain by coming first and second in the national tree-felling contest held in the Forest of Ae.

They are pictured together below — and there's more about them and other artists of the forest, with pictures in colour, on the back page.



Members of TGUK hear about the extent of damage at Bedgebury from Julian Evans.

Continued on page 5

THE TUS DIARY

● In the second of his TUS columns, KENNY MURRAY — who advocated in his first article that the FC should “speak out more forcibly” — practises what he preaches and below makes some controversial points on a number of subjects . . .

Concern on forest sales ...

Since 1981 the Forestry Commission has been disposing of and latterly rationalising its estate. Throughout this period areas were identified which, in our manager's view, were surplus to requirements and “difficult to manage.” The TUS had the opportunity to comment on these sales and on occasions we put forward strong cases against specific proposals.

Although the policy decision behind disposals was the Government's, the FC had control of the programme.

There has, in the TUS's view, been a major change in this policy. We have been informed that companies like Center Parc (who have already bought a block in Sherwood from us) have been scouring the country looking for prime forest sites for leisure developments.

Surveys carried out by these companies indicate that the market in Britain can sustain 12 major developments. Having identified sites they then approach the owners with a view to purchase.

The Commission have told us they must co-operate with these “major job-creating initiatives” in “the national interest.” They also tell us that they will have the final say regarding such sales. *We have grave doubts about this.*

The Commission itself is in the national interest as is an expansion of forestry. We can ill afford, just as our disposals programme is bottoming out, to sell off core forest.

We would like to believe that the Commission could easily block sales but, considering the momentum that any proposals will have gained through the local authority in terms of planning proposals, promises of employment, etc., a refusal would have to be on some exceptional environmental basis.

It is not beyond large businesses to make high-level political approaches with promises of jobs galore, and with either DTI or Department of Employment “vetting” the firms who make the approaches, our apprehension is surely understandable.

HOLIDAYS: By the time this issue is published you should all have responded to Director Personnel's proposals regarding public and privilege holidays.

The reasons behind the rush to change the current systems are as follows: On a recent public holiday at HQ, the computer crashed thereby preventing Conservancies and Forest Districts from inputting data.

On another public holiday, we are informed that a Ministerial office tried to contact HQ and was unable to get through. As you can ascertain from these, the problem, if any lies at HQ.

Action has already been taken regarding CCISP and produce recording on the first point.

On the second, I'm quite sure Ministers other than ones concerned with forestry have encountered similar problems.

They, at least, probably knew when offices were closed. Furthermore staff in the Civil Service would be overjoyed with politicians' leave allowances. I am sure they understand we also need modest time-off.

The TUS believes a sledgehammer is being used to crack a nut. HQ management can take normal management action to avoid these occurrences. Option C is not the way.

One simple method would be to revive the FC-wide list of public and privilege holidays whereby we all knew when offices were closed. A copy from Ministerial offices would be appreciated I am sure.

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

From the personnel notice of Sept. 9 regarding the “Open opportunity post” in secretariat: Para 5 states “The result of the board will not be announced until after all interviews are completed.”

Nice to see it in writing folks!



WILD DEER PLAGUE THREAT

The threat of a “plague” of deer in forests was spelled out by speakers at a conference in Perth.

Ian MacKenzie, chairman of the Red Deer Commission, said the rapid growth of the wild deer population was being aggravated by the trend to bring forestry down the hill to low ground areas and the moves to encourage the creation of farm woodlands.

The need for a more professional approach to deer management was highlighted by Rod Leslie, Forestry Commission (formerly wildlife and conservation officer, now PF&EO West England), who said our 300 rangers shot 20,000 deer a year in the culling programme, worth around £1 million — but less than the expenditure on tree protection measures.

“Our primary objective of management must be the protection of the tree crop. Only the humanity of the methods used to achieve this objective override it. Fortunately, professional shooting with high-powered rifles remains the most practicable and humane method when deer must be killed.

“Production of venison and sporting shooting are important subsidiary objectives but where they conflict with our central aim they must take second place. No one believes that deer can be eradicated from upland forests.”

He pointed out: “Since humans eliminated the deer's other predators, we are the only check on increasing numbers that can lead to starvation and disease.

“The realisation that forest Red deer were breeding far faster than hill deer shouldn't perhaps have been quite the surprise it was but at one stroke it transformed the way in which we have to look at forest deer.

“Cull levels that would be punitive in a hill population may not even stop the increase of forest deer. Galloway forest in South-west Scotland has the highest reproductive rate of any known European Red deer population. The same applies to Roe deer: the North Yorks Moors forests where the species was still a rarity in 1960 has the highest known reproductive rate of any European population.”

Rod Leslie added that despite these “frightening revelations,” it was possible in the long term to control the overall population of Red deer in large upland forests by shooting.

On practical deer control Mr Leslie said, “In the past, training for wildlife staff and forester managers has been haphazard.

“In the last two years two national ranger training centres have been set up, at Cannock in England and Torlundy in the Great Glen and head rangers to staff them selected not just for their knowledge and experience but also for their aptitude for training. In future all new entrant rangers will receive standard national training courses in addition to their home conservancy-based induction. There will be refresher courses . . . and we are designing courses in more specialised aspects of wildlife management.”

Mr Leslie concluded: “We are proceeding deliberately and with purpose to turn our forest deer from the problem of today to the asset of tomorrow.”

THE STONE CURLEW

The Ministry of Defence has joined forces with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to try and halt the decline of the scarce stone curlew which breeds on its land.

It is one of Britain's rarest birds — there are no fewer than 150 breeding pairs compared with around 500 in 1976 and between 1000 and 2000 in 1930.

They are mainly found in East Anglia and parts of Southern England, with a significant number of land owned by the Ministry.

Concern at their fall in numbers, particularly on MoD land in East Anglia where the number of pairs has fallen from 22 in 1980 to just six this year, has prompted talks between the MoD and RSPB to try to arrest the decline.

The cause is blamed on changes in the management of land within military training areas.

Here and there

On guard!



THEATRICALS in the woods . . . when Cheshire Forest District were hosts to the Theatre Workshop who go under the name of the “Chester Drawers.”

Events were set around the Robin Hood theme with action in various areas of the forest — children rescuing Maid Marion; ambushing the Sheriff of Nottingham; attending and taking part in a tournament, including jousting on hobby horses; and touring a mediaeval farm, complete with rare breeds. Parties of school children included disabled youngsters.

More out-of-the-ordinary action in Delamere park . . . a local man has been granted a permit to operate a horse-drawn cart through the area from the Visitor Centre. You can try it next summer . . .

Importer trapped

THE FC has prosecuted a timber importer, with fines over £2000 plus costs, at Newport, Gwent, under the Import and Export of Trees, Wood and Bark (Health), (Great Britain) Order, 1980.

During a routine inspection of a shipment from British Columbia of 200 tonnes of unseasoned Canadian wood, at Newport Dock, FC staff found extensive bark, despite an accompanying declaration that the bark had been removed. The bark is the habitat for bark beetles injurious to forest trees, and the fraudulent certificate seriously contravened import regulations. In this case the Douglas fir beetle (*Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*), not previously recorded in this country, was discovered.

Harvest festival

DOLGELLAU FD, with the encouragement of the local Rector, arranged a forest harvest festival in October in the heart of Coed y Brenin. The local village of Llanfachreth itself houses past and present members of the Coed y Brenin FC staff, many of whom take an active part in the church. And Arthur Wyn Jones, retired forest craftsman, played the organ, while the lessons were read by retired head forester (recreation) Reg Wheeler and retired ganger Cyril Jones. It is hoped to repeat the event next year.

Award for Fred



FOR his outstanding contribution to conservation, Fred Currie, the wildlife and conservation officer in East England, has received a certificate of merit from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Here, Fred is seen receiving the award from Mr John MacGregor, Minister of Agric, Fisheries and Food.

Sorry, chaps!

SO MANY retirement reports and pictures have arrived in our office, that it is impossible to use them all in this issue. We plan to make amends next time around with a bumper issue (hopefully!), but for the record those who have had to give way to pressure of space include: Arthur Scott, 47 years at Rothbury; Ken Harding, grader driver from civil engineering E(Eng), with 44 years' service; and Bill Kitcher, ganger, of Lyndhurst, who had 44 years in the New Forest. Look out for some of your pictures around Christmas, chaps.

Book takes wing

WONDERFUL VARIETY of Britain's birdlife takes flight in a superb new publication, “The Complete Book of British Birds,” published jointly by the Automobile Association and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to mark the 1989 centenary of the RSPB.

More than 1000 illustrations and 200 full-colour photographs are used, and text and illustrations are accompanied by maps. It's priced at £19.95 and available from AA centres, RSPB shops and most booksellers.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

• A varied postbag of letters this month . . . but none gave us at HQ such pleasure as the unsolicited tribute paid below by a primary school head teacher who has taken parties of children to four forests in the past year . .

Step forward, good-hearted gentlemen

Dear Sir,

During the past academic year I have had occasion to visit four forests in your charge (Delamere, Grizedale, Kielder and Thornthwaite). All these visits have been with school children on pre-planning for educational visits and I have been delighted with the forestry centres and the co-operation received.

A recent visit to Thornthwaite Forest (the Whinlatter Centre) on a wet August Saturday was a typically very pleasurable experience. Youngsters were excitedly following the newly created "Rabbit Run" oblivious to any adverse weather conditions.

The friendliness and good humour of the two gentlemen manning the Centre added that special touch that made the day memorable for adults and youngsters alike.

I regret that I failed to ask the names of these two good-hearted gentlemen but their efforts for the general public are worthy of the highest

praises and I trust that you will pass on our thanks and congratulations.

It was a pleasure to visit all your centres and see so many innovative ideas in leisure and educational pursuits all taking place within the confines of "working forests."

The service and range of goods for sale at every centre was first rate.

It's very difficult to fault your organisation if all plans are realised and I look forward to visiting your new "proposed" cafeterias at Whinlatter and Grizedale in 1989. This would make an excellent outing — perfect!

Many, many congratulations on your outstanding achievements and grateful thanks for such informative and enjoyable forestry visits.

Yours Faithfully,

Ian H. King,
Vine Tree County Primary School, Dane Bank
Avenue, Crewe.

So imaginative

Dear Sir,

I have just returned from the Glasgow Garden Festival and I feel I must congratulate you on your "Magical Forest." It was so imaginative, and with an imagination like mine to begin with there are no limits!

However what I need to know is the name of the music accompanying the video, and is it possible to buy the sound-track complete with rain etc? With thanks for all the work you do in the countryside.

Yours Faithfully,

M. Brown (Mrs), 10 Radnor Avenue, Cleveleys, Blackpool.

The specially-composed sound track was untitled and is not on sale — yet. Ed.

Please give Jack a call

Dear Editor,

On our return journey from holiday my wife and I called at the Civil Service Benevolent Fund Home, Cookham House, Cookham, nr. Maidenhead, Bucks., to see Jack Wilson, former head forester, who had charge of the Forest Heritage Collection.

On retirement Jack had the misfortune of suffering a severe stroke and shortly afterwards his wife died. He has as a result spent the past four years at the

Benevolent Fund Homes at Horsham and Cookham.

We received a warm welcome at the home and stayed the night at the visitors' bungalow which enabled us to have two interesting sessions with Jack in the evening and another before leaving in the morning.

He is very well cared for and held in high regard at the home. Despite being confined to his wheelchair Jack is very cheerful and alert. He is an avid reader and spends a lot of time sitting out in the grounds overlooking the Thames.

I was, however, saddened to learn that we were Jack's first Forestry Commission visitors during his four years at the homes and that he has had no contact with the Commission other than receiving "Slasher."

Jack is, as far as I know, the only ex-FC employee in a Benevolent-Fund Home and sadly he feels completely forgotten, especially when he

sees how other departments keep in touch with their people at the home.

If any of Jack's former colleagues could spare a few minutes to drop him a letter or card, or better still call on him when in the area, I can assure them that it would be greatly appreciated by Jack.

Yours sincerely,
Gwyn Owen, 26 Kelvin Road,
Roarh Park, Cardiff.

SPORTING . . .

Dear Sir,

The feature on page 4 of the August issue of The Slasher on the various sporting activities with which FC staff are involved, was raised at a meeting of the Equal Opportunities Committee held on 7 October.

The feeling was expressed that the tone of some of the comments made about female participants could be viewed as detrimental in a general sense to the cause of equal opportunities, although it was accepted that the tone of most of the article was jocular.

There is no doubt that the lively nature of the Slasher is widely welcomed, but I feel sure you will agree that it is important not to detract from the high regard in which Slasher is held by, however intentionally, presenting an interesting topic in a way which gives offence to some readers.

Yours faithfully,
E. G. Parker, chairman, equal opportunities committee, Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh.

THANK YOU

Dear Editor, May I, through the columns of "The Slasher" thank all my friends and colleagues who contributed so generously to my retirement. The gift of a silver-plated mahogany tangle with lead crystal decanters will grace my home and be a constant reminder of the many people it has been my pleasure to rub shoulders with throughout my career.

It is now my wish to settle comfortably into a life of retirement but not I can assure you a sedentary one. If what I constantly hear from retired colleagues is true, then I also will not find enough hours in the day to accomplish all that I want. Yours in retirement, GEOFF SOUTHGATE, New Farm Cottages, Wordwell, Bury-St-Edmunds, Suffolk.



The girls gather round as Rod Leslie departs the scene. Rod has left as environmental officer at HQ to take up his new post as PF and EO, West England.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY!

This batch of letters arrived on the editor's desk from people who had visited Galloway and taken part in the Fun Week there (see centre spread).

Comments ranged from "a super week" . . . "enjoyable" . . . "delightful" . . . to "an excellent way to motivate four teenage girls to walk every day" (this from a mother who obviously thought it would be difficult to keep youngsters occupied. Now she knows differently!

Here are some of the letters . . .

• Dear Sir, My name is Gregg and I am 18 months old. I completed all of the walks on my daddy's back. My mum was navigator. We had a super week and did lots of walking. We think your Tot-Up-A-Trail was an excellent idea. Gregg Murray, Stockbridge, Edinburgh.

• We would like to thank you for the thought and effort involved in organising the event. As newcomers to the sport of walking and with two years' "experience" walking in Austria we were delighted to discover the event on the first day of our three-day stay in Galloway.

We would be pleased to receive any information regarding walks in other Forestry Commission areas, perhaps a little closer to home. George Kerr, Duchess Park, Helensburgh.

• We thoroughly enjoyed the trails and as a parent of a 14-year-old and a 15-year-old I can only congratulate you on what proved an excellent way to motivate four teenage girls to walk every day! My husband and I found it difficult to believe that by Friday of the week they were all eagerly trying to get in as many more miles as possible. I can only urge you to maintain this idea in future years. My sincere thanks for your hard work. Elizabeth Lord (Mrs), Warrington, Lancs.

• How much we all appreciated what the Forestry Commission are doing in Galloway. What made our holiday especially memorable and was definitely the highlight was our visit to the Red Deer Park when Peter Kelly took us right up to the deer! To see a stag at such close quarters, to stroke him and even feel the warm breath as he sniffed at us was an amazing experience and one we shan't forget in a hurry Mr Kelly was a most interesting and knowledgeable warden.

We wish the Forestry Commission every success — we will certainly be coming back to Galloway. — The Elson Family, of Rothbury, Northumberland.

• Lastly from the Convener of Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council: I would like to thank you very much for the invitation to the opening of the Killoch Visitor Centre. It was a very happy occasion and I congratulate you on the provision of an excellent facility. — J. V. M. Jameson.

MORE APPOINTMENTS

Norman Dannatt next conservator

THE Forestry Commission have announced two new senior staff appointments.

Norman Dannatt, is to become Forestry Commission conservator, East England next March, succeeding Mack Dinning, who retires after 38 years' service with the Forestry Commission and the Colonial Forestry Service.

Mr Dannatt joined the Commission in 1955 after graduating with first-class honours in forestry from Edinburgh University.

His career includes service in England, Scotland and Wales. In 1985 he moved to the Commission's East England Conservancy in Cambridge

where he held the posts of both environment officer and assistant conservator in charge of forest operations.

David Burdekin, is to become director of research, next April, succeeding Arnold Grayson who retires after 35 years' service.

Mr Burdekin joined the Commission's Alice Holt research station in 1964 after graduating in natural sciences and gaining a post-graduate diploma in agricultural sciences, both from Cambridge University.

After specialising in pathology research for some years, he became in 1981 chief research officer (south), in charge of the Alice Holt station.

John Pollock's term extended

JOHN Pollock, the former general secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland (the main teachers' union north of the Border), has been re-appointed a part-time Forestry Commissioner for a further three-year term.

In addition, Mr Ronald Philip Hancock, FBIBA, ACII, and Major Michael Strang Steel have been appointed part-time members for three and four years respectively.

Mr Pollock (aged 62) recently retired as general secretary of the EIS. He has served as a part-time Forestry Commissioner since 1978.

Major Steel (45), who formerly served with the 17/21 Lancers, manages the family estate at Philiphaugh, Selkirk. He is a vice-convenor of the Scottish Landowners' Federation and chairman of their South-east Regional Committee.

Mr Hancock, (67) combines a career in the insurance business with considerable experience in forestry and farming.

ARTS IDEAS WANTED

The Forestry Commission art competition, which proved successful last year, will be staged again in the spring of next year.

We are about to finalise the rules of entry and shall want to hear from "Slasher" readers — all eligible — if they want any special sections to be considered for inclusion.

Also under consideration is the possibility of staging regional contests with winning entries going into the national finals. Your views soon please!!

Roy Gregor,
Slasher.

OBITUARY

ROY TAYLOR

Formerly of Cilgwyn Forest, Llandovery Ron Taylor died on Tuesday, August 9. He joined the Commission on August 27, 1927, and retired in 1982 after 34 years. Employed mainly at the old Cilgwyn Forest as a forest worker, he was also beat steward and safety representative for Crychan Forest for many years.

Ron's funeral was held at the Dyfri Chapel of Rest followed by cremation at Llwyncoed Crematorium, Aberdare.

IAN HOPE

Forest craftsman at Kershope, Kielder, Ian Hope died on Sept. 16, aged 59.

Ian started work in 1952 and became skilled in all aspects of forest work. During the last few years he led the marketing and measuring team at Kershope.

Ian was much respected and liked by all who worked with him. He will be missed by all of them, says John Charlton, of Kielder F. D.



Champion idea at Thetford as Alan Minter tries out trim tail

CHAMPIONS at catering for the public, the Forestry Commission were themselves championed by a former title-holder when he came to Thetford Forest to open a trim trail.

Alan Minter, boxer supreme, the man, and like the athlete he is, he had to try it out for himself to be outdone, a senior police chief and local business leader, their paces, too, over one of the ten exercise points on the trail.

It's a mile long, and the course as quickly as possible. It's a mile long, and the course as quickly as possible. It's a mile long, and the course as quickly as possible.

Alan was the first to try it out, followed by Police Supt. Gordon Wade, then Chamberlain, Ken Clarke, and some of the younger guests.

The idea comes from Europe (particularly Scandinavia), but the Thetford trail is the first in that part of the UK on FC land. It was built by workers on a community service programme.

FD manager, Len Simpson, said: "We want as many people as possible to come into the forest and use it."

There are already other special walks in the forest, ranging from one and half miles to three miles.

Fun and games!

MANY are the activities of the... making the keynote of the... games.

And why not, indeed, for as we all know, work and no play make Jack and Jill a dull boy and girl.

So from Joan o' Groats to Land's End, or in forests as near as a hamlet to these distant points, there's always something going on.

LIKE a new forestry trail that attracted such as Alan Minter, former world boxing champion (see left).

LIKE the motley crew who took to rough waters in aid of charity... and the bearded characters on the trail of the lonesome pine (see pictures above right).

LIKE the forest fun that went on in Galloway, or like the cyclists and horse riders also featured in these pages... producing champions like the foresters' wives from Mull whose horse-riding prowess won them a Scottish title.

But first, let's concentrate on the raft race of Inverness FD. Next, they took a well-deserved second place in a tough event.

They were taken to the year's "Great River Ness Raft Race" and won a neat prize. Earlier in a procession of decorated floats, the prize.

The raft race took place down a half-mile stretch of the Ness which flows through Inverness town centre and attracted over 100,000 spectators almost struck right at the start when the Commission's raft was lining up. A combination of fast current, inexperienced crew and mishandling of the starting rope stretched across the river resulted in half the crew capsizing! Once paddles, crew and mast had been recovered the restart meant starting at the back of the line-up. Strict training under team coach Mike Hoban at a secret location somewhere on the Caledonian Canal proved its worth and the FC team fought back to come a close second to the team from Highland Forest Products, one of the FC's largest customers in North Scotland. The raft was built by Martin MacPherson and Donny Chisholm.

The Forest District's timber lorry used for the parade of floats through Inverness presented the theme of wildlife conservation in the form of a forest habitat. This display won first prize of £50 which was donated to the local Highland Hospice. Willie Anderson drove the lorry and Colin Croy, Eric Jackson and Donald Cameron developed the habitat scene, while Tony Hinde lent the animals.

The bearded lads on the trail of the Lonesome Pine are David Kidd (FOIV), Inverness FD; Alan Duncan (HEO), Conservancy N (S); John Ireland (FOIV) Fort Augustus FD; Mike Hoban (FOIII) Inverness; Steve Brown (FOIV), Soil Survey, Inverness; and George Wood (seated). The raft picture, by the way, shows Alan Duncan, Conservancy, and David Kidd, Inverness, at stern, with John Ireland and Steven Brown in the bow.

Ideas for next year's event are already being discussed. Inverness FD are inviting other districts to compete and get in touch!

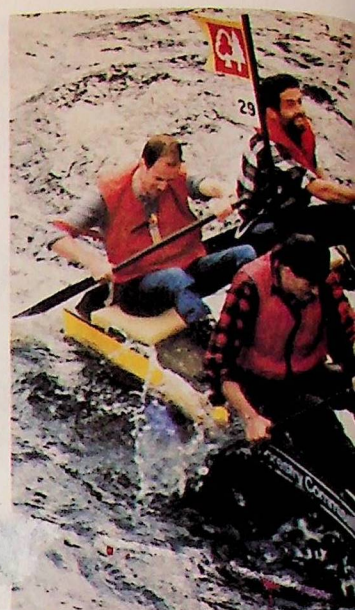
From Inverness down to Galloway, and for ten days the Forest Park there played host to "Forest Fun Galloway 88," a series of events aimed at bringing people into the park.

Tom Weir, the author and broadcaster, officially opened the new Kirtlington visitors centre and "Papy Ha" bird trail. Visitors can walk around a wall display and watch a short audio-visual presentation illustrating the history of forestry.

District offices arranged several events and competitions. Some of the most popular were the various fishing competitions. A family from Dalmellington swept the boards at the Loch Braden event. The adult winner with an overall catch of 15 fish was W. Murphy. His son won the junior event, while his daughter was the ladies champion!

Each day had plenty of events for children. The Teddy Bears picnic brought in bears of all shapes and sizes, and a Pied Piper led everyone to a "Magic Tree" which grew chocolate bars!

In addition to the forest park car trails and drives, Ranger work demonstrations and clay-pigeon shooting, barbecues were held throughout the week. The "Woodchoppers Ball" had live entertainment from three jazz bands and any amount of veniburgers! The finale was a fireworks display watched by over a thousand people on the shores of the Black Loch.

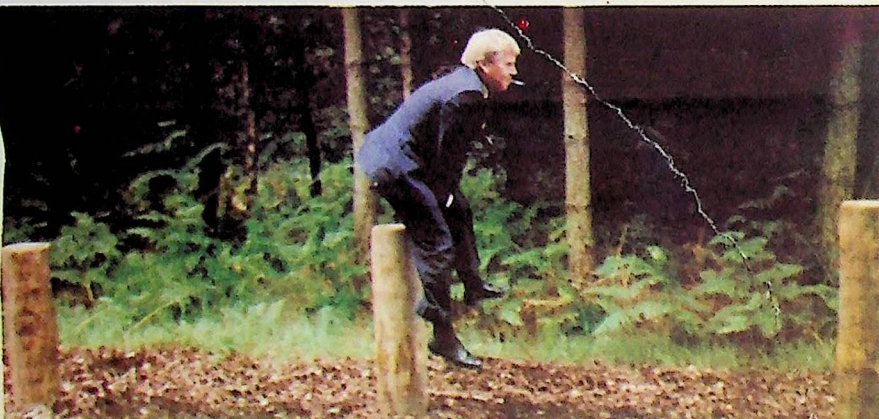


Making a splash on the River Ness.

ON ROUGH WA



Newton Stewart district manager Jim Hamilton



OVER YOU GO... Ken Clarke clears a hurdle.



OVER YOU GO... and so does Supt. Gordon Wade, hat at jaunty angle.

Forestry wives ride to Scots title

DISTRICT Foresters' wives Cynn Ford and Anne Weir from Mull recently entered the 25-mile open Scottish long-distance riding championships.

The event was held around Loch Fyne using mainly forest roads and tracks by permission of Loch Awe.

The girls had trained long and hard during the summer, receiving support from horse enthusiast L. D. MacRae, FDM Mull, and then hard work was repaid when they crossed the finishing line together after a fast ride to find that they had won. Mull's other two entrants, D. M. Kiley Worthington and C. Rendall, who had entered the 100-miles, two-day class, were first and second making it a clean sweep from Mull.

This fast-growing support, reflected in the 70 or so entrants, relies heavily on

the support of the FC whose roads and tracks make ideal riding surfaces.

STILL on horsemanship... and Gwent Forest District has opened what is believed to be the first purpose-built horse jumping circuit of its kind in Forestry Commission woodland. It's on the outskirts of Cardiff in Cefn Mabley Woods, and the circuit incorporates 12 fences of varying design and height suitable for novices and experienced riders together with a traditional riding route of 1 1/2 miles overall distance.

FDM David Parsons explains that in 1986 he was approached by a local organisation called SAFE (Safety and Facilities for Equestrians) who inquired into the possibility of an area for horse riding. There are very few bridleways in the area and an increasing number of horse owners. The FC has provided recreational facilities for walkers and

car drivers in its woodlands and although horseriding is permitted we felt that here was our opportunity to add variety. CMCP (Caerphilly Mountain Community Project) task force carried out construction work and SAFE provided technical design guidance, the project began. The opening event was attended by over one hundred riders, some of whom are pictured right.

David added: "We have since opened a similar facility in the Wye Valley area at which Anne-Marie Taylor, a member of the GB junior three-day event team, "cut the tape." Horse riding in Gwent is approaching the scale experienced by colleagues in parts of south-east England. We would welcome any advice, and for our part be happy to offer help to any other forest district which may be considering a similar facility."



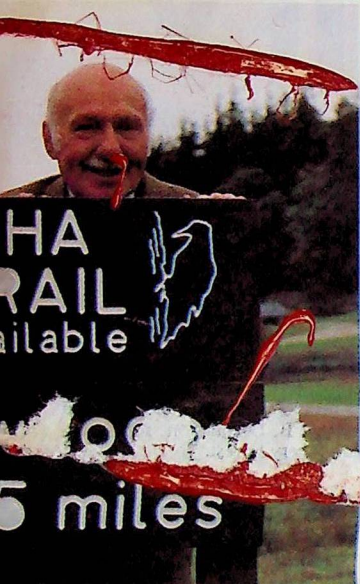


On the Trail of the Lonesome Pine.



The FC's winning tableau, a forest habitat on Culloden's own timber lorry.

ER OR ON DRY LAND IT'S ALL GOOD FUN



(t) with Tom Weir.



Jim Hamilton, Colin Brooks, bar-be-cue.



Some "pets" were considerably larger than their owners.

ON YER BIKES!

BILL Brown of Northern Research Station at Roslin, in Midlothian, is a hero in more ways than one . . .

He's a hero to Children in Need after joining in a 750-mile cycle trip — to France, no less — to aid the funds of that organisation.

He's a hero recognised by Lothian and Borders Police for as a special constable he helped to disarm two men earlier this year.

Bill took part in a sponsored cycle tour over a four day period in August and September for Children in Need. He was joined by three regular police officers en route from Penicuik to the twin town of L'isle-sur-la-Sorgue in the South of France. Which must make their "beat" one of the world's largest, certainly on a bike.

Having cycled to Coldstream in the borders they then drove to Dover. The lads continued to cycle from Calais in relay to Troyes, Dijon, Lyons until arriving at their Destination with 750 miles cycling behind them. They expect to have raised at least £5000.

Earlier this year, Bill and another police colleague disarmed two men, one with a loaded shotgun and another brandishing a knife with a 13" blade.

Bill received a meritorious award from Chief Constable Sir William Sutherland for his devotion to duty and disregard for personal safety.

● Bill is still taking sponsorship cheques etc., payable to Children in Need. Any donations should be sent to him at NRS.

Back to cycling, and across the Border at Kielder Water, more than 140 riders took on the challenge of a full circuit of the FC road network in August.

They came from all parts of the country for the 25-mile event . . . and a penny-farthing and ancient bone shaker were among the exhibits there.

They're not in the picture right, which shows a large part of the field for what was an extremely successful event. If you're interested, it's on again next year . . . so get pedalling. Write to FC Kielder.



12 months after the Great Windblow

Continued from page 1

down from Glenbrantar in Argyll to operate the OSA harvester specially bought by the FC to help the Weald clean-up operations.

Other machines are playing their part too. Another brand new harvester, a Valmet 862/948 single gr, together with the OSA and three new Lokomo forwarders were all bought and allocated to the district. Operators were selected and trained and two operators and a Brunnett processor were diverted from duties in Bowland Forest in Lancashire to join three local Bedgebury cutters.

Harvesting forester Paul Vickers is philosophical: "Tackling windblow with machines like this was something of an unknown quantity for us," he says.

"Weald FD now has the highest concentration of harvesting machinery anywhere in the country but no-one had tackled windblow

with harvesters before. We had to plan the whole thing from scratch and get it off the ground in a hurry but we are well pleased with the results."

As they should be! For as mentioned above, 15,000 hectares of windblow faced the staff after the storm — that represents some 350,000 cubic metres of timber to find markets for — or well over ten times the District's normal annual cut of just 30,000 cubic metres.

Over 90,000 cubic metres — three times the annual cut — from some 385 hectares of Bedgebury Forest had already been cleared by the end of September, just before the Minister's visit. Well over half of this had been achieved by the Commission's own squads.

This encouraging start to an intensive two-year clean-up programme means that the district is well on target, being about a third of

the way through the total programme by now, although the Commission's direct labour are some two-thirds of the way through their programme.

Seven men have been diverted from other districts to help and a small "village" of caravans among the forest plots has become an established part of the Bedgebury community.

The philosophy was not to put too much pressure on local contractors who had their work cut out — no pun intended — to clear Kent's many private woodlands.

The Minister delayed his official programme for nearly half an hour to spend time among the debris with Paul and Mark Dixon.

Our correspondent reports: The whole day was organised with a precision that would have done justice to a military exercise. While Sir David Montgomery lunched with

the Minister, staff from HQ Silviculture and Research Divisions were bussing well over 100 local woodland owners around carefully marked and prepared sites.

Deep into the forest, away from the Bedgebury that the public are so familiar with, a windblown block of Corsican pine had been carefully prepared into four adjacent demonstration plots. Four more sites on the nearby Scotney Estate had been similarly prepared in windblown broadleaved woodland.

The first stop covered site preparation for restocking and clearly demonstrated the contrast between an over-cleared site and a site adequately prepared for replanting.

Other stops detailed weed control, planting and tree protection, and issues surrounding species choice, and FC scientists or foresters gave a presentation and discussed owners' problems.

The Ranger's Lament

THE Poet of the forests, Arthur Frankland, whose retirement after 33 years in Cleveland, where he was a senior ranger, we recorded in our last issue, penned these lines when friends gathered to wish him and his wife Betty happy days well earned . . .

It's been a bit of an experience, this forestry job
Away from the hustle, and bustle and mob.
Interesting work, well, that's what it appears
For me, a short time, but it lasted for years.

The tracking of rabbits through snow to one's knees.
The last one in a planting, puts one's mind at ease.
Only to find, on return the next day
A whole lot of new feelings, from God knows where.

A hole in the fence, was the apron dug in?
Had someone just come, and dropped a few in?
Had the gate been left open, or just left ajar?
Or did they just run, and jump the top bar?

There are squirrels that just play, darned hard to get.
There are badgers that tip up, the hoppers one has set.
There are people who just throw the darned hoppers away;
The frustration of trying to find them, next day.

A roe deer or two are a sight to behold
Especially the buck, with his antlers so bold.
For with all one's great knowledge, on stalking you see
They are seldom in the place, where one expects them to be.

Just think of one's dogs — they need some sort of praise
As many good dogs have gone over the years.
For through thorns, brambles and heathers we tell them to seek
It is not for the lazy, or tender, or meek.

My old dog and I, we are forced to retire,
I am told to put up my feet, by the fire.
But to watch the dog's expression is to be of great note
As I start to wash up, instead of putting on my coat.

What of wives who worry when one comes home late,
Who accuse one of being married to the wood, or the state.
But with years of experience, it all seems the same
There are deer, rabbits and squirrels and they all take the blame.

I have watched all the creatures we try to control
No matter how old a rabbit, they will scrat a new hole.
What a wonderful thing, if it could only aspire
That we could tell them the age, that they had to retire.

A. D. FRANKLAND

Poet Arthur writes last line

Headline from our August issue.

FORESTRY PEOPLE ... FORESTRY PEOPLE ... FORESTRY PEOPLE ...



Brothers John (left) and Gerald flank foreman Ifor Peters, BEM.



Tom Thomas receives his service certificate from Robert Donaldson, district manager.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

FAMILY ties in the family of forests have always been strong . . . as epitomised in the two pictures above.

On the left, two brothers with more than 76 years' service between them; on the right, a third generation with a link with Aeron Forest in Wales.

The two brothers, John and Gerald Leach, both forest craftsmen in the Ruthin Forest District, retired recently. In their more than 76 years' service between them, they saw 12 area supervisors and nine district officers come and go and they worked in six forests without having to move home!

John and Gerald leave a legacy of conscientious and high quality work, none more evident than the plantations they established for the Welsh Office on trunk roads throughout northern Clwyd.

The esteem held for both John and Gerald was evident in the sum raised for their retirement gift. At their request, the money was donated entirely to the Bodelwyddan Resource Centre for Disabled People Fund.

Tom Thomas, who started work at Aeron Forest on November 20, 1957, is the third generation of the Thomas family to have been involved in forestry activities in this area.

His grandfather originally sold some of the land that was to become Aeron Forest to the Forestry Commission; and his father planted the first trees at Aeron Forest. Interestingly, Tom's son — Meirion — is now also working for the Forestry Commission as a harvesting contractor.

In 1969 Tom transferred to Tywi Forest, living first at Pantyfedwen and later at Crofftau. When

he first went to Tywi the planting programme was 1,000 acres (400 hectares) a year and today those same trees are having their first thinning.

As well as being involved in planting operations Tom has been involved in a wide variety of forest management work including fencing operations and he calculates that during his career he has been responsible for fencing more than 50 miles of forest boundaries. Tom still lives at Crofftau where he farms 120 acres with his wife and family.

A presentation to mark Tom's retirement was held at the Talbot Hotel in Tregaron. Many friends and colleagues attended to wish both Tom and his wife a happy retirement and to present Tom with a pair of binoculars and a cheque. The presentation was made by Mr Robert B. Donaldson, forest district manager of Llandovery Forest District.

. . . and more farewells in Wales



Dil Groves with Newys Owen and FDM Peter Hughes.



Alun Thomas of Corris Forest District with his service certificate (34 years at Dyfi Forest which was presented by Corris forest district manager, Ron Stokes. Alun has also retired.

A shoal of retirements in Wales to add to the three above.

TOM GRIFFITHS, (43 years with the FC) started work just before the Second World War, joined the RAF in 1942 and served in France and Germany.

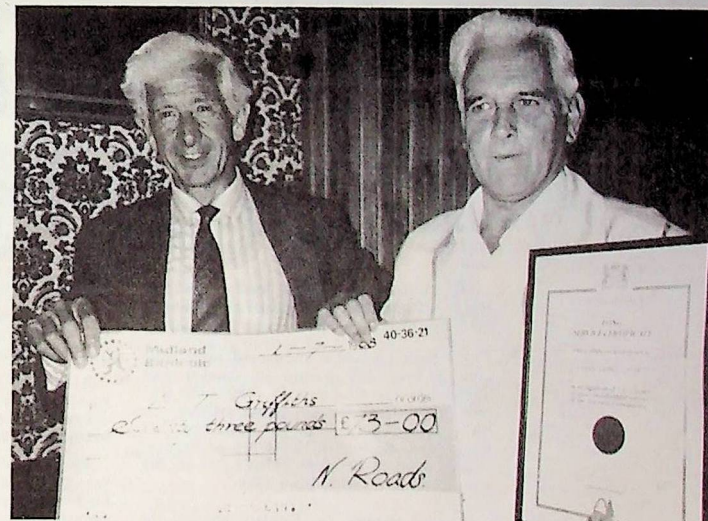
After the war he returned to the FC and worked on ploughing, planting and general duties for 20 years. Tom has been with the roads department for 22 years as lorry driver, excavator operator and, latterly, as vib-roller operator. He takes a keen interest in the local activities of his village, Abbeycwmhir where he was born. Although he has recently suffered health problems we understand he is steadily improving.

At a recent presentation at Llanidloes, Tom received his long service certificate and a cheque which he intends to put towards DIY equipment.

DILWYN (DIL) GROVES (34 years' service). He began working life at 15 years of age at Lewis Merthyr Colliery and remained in the coal industry for 15 years.

He joined the FC in 1954 on the former Michaelstone Forest, and was for many years employed as an H&M worker. He well remembers starting thinning operations in 1956 armed with an axe and bowsaw. In recent years Dil was a stalwart member of the FM squad, in Afan district.

At an informal lunchtime ceremony Dil joined staff for a farewell drink, and Miss Newys Owen, AO, presented Dil with a barometer, a gift from friends and colleagues. On behalf of the FC FDM



Tom Griffiths with T. P. Summers, Conservancy civil engineer



Dai Lewis (Beechfa Forest) with the engraved watch received on his retirement.

Peter Hughes handed Dil his service certificate.

FRANK CHAMBERS (39 years' service) spent many years in the old Ebbw Forest where he was, among other things, a mine of information on fencing problems and estates matters.

Practically all his service was in South Wales and included the old Crychan, Mynydd Du, Margam and Brecon forests with the last 15 years in Gwent. Frank asked for a quiet send-off but a small group gathered to wish him well.

Retirements from the forest districts include:—

DOLGELLAU: Two of the long-

serving members of the forest management squad retired within two weeks of each other. They were **Richard Parker**, who received his service certificate from the Conservator, Mr John Morgan; and **Dai M. Owen** who also received his Certificate from the Conservator. Dai had been unwell for a long period of time and retired on medical grounds.

Both Dick and Dai contributed much to the successful establishment of many areas of Coed-y-Brenin.

BRECHFA: Three forest craftsmen with a commendable record of service to the district have retired . . .

Gwilym Davies (28 years), who retired on medical grounds, received an engraved watch from colleagues at a private ceremony date.

Paul Kurowski, (31 years), who joined the former Teifi Forest team in 1956. At a gathering at Brechfa Forest Centre, workmates presented him with a radio/cassette player.

D. G. (Dai) Lewis (34 years), who received an engraved watch at a farewell party arranged by family and friends.

RHEOLA: Five have retired through ill health . . .

Lewis Lewis (27 years at Coed-y-Rhaiadr Beat); **Selwyn Morgan** (28 years); and **Stephen Duffy**, **Michael Williams** and **Terrence Smith** (all with over 10 years' service).

FORESTRY PEOPLE ... FORESTRY PEOPLE ... FORESTRY PEOPLE ... FORESTRY PEOPLE ...

In memory of Jimmy Devonian Fred makes his exit

A special trophy for curlers will mark the memory of the late Jimmy Paterson, ploughing manager in South Scotland before his death.

Many friends and former colleagues of Jimmy had expressed a wish to remember him in some way. Since Jimmy was such an enthusiastic member of the South Scotland Curling Club, it was suggested that the introduction of a Jimmy Paterson Curling Trophy would be appropriate.

Mrs Paterson was approached and she was happy with the idea, feeling that Jimmy would have been honoured by it, so the Curling Club agreed to buy a suitable trophy which will be played for annually at the end of the season.

• If you would like to be associated with this memorial, please send donations to G. Coulthard, secretary, South Scotland Curling Club, making cheques payable to "Graeme Coulthard for the Forestry Commission Curling Club" by November 15.

A rare honour for David

An Afan Forest district forester has received a rare honour from the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales.

David Parnall, until his recent retirement, was recreation forester at Afan and the special award was made for initiating work on restoring historic farm buildings in the Afan Valley area.

The certification, one of the council's top conservation

HISTORIC FARM RESTORATION

awards, is normally presented to organisations, but on this occasion Dave's individual efforts were recognised.

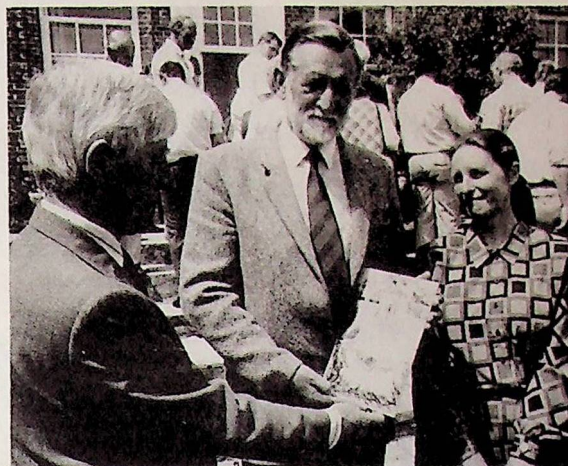
The restoration projects which included three 15th century farm buildings and a 17th century corn barn, used labour funded by the Manpower Services Committee, and materials provided by the

Forestry Commission as sponsors.

Dave Parnall said: "These old derelict buildings form an important part of the pre-industrial heritage of the valleys, and my research on the history of the area and the buildings in particular confirmed that the restoration work was worthwhile."

Dave was unable to attend the Royal Welsh show to receive the award as he was in the process of moving to Plymouth on retirement.

Therefore, members of West Glamorgan branch of the CPRW made a special trip to Farteg Fawr, Bryn, Dave's forestry home for 16 years, to make the presentation.



With the retirement of Fred Courtier as head forester (wildlife) in East England, the FC has lost one more of its officers who is almost as well known outside the Commission as inside.

Large numbers of friends and colleagues stood in brilliant sunshine on the terrace of Queen's House, Lyndhurst, to hear Fred's praises sung and the old Devonian's witty and memorable response to the presentation made by Norman Dannatt, assistant conservator.

Fred served in the Royal Navy before studying forestry, first at Dartington Hall and then at Dean School.

He found his métier immediately on joining the Commission in 1952 as the man in charge of a brand new section at Alice Holt studying woodland mammals. The grey squirrel was his first concern and he was responsible for devising more effective control methods for these destructive creatures before, in 1960, he became FC game warden, a job that included the training of FC staff in deer management.

From 1970 he operated mainly

in the New Forest and South-east England, extending his beat to the new East England on its formation. But his interests and reputation ranged far beyond these confines through his appearances at conferences and seminars and his lectures to both lay and expert audiences.

As well as a wide and formidable knowledge of the natural world, Fred possessed quiet determination, organising ability and the courage to speak his mind even at the risk of unpopularity. He was the last of those who habitually slid down the banisters at Queen's House to the alarm of less intrepid spectators.

It was fitting that at the end of his service Fred should have received the Balfour-Browne Trophy for outstanding services to deer (as recorded in our last issue).

Fred and his wife Heather (seen together, above with Norman) will continue to live at Denny Lodge in the New Forest in retirement. It will be a wonder if the world of wildlife conservation does not continue to beat a path to their door, where the welcome will be as warm as it always has been.

Tributes paid as Rod Stern leaves

Tributes from far afield were paid at the retirement of Rod Stern. A turnout of over 100 people, including many retired staff, gave Rod and his wife Vanessa a great send-off at the refurbished Alice Holt visitor centre.

East England Conservator Mick Dinning provided a resumé of Rod's career and presented him with a crystal decanter and glasses as well as a handsome cheque to be used for photographic equipment.

Brian Holtam, ex CRO North and Conservancy E(E), also contributed with a selection of Welsh prose to remind Rod of his time in North Wales.

Rod had some amusing tales from his service in his early days at Aberystwyth and Dovey to his final post as Conservancy Conservation Officer for E(E). His particular expertise in this field was reflected by the number of individuals from outside the FC concerned with conservation who attended his retirement party.

Rod's particular strengths are not lost to the FC — he will be returning on a number of conservation projects!



Rod and Vanessa admire their gifts.

GORDON — LAST OF THE BENTLEYITES

Gordon Joyce retired on September 1 after nearly 25 years with the Commission, most of which was spent on forest management duties at the Old Bentley (Salisbury) Forest. He is the last of a 12-strong workforce of 25 years ago.

With his wife Joan, Gordon was joined by colleagues past and present for a lunchtime farewell. Bob Budden, the Wilts & Avon FDM, presented Gordon with a book, inscribed tankard and cash. Joan was given a bouquet arrangement by Anne Clark from the FD office.

Gordon intends to continue an active life on his smallholding at East Grimstead near Bentley.



Gordon with wife Joan and district manager Bob Budden.

Alan's last day after 35 years



Alan Dunning, Chief Forester at Dorset FD, retired in September after more than 35 years with the Commission spent in areas as far apart as the New Forest, Scotland and Dorset.

At an informal gathering at Wareham, Conservator John Fletcher presented him with a cheque for more than £300 collected from colleagues and friends inside and outside the FC.

He intends to buy crystal glass — and invited passing friends to call at his cottage in Bere Regis to help him to use them to full effect.

Alan's grand-daughter Anna presented Eileen with flowers and a pot plant; and staff at Dorset FD produced a series of photographs depicting some of Alan's activities over the last 11 years, then presented Alan and Eileen with a walking stick each, for they intend to spend a deal of their time in their main hobby of walking the countryside.



Alan's grand-daughter, Anna, presents Eileen with a bouquet as Alan looks on.

Craftsman Les, man of the moors

Forest craftsman LES TYSON (aged 54) has taken early retirement after 42 years in the present North York Moors Forest District.

Les started as a lad on the old Broxa Forest and spent a lot of time in the Broxa Nursery where he developed his skills as a transplant lifter and lining-out expert which have stood him in good stead for the time spent in the nursery on North York Moors at Wykeham.

Les was presented with a cheque by district manager John Mackenzie from colleagues and friends.

He hopes to devote more time to his hobbies of wood carving and gardening, having developed quite a reputation locally from his skills.

For his decorative wood-carving he uses hardwoods like mahogany and oak rather than the soft pines and spruces he is used to at work.

He also enjoys gardening and drawing.



LES TYSON
Wood carving.

Another craftsman BERT TOMLINSON retired on his 65th birthday after 33 years with the FC working in the Bickley and Wykeham areas of North York Moors.

Bert does not intend "retiring" yet though — he will be spending much of his time working on his smallholding in Langdale End.

Vilnis' farewell

Vilnis Grant has retired after 31 years' service, mainly in what are now Kielder and Rothbury Forest Districts.

Coming to Britain after the war, Vilnis put himself through night school, training as a surveyor. Later, hearing of a fellow countryman working for the Commission at Kielder, he contacted him to find out what he and the Commission did, and that, as they say, was that.

A meticulous worker, Vilnis sometimes took so much equip-

ment on site that he was once asked by his chairman where the hay was as, since he was being treated like a horse, he assumed he was being fed like one too!

Stories like this will be known and remembered by all his friends, many of whom subscribed to his parting gift (of Edinburgh Crystal), which was presented by Iain Hampson (area civil engineer). A bouquet was presented to Vilnis' wife, Jan.

Since he remarried, Vilnis has been living in Carlisle.

The skill of our craftsmen . . . winning shapes in forestry



There's a lot of talent among FC workers . . . as clearly illustrated in these two pictures of carvings (sculptures in wood). That splendid crocodile (what . . . down in the forest??) came to the fore at the national tree-felling contest in the Forest of Ae, when Jim Elliott, a forest worker at Glentor quarry, Devon, won the chainsaw carving contest. And at the now-closed Glasgow Garden Festival,

one of the star performers of the many events organised for the Magical Forest exhibit was Peter Bowsher, forester from Dornoch, in North Scotland.

Here he is (above) at work in the early stages of creating a roe deer sculpture; and he is flanked by his hedgehog family and an imposing, watchful heron.

Don't hide YOUR light under a bush . . . let's have some of your examples of your hobbies. Photographs and details to the Editor, The Slasher, at HQ in Edinburgh.

Back to the tree-felling contest mentioned earlier . . . it was won by Duncan Gillies, FC worker from Lorne, Argyll.

He competed with over fifty other forest workers from around Britain to fell, sned and cross cut a tree by chainsaw.

Designed to encourage a high standard of felling, the competition has been running for over ten years. Among skills judged are accuracy, speed and safety while felling.

Duncan not only felled faster, but his high regard for safety also earned him the Safety Medal.

Among prizes won by the new champion is a trip to Sweden to compete in the "World Chain Saw Competition" in 1989.

Another FC worker, David Grieve from New Galloway, came second in the competition

ANDY GALLACHER looks back on his days of magic . . .

Impressions of an impresario



GOLD MEDAL . . . and Bill Blake receives the award on behalf of the FC for the best outdoor exhibit at the Glasgow Garden Festival. Making the presentation: Lord Aberconway, president of the Royal Horticultural Society.

At the end of last January a phone call turned my occasionally busy but peaceful life in retirement upside down.

Duncan Campbell, former head of environment branch was on the line to ask if I could take on the unpaid job of organising events for the forestry events area which adjoined the Commission's Magical Forest exhibit at Glasgow Garden Festival.

Although I would be paid travelling expenses, etc., all events had to be at little or no cost to the Commission. Since I had already agreed to a weekly stint as a volunteer steward, I readily took on the job, little realising what was ahead.

A brainstorming session by Richard Broadhurst and Simon Bell produced a long list of ideas and placement assistant Jim Thomson did some early spadework.

By early March my first draft of an events framework for the whole of the festival period was ready for discussion with the GGF assistant director of events who promised support by direct input from his events department. Unfortunately support was minimal and this was really limited to financial backing totalling £800 for seven of our own planned events.

I had been asked by the GGF events department to set aside the first three weeks for the erection of an Oglala Sioux Indian tepee but obviously someone overlooked the fact that the tepee could only be set up on soft earth or turf — not on the hardstanding of the events area. Finding a suitable corner within the Magical Forest cost Carol Anderson some very early Sunday morning sleep!

Early in May, Mike Locke joined me on the events side and he quickly proved his worth. He also provided one of the more amusing anecdotes of our organising stint.

We had become rather concerned about the lack of direct input by GGF and felt that some amateur or semi-professional entertainment would be an attraction especially at weekends. There was a suggestion that such entertainers were a feature of Waverley Market in Edinburgh and Mike undertook to investigate. His inquiries evoked the response "Oh Mac, you do not usually get these acts for under £100 a day!"

This idea was quickly shelved . . .

Early attempts at sponsorship met with little success

but we were indebted to Andy Little, chairman, Royal Scottish Forestry Society, for organising members to present five days of country crafts with woodturning, rustic garden furniture and chainsaw sculpture.

The range of events was extensive — Forest motor sport (with a £53,000 Ford RS200 rally car on display); Mountain bike and Nordic cross-country skiing equipment displays; Penicuk lifesize Punch and Judy; the Magical Forest quiz (with over 600 small prizes distributed); crook and walking stick-making (presented by ex HEO Jim Byth); amateur wood turning (courtesy of FDM Peter Quelch with his modern lathe and an excellent working replica of an ancient manually-operated lathe); forest holidays (caravan, camping and cabin feature); conservation in action (with Ranger Mike Canham highlighting bird box-making); orienteering (through the Magical Forest); chainsaw sculpture (with star performers Peter Bowsher, forester, Dornoch, and Jim Potts, chainsaw operator, Kielder. Star billing was accorded to a three-day demonstration by the Siberian Husky Club of Great Britain featuring free rides for children in a specially constructed "rig". This event served to correct widely held misconceptions about the alleged ferocity of huskies!

Our experience served to confirm what most folk with experience of arranging shows already know — the events which featured someone or something in action had the greatest visitor attraction, with chainsaw sculpture and the huskies competing for top honours.

The last day of the Festival was perhaps the greatest achievement of our events programming when we had long queues for young Caledonian Pine seedlings and about 2000 free pens which I had managed to procure without charge.

A borrowed double-burner stove was put to good use in preparing hot rolls, tea and coffee for staff, and the day was topped by a five-piece band which I had persuaded the GGF director of events to engage. The crowd of 200 or so visitors were rocking in the aisles!

It was with a tinge of regret that Mike and I witnessed the initial death throes of what had been a highly successful Garden Festival, an outstanding Commission exhibit (which fully deserved its large Gold Medal award) and a successful programme.

Life will never be quite the same again for Mike and me!



TOP TEAM . . . the award for the best innovative exhibit at the garden festival goes to Simon Bell, Bob James and Carol Anderson. With them, the much-acclaimed Ancient Forester.



Sporting Gerry's farewell

Noted for his "laid back" approach to work, Gerry Perry proved it when he used his charms on the girls of personnel division on his retirement from salaries section, HQ, after 17 years with FC. He served as SEO and Grade 7 in Basingstoke then Edinburgh before reverting to EO at the age of 60 in 1985.

An excellent footballer in his youth Gerry was involved in many HQ sports and social events, including a spell as chairman of the Sports and Social Club.

He was presented with an engraved crystal decanter and glasses.

• More retirements in Pages 6 and 7.