

SLASHER



Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

Issue No. 338

December 1988

Our many friends

AS now appears to be the norm, 1988 has been a year with its usual crop of problems, changes and challenges for the Forestry Commission, its staff and the forest industry in general.

Whether it has been clearing up after the Great Gale of October '87, taking on board the major changes brought about by the March Budget, or dealing with the many local, but important, problems facing us throughout the country, everybody I have met has got down to the job in hand with the enthusiasm, humour and dedication typical of FC staff.

I have the feeling that 1989 will prove to be more of the same. Forestry and the Commission are news these days and, in this connection, I sense that we have many more friends than our more vocal enemies.

We must, however, continue at all levels to promote the forestry case with its many achievements, and we can all take considerable satisfaction from the continuing support given by Government for an expanding forestry industry.

I hope everyone will have a very happy Christmas with their families and wish you all the best in the year to come.

Sir David Montgomery,
Chairman.

Privatisation

"NO FOUNDATION"

SUGGESTIONS that the Forestry Commission is to be privatised have been in the headlines again recently and have been firmly rebutted by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The most recent calls for privatisation came from the Adam Smith Institute, in a report "Pining for Profit," which said that many of the Commission's activities in tree planting and forest management were uneconomic and which also called for an end to planting subsidies to private forestry.

This report was published only a few weeks after an article in the "Observer" suggested that Whitehall was pushing ahead with privatisation plans.

However, Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr Malcolm Rifkind, the Government lead spokesman on forestry, announced in a letter to Mr Alick Buchanan-Smith, MP, published in the "Dundee Courier," "I do not know how the 'Observer' article came to be written but I can tell you that it is without foundation.

"The Government has not drawn up any plans to privatise the Commission, nor has it made any proposals that might lead in that direction. I can assure you that the central role played by the Commission in an expanding forestry industry is well recognised."

That, and other reassurances from official sources, have made it clear that no discussions are under way which might pose an immediate threat to the Commission and its role in providing a strong base for an expanding forestry industry.

The Director General, Mr Gwyn Francis, speaking to

MINISTER ANSWERS REPORTS

the United Kingdom Wood Processors' Association at the end of November, quoted Scottish Office Minister Lord Sanderson of Bowden, who said: "There are no plans on the table at the present time to privatise the Commission."

At that meeting Mr Francis pointed out that demands for reduced levels of agricultural production had created a new interest in forestry and a widening of the opportunities for trees to be grown on better quality land.

The change in tax concessions for private planting would have an impact but, he said: "We now have a means of support for private forestry which is more publicly acceptable and which will come to be recognised as such by the profession as a whole."

"We must recognise that the creation of new forests by planting cannot take place without regard to other interests and the impact of new planting on the countryside. This point is central to the Woodland Grant Scheme and indeed central to the decisions on whether and how new planting should take place. Planting is a force for change in the countryside, it must be handled sensitively and in sensitive areas it is right that other interests are given weight. If this is not done in an acceptable way the support of public opinion will be put at risk. We must also be concerned that this should be done in a way which is fair and equitable to the owner of land."

Thanks for your help, sailors!

THERE can be no better way for the Forestry Commission to say thanks than to present a miniature forest.

And Aberfoyle office in Scotland did just that recently when they presented 30 Norway spruce trees to decorate the Royal Navy base, HMS Gannet, at Prestwick, Ayrshire, over the festive season.

And here you see the Navy dropping in on a Sea King helicopter to collect their gift at the David Marshall Lodge — personally handed over by Andy Ferguson of Comrie, helped by his Aberfoyle colleague, Bert Campbell.

It was an accident involving Andy himself that brought the Navy into the picture.

Andy was carrying some fencing materials on a Garron all-terrain vehicle at Balquhidder when the vehicle capsized on rough ground and was badly damaged.

Bruised and shaken, Andy made his way down the hillside, leaving behind a totally immobilised Garron.

The Navy heard about the problem and, as a training exercise, they flew in a Sea King and winched the machine up on to a Commission lorry.

But for their help, the only course would have been to dismantle the vehicle and carry the pieces down to the workshops. So a good deed was well and truly done by the lads in blue.

This special trees delivery is only one example of how our product goes all over the place... including Europe. For our Christmas tree sales have been brisk across the country.

The Public Information Division received more calls than ever before from members of the public wanting to know their nearest sales point, and David Jardine (of Harvest and Marketing) reports that "this year income generated is greater than ever."

Some of our bigger trees were proudly displayed in fine settings. Durham office supplied a number of 20 ft. trees for Europe's largest shopping centre — the Metro at Gateshead.

Another shopping arcade, the St Nicholas centre in Aberdeen, got theirs from Kirkhill; while a tree from Blair Adam ensured guests at Gleneagles Hotel had a traditional Christmas.

The demand for non-spruce trees continued to increase with many people preferring to buy Scots and Corsican pine or Noble fir. At Newton Stewart, district office staff were busy organising the selection and cutting of Noble fir foliage for the West German market.

Over £20,000 worth of foliage has already been sold to the continent.



Just a reminder of times past... and more fun to come next winter

Yes... winter's here, but there'll be another. And another. And another...

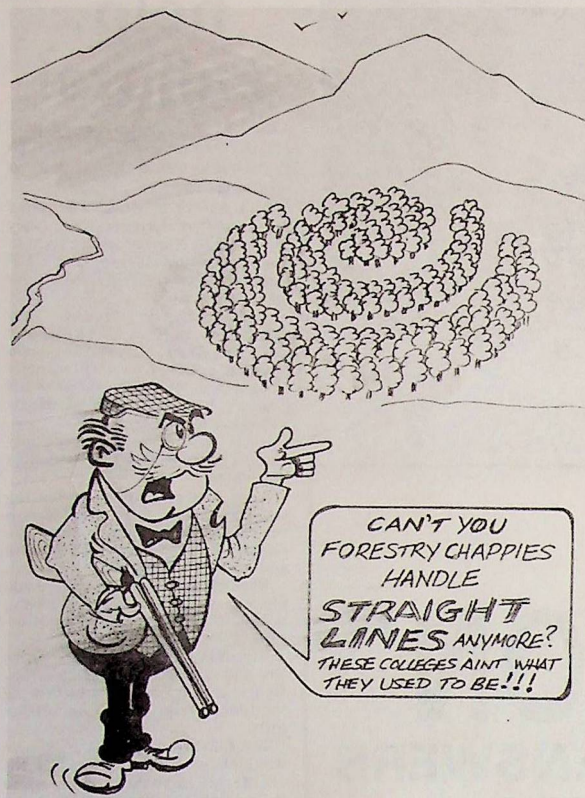
Which will give skiers the chance to come again to Glenmore to enjoy the facilities there, courtesy of the Forestry Commission.

Meantime, if there's snow around, enjoy yourself, for this 'nursery' slope at Glenmore is extremely popular, especially with youngsters. A nice little earner, as they say.

Using a small 8 hp engine, skiers are towed less than 200 yards ready to tackle a gentle slope. And they are happy to pay £2 for a half day ticket to take the strain of going back that short distance.



KARTOON KORNER



Dear Santa

A "Stability Kit" — if there's such a thing — would be an ideal Christmas present. We really feel we've been under the cosh just recently what with tax changes, computerisation, new grant schemes, re-organisation and Private Sector and Forestry Commission bashing to name but a few. The Adam Smith Institute, Santa, are a rather peculiar crew. I don't know who they represent, nor am I sure if they've ever actually been to a forest. So for their Christmas present please give them an "Objectivity Kit" plus the new booklet "Selected Quotes To Use When Stumped." To give them any more room on my list would merely give them space they don't deserve (so if they wake up to empty stockings we won't mind!).

Thank you, Santa, for the Public and Privilege Holidays which I've enjoyed for years. I don't like the new dates because they restrict my friends in Research, Conservancies and possibly at Forest Districts. Could you also put a note in everybody's stocking telling them I DID NOT agree to the dates and that it was extremely naughty of Charles Simmonds to copy a letter to staff which has resulted in my getting the blame when I knew nothing about it.

Oh, one more thing on these holidays, Santa. You may be getting a request from Sandy Morrison for a machine gun as he has to keep his staff in on Fair Friday — don't give it to him.

My thanks also for the guidance on Equal Opportunities. This will be of invaluable assistance to many people. I may, however, need some of the aftershave called "Macho Man Submits" or the new board game "Have The Scales Lifted Yet?" But I'm sure, with time, it's going to work out.

Well I can think of many other things I'd like but I don't want to appear unreasonable, nevertheless I'd like you to give the Forestry Commission a great pat on the back for its achievements. We are changing on the environmental/conservation front which I know will please you. We're getting there on answering criticism of forestry. None of this could be done without a dedicated and committed staff.

To all within the Commission, to retired members, to the private sector forestry companies and wood processing industry and everyone else who reads "Slasher" — my best wishes to them and theirs for the New Year.

Slàinte!

Yours, Kenny.

Retirement club is branching out

PRELIMINARY groups have been set up in many areas in readiness for the official launch of the Retirement Association in March.

The steering committee met at HQ on October 18, when representatives from the various conservancies reported encouraging response throughout the country.

The target is a branch in every conservancy before the end of March, month of the official launch.

Invitations to initial meetings the various areas were confined to those who had already indicated an interest in joining the association. Conservancy representatives are now in the process of writing to ALL retired staff inviting them to informal get-togethers to discuss progress and ideas for the future.

If you have not yet received an invitation it should be on its way very shortly.

WEST ENGLAND: A branch steering committee set up and meetings arranged with a view to forming branch covering Bristol and Avon and groups for Dean, Devon and Cornwall, Wessex and Midlands and Marches.

EAST ENGLAND: Meetings at Cambridge, Alice Holt, New Forest, Bedgebury, Thetford and Sherwood set up *ad hoc* committees to get things moving.

NORTH ENGLAND: Meetings held at York, Bellingham and Chester, where a strong group of former Chester office staff have been meeting regularly since the office closed in 1985. They will form the branch committee. There are possibilities for future groups at Pickering and other locations.

WALES: Branch steering committee set up. Representatives appointed to organise meetings at Betws-y-Coed, Aberystwyth and Garwnant to set up three groups in Wales.

SOUTH SCOTLAND: Meetings being arranged.

MID SCOTLAND: Steering committee set up. Further meetings shortly.

NORTH SCOTLAND: Steering Committee set up. It is hoped to set up a branch at Inverness with groups at Aberdeen, Morayshire and in north and west conservancy.

HEADQUARTERS: Steering committee set up. First branch meeting held in November.



Your conservancy representatives, and group representatives where known, are:—

HEADQUARTERS — Brian Can, 25 Caiystane Crescent, Edinburgh EH10 6RT.

WEST ENGLAND — Brian Tipping, Peartree Cottage, Wyke Champflower, Bruton, Somerset.

EAST ENGLAND — Cambridge — Eric Winterflood, 51 Priams Way, Stapleford, Cambridge CB2 5DT; Alice Holt — Ron Brown, Edgewood, Station Road, Bentley, Farnham, Surrey GU10 5JZ; New Forest — George Goss, Laurel Cottage, 109 High Street, Lyndhurst, Hants SO4 7BH; Thetford — Steve Chapman, 2 Birds Croft, Great Livermere, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP 31 1JJ;

Bedgebury — Derek House, 56 Pevensey Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex TN38 0LS; **Sherwood** — Jim Barraclough, Longlull House, Cambarton Road, Worksop, Notts S80 3BU.

NORTH ENGLAND: Ian Marchall, 9 The Dell, Delamere Park, Cuddington, Cheshire CW8 2XG; Chester — Bill Wardrop, 34 Merton Drive, Chester CH4 7PQ.

WALES: Roy Davies, Clifton House, St Bride's Major, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan; **North Wales** — George Pringle, Glam Craig, Betws-y-Coed, Gwynedd LL24 0BZ; **Mid Wales** — Denis Fisher, 16 Maes Ceinion, Waun Fawr, Aberystwyth SY23 3QW; **South Wales** — Roy Davies and Gwyn Owen, 26 Kelvin Road, Roath Park, Cardiff CF2 5ET.

NORTH SCOTLAND — George Taylor, 4 Roseberry Street, Aberdeen.

MID SCOTLAND. — A. M. Gallacher, 24 Dunlop Tower, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0BS.

SOUTH SCOTLAND. — John Drummond, 8 Loch Road, Dumfries DH2 9JE.

● Look out for fuller details of the launch plans in our February issue.

ONCE again it looks as if the completion of Annual Staff Reports are subject to as much "slippage" as ever.

After all the exhortations, the circulation of a revised NIM19, the distribution of a timetable and even the DG urging timeous completion, many are still outstanding.

HQ is by far the worst area and why this is continually the case I cannot understand. Whatever the reasons it is unacceptable.

Completion

So, reportees, if you haven't seen your report — ask why and insist on immediate completion. Countersigning officers should demand completion of outstanding reports. Reporting Officers, excepting unusual circumstances, should be ashamed of themselves if they have not completed reports. We all have a part to play in the ASR/AI system and if we don't, it just won't work.

Car-leasing update — the TUS have recently received comments from the NUCPs solicitors regarding the contract. A resume of these has been sent to the official side for their consideration before we formally meet on 24 January.

THE TUS DIARY HAVE YOU HAD YOUR REPORT?

KENNY MURRAY



The DG has stated that he wishes negotiations to be completed in February so we shall hopefully resolve the differences between us on the contract before then.

I have also been shown a copy of an administration and finance instruction from a conservancy. Its purpose is "to describe how the rules relating to travel on official business contained in standing instructions NIM76 and NIM45 will be applied within the Conservancy. What's the point in having detailed Departmental Instructions which are applied differently throughout the organisation? Certainly local managers must make decisions on individual mileages, who is responsible for the scheme etc. — but an instruction which differs from an NIM only creates confusion and inconsistency.

Pay and conditions of service — industrial staff — most of you will know that TGWU and GMB members overwhelmingly reject the Commission's offer on pay and conditions. There is apparently a stalemate at the moment with the FC refusing to discuss the package further until next year's pay negotiations. We await the results of their deliberations with interest.

Service

I would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to one of the most committed and hard-working Trades Unionists the Commission has produced — John Hose. John retired on the 18th November after years of unstinting service to his members in the TGWU. I speak on behalf of all non industrial unions in wishing John a long and productive retirement from Sherwood Forest. He'll be sadly missed and with the Editor's indulgence I reproduce John's favourite verse from "The Fool" by Padraic H. Pearce.

I have squandered the spendid years that the Lord God gave to buy youth,
In attempting impossible things, deeming them alone worth the toil,
Was it folly or grace? Not men shall judge me, but God."

A Happy and Productive 1989 to you all.

WOODEN RUNWAY FOR BRISTOL

THE new runway extension to Bristol's international airport is shortly to be commenced.

A recently signed deal with the Forestry Commission has meant that the new runway will be constructed of wood.

Exhaustive tests with Dan Dair and BOAC have shown that Japanese larch is by far the most suitable timber.

The Forestry Commission 'wood' have preferred to have supplied sitka spruce but were still pleased to have signed the 'Deal'.

A spokesman for the Airport Director said that the wooden runway would be constructed for half the cost and in half the time. He also said that aircraft carriers had always had wooden flight decks and the timber runway would result in much softer landings!

A spokesman for the Forestry Commission denied all knowledge of everything until he realised that this was an important commercial deal, when he immediately claimed all the credit and then claimed a first in timber technology but he got that wrong as well.

The Forestry Commission has doubled its strength of landscape architects so as to be sure of obtaining the correct shade and colour of the timber preservative to be used.

Further projects now to be considered are extending the M1 to Scotland and the proposed widening of the M25.

GUESS WHO!

Pocket money . . .

WALES CONSERVANCY office had to part with nearly £80 for the return of their A&FO, Iain Miller, and area land agent, David Adamson, who were "kidnapped" and held hostage by Dyfed Fire Brigade. Bank managers, company directors, an income tax inspector, and police officer as well as civil servants were put on the hydraulic platform of the fire engine and lifted above the houses ("above the seagulls too," suggested Iain) while FC staff tried — reluctantly, it has to be said — to raise the ransom needed.

Awards double for FC in Scotland, Wales

Two major awards have been gained by the Forestry Commission at opposite ends of the country — for work in the North of Scotland, and for facilities at a camp site in Wales.

The Welsh award marks a remarkable hat-trick for the site — for it had already won the same honour TWICE before in the past eight years.

The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland has awarded FC engineers a Certificate of Merit for the sensitive way their structures, especially roads and bridges, blend into environment.

The award was given for the design of roads, paths and bridges at Lael in Wester Ross; at Dog Falls, Glen Affric in Inverness-shire; and at Rumster Achairn, Caithness.

"We are delighted with this recognition from a body as respected as the APRS," said Roger Hay, head of the Commission's engineering team.

"We always design and build structures from the start in a way that we hope enhances the environment. Engineering structures must be in harmony with their particular location and not detract from the landscape. In addition, of course, forestry roads often open up areas of the countryside that were previously pretty inaccessible."

APRS director, Mr Robert Smith (also a member of the panel of assessors), said, "In view of the abuse heaped on certain forest developments over the last few years, it was most refreshing to find such good work being done within the forest areas visited. The unobtrusiveness of roads and bridges as compared with some of the awful hill tracks which APRS has commented on in the past was most encouraging."

Chairman of the panel, Mr John Foster, FRSA, said the engineering division's use of sympathetic materials "is particularly noteworthy."

The Automobile Association's coveted campsite of the Year Award, went to Snowdonia Forest Park, at Beddgelert, which had already been judged best campsite in Britain in 1980 and 1982. AA inspectors particularly commend its attention to detail and friendly, family atmosphere.

The FC site has 280 pitches, split equally between campers and caravanners; some pitches have electrical hook-ups. It has been attracting fresh-air fanatics to the Welsh mountains since 1932.

Facilities are excellent, and include a restaurant, village shop and laundry and washing-up room, housed in timber-clad buildings that blend perfectly with the woodland and surroundings. An adventure playground helps to keep children amused.

For the active holidaymaker, Snowdonia Forest Park provides a first-class base for walking, orienteering, fishing and climbing.

Run for more than 20 years by the



Husband-and-wife team, Adam and Beatrice Easton with local forester Dave Downes in a lovely Snowdonia setting.

husband-and-wife team of Adam and Beatrice Easton, the site regularly copes with 60,000 camper nights a year.

This year's award is of special significance. Paul Tabbush, the local manager says, "There has been quite an extensive refurbishment since our last two AA awards. This latest accolade rewards all the hard work that has been put in."

In case you didn't know . . .

• Beddgelert campsite is just one of 32 FC camping and caravan sites around Britain. A further five sites are leased to the Caravan Club and three to the Camping and Caravanning Club; 53 sites are set aside for youth organisations.

• The Commission also has 177 forest cabins and houses for holiday renting. Other facilities include 10 forest drives, 19 visitor centres, 21 arboreta, 646 picnic places and 709 forest walks and trails.



KICK-OFF TIME FOR FOREST FC

The Mid Scotland Conservancy office football team who are competing in the Second Division of the Strathclyde Civil Service League. The team

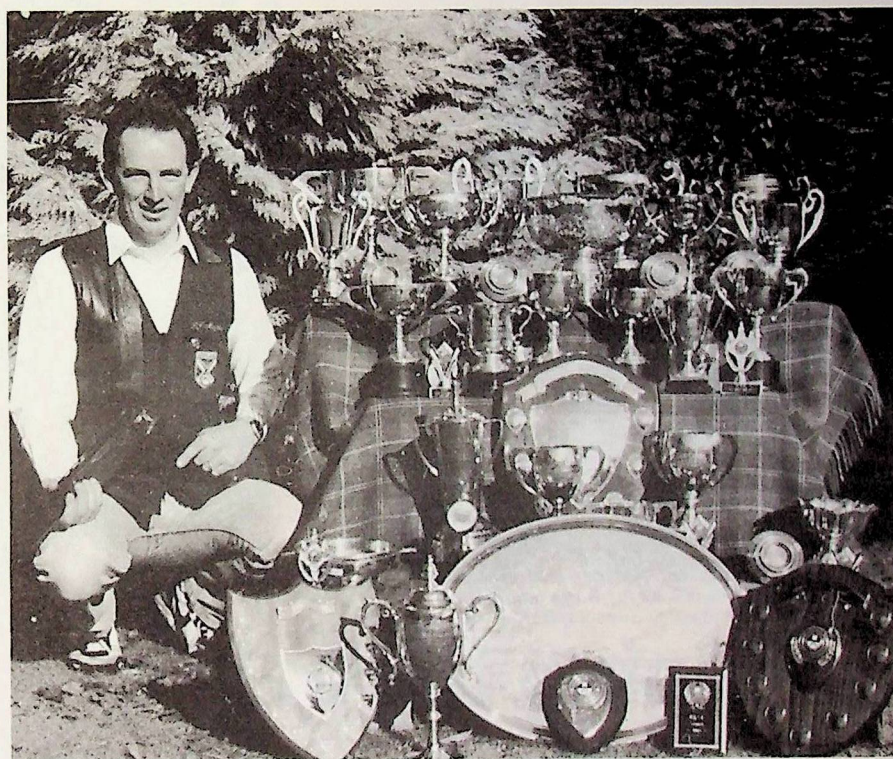
is made up of some members of the M(S) Conservancy office, associated Government departments and friends. Pictured are: Stuart McRae, Richard Leacock, Tommy Kelly, John Morton, John Gair, Liam Pidgeon, Howard Davies, Kevin Pidgeon (Manager), Jim Monaghan, Andy McGarvey, Gerald Pidgeon, Robert Skilling, Steve McLeod and Andy Wallace.



Chairman Sir David Montgomery with Geoff Freedman, engineering division (holding award) and Ken Davidson, area civil engineer, Inverness.

TALKING OF WINNERS . . .

Peter's on target!



PETER MACKAY, a senior ranger in Easter Ross Forest District N(S), displays some of the trophies he has accumulated in 11 years of clay-pigeon shooting. Peter has many notable shooting successes including:

- Scottish open (down the line) winner in 1986 and 1988.
- Scottish open (single barrel) winner in 1981.
- Third in British open in 1981.
- Fourth in British open in 1985.
- Scottish team (down the line) member from 1979 to 1988.
- Scottish Berrata Grand Prix winner (down the line) in 1986.
- North of Scotland champion — three times.
- North of Scotland runner-up — three times.

Peter's keen eye is not restricted to clay pigeons, for the deer population of Easter Ross has supplied the FC with "one or two" trophies. This, combined with a good understanding of conservation problems, makes Peter an asset to the District's staff.

Tony's in the fast lane

RECORD Breaker . . . that's Tony Summers, conservancy civil engineer in Wales (based at Newtown) until a few days ago.

As a local newspaper in Shropshire reported recently, Tony is certainly making waves well after he thought his competitive days were over.

For he notched up a record as a competitor in the Amateur Swimming Association's 60-64 age group, clocking up a splendid 26.5 sec. for the 100 metres backstroke.

In doing so, he recorded a double . . .

ONE: It was his last time in that age group; next year he moves on to the 65s and over, which could lead to further success.

TWO: It was his last major swim bid as a Forestry Commission employee, for he retired on December 16 (and no doubt there'll be more about that in our next issue).



Tony won his first swim medal when he was 12; later represented Britain at European and Olympic level; won both the Welsh junior and Rhodesian senior titles; and flew Spitfires and Tempests with the RAF from 1942 to 1947.

His next target: a possible world record for veteran swimmers. Watch this space . . .



Sandy Fraser with two of the brood of six short-eared owls he found while planting trees in Dornoch Forest district.



Iolo Lloyd of Ruthin feeds the owl . . . a daily task until it gets to catching its own food. Below, close-up of the owl. Soon to be released (hopefully) into the wild.

Tipping the balance — red before grey

A SURVEY is under way to establish the level of the red squirrel population in forests in the Midlands.

In Cannock Chase, near Birmingham, red squirrels have always been present but their numbers have declined over the past 30 years while grey squirrel numbers have not.

In 1986 no sightings of red squirrels were reported and it was feared they might have become extinct. However, sightings were made in 1987 and the survey, being undertaken by a student, Jonathan Eason, from Birmingham, will confirm their presence and determine if they are confined to particular areas.

The Forestry Commission project will also assess the suitability of the habitat for red squirrels in terms of forest structure, tree species and food supplies and will lead to recommendations that will benefit red squirrels and promote their long-term survival.

Coniferous trees are the most important habitat for red squirrels and the 3000 hectares being surveyed has 40 per cent Scots pine, 60 per cent Corsican pine.

The Scots pine not only regenerates better than the Corsican but its cones contain a greater number of seeds as a food supply. The age

structure of the forest is also an important factor in the number of cones being produced.

The grey squirrel, rival to the red for feeding grounds, cannot survive on coniferous seeds alone and the survey area contains a proportion of broadleaves such as oak, beech and sweet chestnut the fruits of which are required by the more heavily-bodied greys.

"The whole question of age structure and species of conifers as well as the proportion of broadleaved trees will be important factors in future forest management plans if we are to encourage the maintenance and spread of red squirrels, not only in the Midlands, but in other forest areas where they are under threat.

Mr Harry Pepper, Forestry Commission wildlife branch, who is in charge of the project, said:

"Management aimed at tipping the balance in favour of red rather than grey squirrels presents a challenge and its success will have wide-ranging benefits."

During the survey modified tunnels leading to feed hoppers will comb out squirrel hair for inspection; drey counts will be made and felled trees will be inspected for dreys which will be dissected for species identification by lair. Radio telemetry may also be used.



'Nest-egg' of goodwill for the owl

OUR oft-stated commitment to safeguarding the wildlife of our forests is reinforced yet again in this issue of The Slasher.

Owls are to the fore this time, with reports from three widely different areas — Dornoch in the North of Scotland — Pickering in North Yorkshire; and further south again to Ruthin district in Wales Conservancy.

The rare black-throated diver and the squirrel population also form part of this month's Wildlife Focus, but first let's concentrate on the owl . . .

That appealing picture on left of a long-eared owl chick was taken by Mick Canham, senior conservation ranger in North Scotland, who tells us that 1988 has been a much better breeding season for birds of prey in the North.

Mick also advises that after the wet springs of 1986 and 1987, voles have reached high numbers again and provided many birds of prey with a bumper food supply.

Species that have done particularly well are kestrels and short-eared owls (whose main prey items are voles).

Other species like long-eared owls, peregrines and henharriers all fledged good broods.

From Dornoch down to Wales, where JOHN WESTLAKE, conservation officer, tells us from Aberystwyth what he describes as the "bare bones of the long-eared owl saga."

He reports: In May 1987, (while working as an H&M forester in Ruthin FD), a contractor arrived at my door one evening with a cardboard box which emitted extraordinary hissing and clicking sounds.

When I opened it, I was confronted with an immense pair of orange eyes and distinctly unfriendly beak. Hasty checks in "the bird book" confirmed it was a long-eared owl fledgling. As the entire area that it came from was

being clearfelled, I decided to pass the bird on to Malcolm Ingham, head ranger for Wirral Council, who runs a wildlife rehabilitation centre.

He took the bird and reared it in a "wild" aviary (so that it did not become tame). This he did successfully and this year the bird was transferred to a purpose-built aviary in Colcaenog forest to be "hacked-back" into the wild.

This involves the local Conservation Ranger (Iolo Lloyd) feeding the owl daily with dead day-old chicks while it gets used to catching its own food. Eventually a hatch in the roof will be opened so that the owl can fly free. Iolo will continue to feed it until the food is no longer being taken.

So far as we know, this is the first time anyone has attempted this with a long-eared owl. So far, everything has gone well and it seems likely that we will be successful, concludes Mr Westlake.

Few of the residents at Pickering are aware that just above their heads, through September and October, two tawny owls have roosted in a lime tree outside the District office within feet of the busy main Scarborough to Thirsk road (A170).

Office staff have watched them with great interest as this is the second year that the owls have used this particular tree. District Forester Peter Green's theory is that warmth from the centrally heated office encourages the tree to retain its leaves longer than the others by the roadside, and this shelter and warmth is what attracts the birds.

Now that winter's icy fingers have removed the last of leaf, the birds have also gone but we look forward to their return next year.

● Have you any wildlife stories to tell? Then share them with us . . . write or call Roy Gregor at The Slasher, FC HQ in Corstorphine, Edinburgh.



Many kestrels — like this one from a brood of six reared in a nest box provided by FC Wildlife staff in the North — benefit from the good stocks of voles.

SAFETY FIRST, TOO, FOR BLACK-THROATED DIVERS AT 'ANCHORAGE' IN LOCHS

Man-made islands aid rare birds

THE rare black-throated divers have given a vote of confidence to artificial islands as safe breeding spots in the Scottish Highlands.

It is estimated that there are only about 150 breeding pairs in Britain, most of them in North-west Scotland.

These birds spend most of their time at sea but come inland to breed on Scottish lochs during April to July with the female usually laying two eggs. Breeding success is relatively low, with a fledgling rate of only 0.27 per cent, according to one report.

The divers move with difficulty on dry land and their nests, very close to the water's edge, can be flooded. There is also the problem of disturbance by anglers which, though it may not always cause failure, will keep birds off their nests, leaving eggs vulnerable to predators.

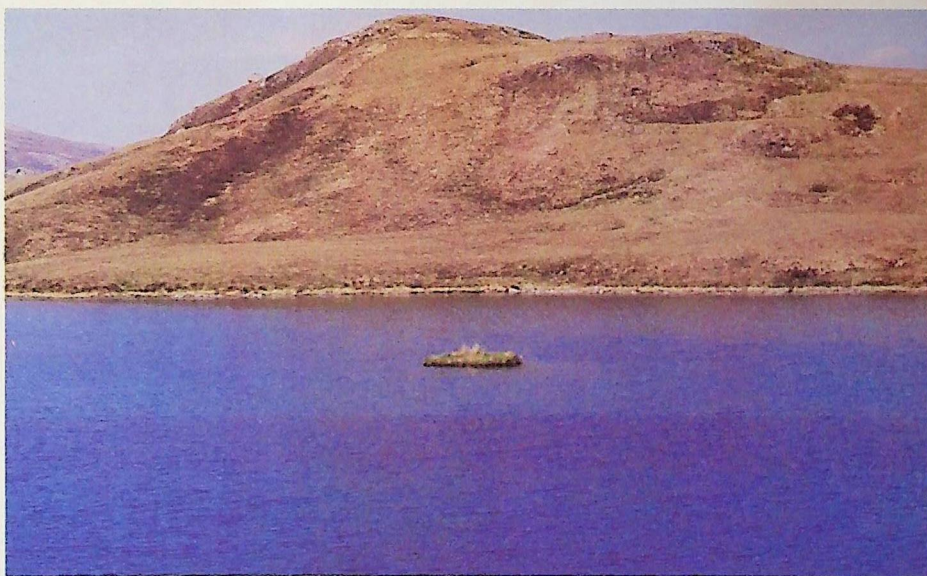
To ease these threats, FC wildlife rangers have developed floating islands which would provide safer nesting places. Initially, these were made from three pieces of expanded polystyrene blocks, 8 ft. by 4 ft., enclosed with wire mesh then covered by turf to give an island 12 ft. by 8 ft. These nesting grounds were located on suitable lochs, anchored by two concrete-filled five-gallon oil drums.

Later designs have used wooden boards top and bottom with the polystyrene centre being chamfered at the edge to provide easier access for the birds. The first were located in 1985; others in the following two years brought the total to eight.

"Our aim was to provide a safer nesting place that would stand up to the rigours of the northern weather and where it would assist the birds to hatch their first clutch of eggs before anglers appear," said Mike Canham of Dornoch Forest District.

"The first years were disappointing but this year a pair incubated one egg on a small loch in Sutherland and we had more good news when a redthroated diver hatched two chicks on one of our first islands.

"We have also had reports of success from one of the islands that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds provided after studying our designs. The future now looks promising and it is gratifying to see this simple conservation idea proving successful."



Above: Typical of the Highland home for the black throated divers.

Below: One of the artificial islands in use.



Colourful crew!



THIS intrepid FC group braved the autumnal cold of Guy Fawkes Day to compete in the Kielder Water Raft Race, helping to raise money for BBC's "Children in Need."

All five teams taking part had to build their raft from the material supplied, paddle a set course, and return to shore to dismantle their raft.

The two Commission teams showed their mettle by leading first and second for most of the course. Unfortunately some internal warfare resulted in an "also-ran" competitor taking first place, while further internal warfare resulted in pushing back one FC team even more. Result? Second and fourth places for the intrepid Kielder Forest District crews and a total sum raised within the event of £350.

Pictured here from the left are: Chris Cloy, Keith Allison, Michael Strachan, Graham Caygill and James Ogilvie.

STILL WITH KIELDER . . .

The fact-finders



MR RICHARD RYDER, Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, seen visiting Kielder Forest recently with his private secretary, Mr Frank Strang on a fact-finding visit.

Their guides were the Commission's chairman, Sir David Montgomery; Conservator for North England Mr And Neustein; district manager Dr Robert McIntosh; and local management officer Mr James Ogilvie.

Mr Ryder (third from right) was shown an overview of the forest from early establishment of the tree crops to the final harvest at clearfelling.

Of particular interest was the topic of 'restructuring' — a name given to the patchwork of felling areas designed to improve the appearance of the forest for the future.

The uniform nature of some of the early planting is being 'broken up' into felling coupes more in keeping with the landscape. These will use permanent features such as streams as their boundaries.

In turn, these streams will be improved for conservation purposes through greater planting of broadleaves.

In this way both the wildlife and the visitors will benefit from this enlightened policy. The end result will be an area of some 4000 ha of additional broadleaved woodland: more than has existed at Kielder within the last millennium.

Reptiles and all that

A ONE-DAY meeting for all those concerned with reptile and amphibian recording and conservation in Britain, hosted by the National Amphibian Survey, is being held on Saturday, January 28, at Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft Campus.

The aim is to bring together all those with an interest in herpetology, both amateur and professional, to exchange information and ideas.

Presentations will include a progress report on the NCC National Amphibian Survey and reviews of herpetofauna surveying methodology, and organisation.

Project funding, habitat management, specific case histories and national issues will also be discussed.

Poster and information displays are welcomed.

For details and a full programme, please contact: Dr R. Oldham, HR Meeting, School of Life Sciences, Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft Campus, Leicester, LE7 9SU. (Tel. 0533-431011, ext. 328 or 329).

WE HEAR from one Slasher correspondent, FAO Miss B. Evans, of an oddity of the postal strike. It happens that this account was presented to John Roberts at Gwent FD by a representative of a quarries company, who made a special journey to Abercarn in a red Mercedes with a request to settle the debt for tuppence!

Needless to say, John settled the account from his own pocket!

BENCH WILL HONOUR CYRIL'S MEMORY

A FUND has been arranged to mark the memory of Cyril (Josh) Fletcher, of Alice Holt, with a commemorative bench in the grounds of the forestry centre.

Cyril, a man with a real love of the countryside, died in August, at the early age of 53. He had been with the FC since 1952.

A former colleague, J. Christie, has paid the following tribute to Cyril, whom he describes as a man who was always courteous and considerate:—

I am grateful to be allowed to say a few words about my friend Cyril — Josh to his family.

I was privileged to have worked with him for many years, almost from the time he joined the then working plans section in October 1952. Cyril was a much loved colleague and friend to all who knew him: always courteous and considerate, with a tremendous sense of fun.

Unique

I came to rely on Cyril more and more in my latter years at Alice Holt. He had become a key figure in the Mensuration Section and had a unique knowledge of sample plots and their measurement and was proud of the data base that he managed and in which he played a large part in its formation.

Latterly he did not enjoy good health but he did not let this get on top of him, at least he did not let it show except on rare occasions.

Cyril's real love was for the countryside. He was a keen naturalist with a special affection for orchids, both wild and cultivated and for Amaryllis. Some of us can remember his excitement in waiting to see the results of some cross pollination he had carried out almost like a father waiting for the birth of his first child.

Hated fuss

Cyril hated fuss himself, but would always join in with others, or on his own, to mark special occasions of his friends and would often commemorate the occasion with a small poem of his own.

It is fitting that I conclude this tribute to a dear friend and colleague — whom I personally shall miss for a long time to come — with these verses of Tennyson . . .

*Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.*

*But such a tide as moving seems
asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.*

*Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.*

*For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.*

J. CHRISTIE

TONY ANDERSON

IT IS with regret that we learn of the sudden death of Tony Anderson, the Commission's Chief Photographer serving at Alice Holt Research Station for 38 years until his retirement last year.

JACK FETTIS

JACK FETTIS, BEM, Head Forest Warden of Wadsworth Wood, died on December 8. He became a forest warden in the 1950's and since his retirement in 1971 spent most days, including weekends, patrolling the woods from dawn till dusk. His dedication to his duties earned him a BEM in 1983.

Truly a handy man!

SID BOWS OUT AFTER 38 YEARS

SID HAYES' job description fitted him down to a T.

For the Low Dalby estates handyman in North Yorks Moors could turn his hand to anything and everything say his workmates.

Now he has retired, after 38 years in the forest district of which he has many memories.

"Save the Children"

A buffet lunch to mark his last day with the FC was held at the Fox and Rabbit near Dalby — and appropriately as a memento of the occasion, Sid had to be photographed with the "Fox and Rabbit" and other friends who gathered to say farewell.

It was Sid's wish that any donations for a retirement gift be given to "Save the Children" and a cheque was sent on his behalf. However, his friends in Dalby felt they could not let him go without some mark of their appreciation and affection, and presented him with a book token.

Invaluable

Sid will be greatly missed by his workmates, who say that he could turn his hand to anything and everything. His knowledge of the land and properties has been invaluable; he knows of derelict properties that nobody else has heard of; buildings and landmarks that don't exist any more; and also has a wide knowledge of local wildlife.

Among his many anecdotes Sid tells of the time, in the depth of winter, when they had to walk, carrying ladders and paint, from Saltersgate Inn to Newton Dale, and the occasion when they had to walk a mile, using the tailboard of the



wagon as a stretcher, to carry a man who was taken seriously ill in the forest. Sid was driver of the wagon at the time.

He remembers digging water pipelines by hand and when there was not enough work for the estate's gang, which numbered in the teens in those days, they were put to work in the forest. Sid had a spell planting at Pexton and felling in Allerston Dale, using the old crosscut saw. When the gang were working in Bawtry, Sid used to travel by motorbike from Thornton Dale. At one time he owned a Norton and an AJS.

Sid is a keen Country and Western fan, but a more recent hobby is breeding cage birds: canaries, finches and budgerigars (an Australian love-bird!).

Trio quit Bristol

THE end of September saw three retirements from West England Conservancy Office at Bristol — Martin Orrom (PF & EO), Mary Reed (AO) and Dorothy Edmondson (environment).

Martin Orrom has retired after 35 years, having served in the old NW England Conservancy, HQ and SW, now W England.

Office staff were treated by Martin to gâteau and glasses of "bubbly" during the afternoon. In the evening, friends and colleagues from all parts of the FC and some from the private sector, met for a meal to say farewell to Martin and his wife Elspeth who have moved to the Lake District.

Conservator John Fletcher presented Martin with a music-centre and Elspeth a bonsai tree.

Mary Reed was with the Commission for 15 years, mainly in estates section and latterly in private woodlands. At an informal gathering, she received a cheque plus a bouquet on behalf of the Sports and Social Club, Mary's efforts for the club will be missed.

The third retirement was that of Dorothy (known as Doe) Edmondson, who had been with Bristol office throughout its many changes in title — a total of 46 years!

Doe planned to leave quietly and had arranged a small coffee morning for office staff but was surprised and delighted to be presented with a portable TV by John Fletcher.

In the recent past Doe was a member of private woodlands section, but her last two years were spent in environment. Therefore, head ranger North, "Brad" Bradbury, was on hand to present Doe with a bouquet on behalf of the Rangers.

We wish all three every happiness in their retirement.

170 years' service

FAMILIAR FACES TAKE THEIR LEAVE

FROM all areas . . . from all varying fields of work in the FC . . . comes news of familiar faces retiring.

A typical cross-section of FC workers who have recently joined the ranks of the retired is featured in these columns . . .

In all, four men mentioned below has a record of service stretching over almost 170 years.

Men like **ARTHUR SCOTT**, who served 47 years in Rothbury, Northumberland.

Arthur and his wife, Doreen, held their retirement party at Swarland Village Hall in October — and they are shown here on the oak seat made from Northumberland oak, which was presented by friends and colleagues. In the background is the Conservator who presented Arthur with his long service award.

BILL KITCHER of Lyndhurst, who worked 44 years in the New Forest. Bill, one of the few who have been employed in every section of the District, retired as ganger in forest management. He will be especially remembered for his work as safety representative, and through his wide experience as a trainer of foresters and other workers.

Men like grader driver **KEN HARDING**, another character of the New Forest, who also had 44 years' service.

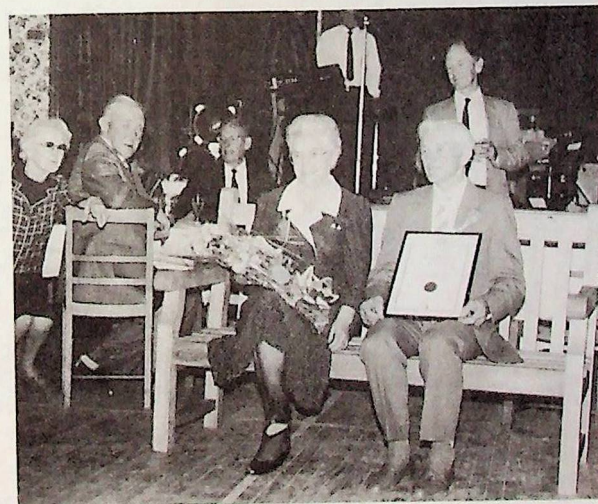
At the "Happy Cheese," in Ashurst recently, many friends and colleagues gathered to mark his retirement from civil engineering branch E(Eng), working with the forest and civil engineering teams in the New Forest area.

Born on the Isle of Wight, Ken originally came over to the mainland intending to stay only a few weeks working on drainage for the forest side. He ended up staying a little longer! Eventually, he joined the roads team, and is believed to be one of the first members as such in the old SE(Eng) Conservancy.

Conservancy civil engineer John MacLeod presented Ken with his long service certificate (well-earned) together with a cheque as a gift from all his colleagues. His wife Freda, received a big bouquet.

Men like forest crastman **HARRY MEE**, who retired on September 30 after 32 years in North York Moors. He started on the old Hawby beat of Hambleton District.

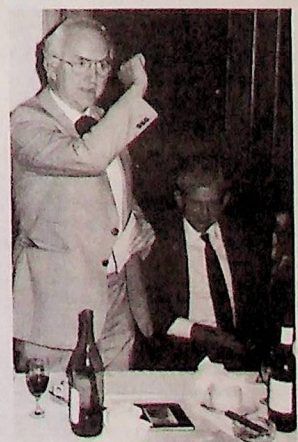
Harry was presented with a Border Crafts ceramic and voucher from colleagues, a framed illustrated "certificate" from the Rangers with whom he had worked, and his long service certificate. He will spend his well-earned retirement looking after his smallholding and garden.



Arthur, Doreen and their seat.



Bill Kitchen, his wife and colleagues.



Martin Orrom lays down the law . . .

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

BROTHERS GO

WITH 93 years' service between them Willie and Revel McKeand hung up their felling boots for the last time, leaving an unfillable gap in the Aberfoyle felling team.

The 50 years served by Willie was spent primarily in the felling team after a short time on Forest Management. During the war years, Willie, serving with the 1st Battalion London Scottish, was captured at Anzio and spent some 30 months as a POW in Germany. This was a particularly dangerous time with heavy Allied bombing of areas near the camp he was in.

A very able football player in his youth Willie graduated to gardening, winning many trophies at the Gartmore Flower Show.

To mark his retirement friends and colleagues gathered informally to watch Dr Alan Low present him with his Long Service Certificate. David Henderson-Howat then presented him with a garden seat made from a 50-year-old Western Red Cedar. Willie had been conned earlier in the year into felling the Cedar under the pretence that it was for the Garden Festival. He was also photographed felling it believing that the slides were for evening and school talks. However, he found out the truth when he was

presented with a framed photograph of him felling the tree.

His younger brother Revel retired early with 43 years service with a short spell in the Roads Engineers before joining the felling team. Revel also worked with cablecranes. Apart from his strong attachment with local and district football as an official Revel had a strong interest in trade unionism. He was the local union rep from 1963 and spent 12 years on the JITC.

At Revel's request a small gathering of close colleagues saw David Henderson-Howat present him with his Long Service Certificate, a barometer and a book token.

Willie and Revel's father, Woodrow, worked in Corrie Nursery and Loch Ard Forest for 10 years. Their brother John retired a few years ago after some 40 years service, ending as a Head Forester at Carradale in Kintyre District and their sister Margaret was a Land Girl in Loch Ard Forest for eight years towards the end of the war before marrying a Forester, Alistair Morrison, who also recently retired at Tighnabruach in Cowal District as Head Forester. Without doubt the McKeand Clan have left their mark on the Forestry Commission.



Harry Grainge with colleagues at Torrarchilly.

THERE have recently been a number of retirements at Easter Ross Forest District. Bill Mackintosh gained his forestry training at Faskally School after leaving the Navy and during his 29 years with the Forestry Commission he worked at many locations in North Scotland. He retires to the Black Isle where he has spent the last 15 years.

He was presented with a money-filled wallet by Forest District Manager, Bob Dunsmore, on behalf of friends and colleagues.

Harry Grainge, Senior Ranger 1, retired from Torrarchilly after

22 years. He received an attractive split cane fishing rod from his workmates but before this, his colleagues managed to keep a straight face as Harry was presented with two garden canes taped together, string and a bent nail. He was delighted with both.

Sandy Sinclair, who worked for the Forestry Commission for 37 years and David Foster, who was with us for 10 years, both retired from Ardrross.

Alex Sutherland and James Skinner retired from the Black Isle. James worked there for 33 years and Alex for 40 years. (More retirement stories on pages 6 and 7).



From one former RAF-type to another... Ray Cole, PTO (surveyor) in Wales Conservancy, receiving a barometer from Tony Summers as one of several gifts on his retirement.

Cyril Daniel enjoys the joke... often wishing he was fireproof in his job, he finally achieved a pair of asbestos trousers at his farewell do. Made expertly by Brian Williams, they were presented by district manager John Naisey in picture right.



Double send-off for Hugh

TWO special send-offs for Hugh Tilney-Bassett, FDM Chilterns.

He was to retire in mid July, but was asked to stay on, and his six extra weeks culminated in three visits by the ICF annual tour, which this year was based in Oxford and concentrated on lowland forestry in the Chilterns.

This meant a double farewell.

The first, in July, coincided with a visit from Commissioner Roger Bradley and Director Environment Alistair Scott and many of Hugh's friends joined the party for a walk around Wendover Woods to look at work carried out during Hugh's days in the Chilterns and at some of the landscape and recreation work planned for the future.

Mick Dinning, Conservator E(E), recalled Hugh's 38 years with the Commission since graduating from Edinburgh, first as assistant education officer at Gwydr, where he is well remembered for wearing shorts in all weathers, then to South-east England Conservancy and then to East England (first at Thetford, then North Norfolk, Lincolnshire and finally at Chilterns). He was well known and respected for his tact and diplomacy, often in difficult situations and for his involvement with the Plan for the Chilterns.

The second farewell took place on Hugh's penultimate day of work in E District Office when Mick Dinning presented him with a weather station, a carving of deer fawn by Chris Taylor, a beat forester at Chilterns, a photograph of an edible dormouse (a pest found only in the Chilterns) and a "bundle" of notes.

RAY COLE of Llandover Roads. As PTO (surveyor), he re-

tired on August 31 after 27½ years. Before starting with the FC he was with Ordnance Survey. War-time service in the RAF saw him on flying duties as navigator, attaining the rank of warrant officer.

Ray first worked in the drawing office in Cardiff, then spent a few years at Neath Roads before transferring to Llandover Roads.

A presentation was held at Rhandirmwyn when friends and colleagues gathered to give him a lively farewell. Mr T. P. Summers, Conservancy Civil Engineer Wales, presented Ray with a barometer, and the area engineer, Colin David, presented a hardwood fruit bowl, while Ashley Morris presented a three-figure cheque.

Mrs Glenys Cole was presented with a bouquet by Mrs Ann Moses, AO at Llandover Roads.

CYRIL DANIEL: Friends and colleagues gathered in Abermule to say farewell to FO III, Cyril Daniel, District Forester H & M, who had 43 years' service.

Mr John Morgan, Conservator Wales presented Cyril with a portable slide projector and spoke of his loyal service. Mel Humphreys presented a cheque and John Naisey, FDM, produced a pair of asbestos trousers expertly made by Brian Williams!

Cyril not only believed in a belt and braces approach to the job but very often wished he was fireproof!

Brought up in Shotton, Cyril began his career at Delamere before going to Benmore Training School. After a spell at Clocaenog where he met his wife Rose (her father was head forester), he served at Ceinog, Gwydyr, Corris and Kerry before amalgamation in 1984.

DAI OWEN (37 years) and ANEURIN ROBERTS (40 years), both forest craftsmen, retired

together having served all their time at Dyfnant.

Mr D. M. Hughes, assistant conservator operations Wales, presented Dai's long-service certificate at Llanfyllin. John Naisey, FDM, presented a wrist watch on behalf of colleagues. Unfortunately, Aneurin was ill and had to miss the presentation.

Both were members of the FM and tariffing gang and were renowned for their accurate work.

Dai will now be able to spend more time with his wife on his holding near Llanfihangel, and follow his interests which include drama, and acting as correspondent for the local Welsh paper 'Yr Ysgob.'

Aneurin, who has a fine bass voice and is a popular member of Plynain parties (carol-singing parties) will continue to live in Llanerfyl.

CYRIL JONES, forest craftsman at Ceri, had 32 years' service.

Starting his career as a trapper in 1947, he travelled to work on a motor bike with his terrier either in a planting bag or riding on the petrol tank.

He later joined the harvesting gang but left the Commission in 1966 to work in private forestry and local factories. He rejoined the FC in 1975 and after a period on production joined the FM gang until retirement.

At a gathering at Berriew, he was presented with an electric fountain for his garden — Cyril's main interest together with fishing and shooting.

During August and September, Llanrws Forest District saw the retirements of four stalwarts who had served a grand total of 169 years!

First to go with 34 years' service was ERIC LITTLE. Visitors to

Llanrws will remember him as the handyman who always made them feel welcome.

Then, the well known duo of RODERICK JONES (46 years) and VIC PUGH (47 years) left on the same day in September. They had worked together as a team on forest management jobs on the former Betws and Llanrws beats for some years. Their corporate knowledge of the woods was quite astonishing.

Last of the quartet was EMRYS HUGHES (42 years). He retired on the last day of September as the sole surviving member of the former Hafod Fawr team. He had worked on most aspects of forestry work but latterly was involved on maintenance work at Beddgelert Campsite where he became well known to the campers on their many repeat visits.

Each was presented with the long-service certificate.

STAN JONES, Ruthin: Ron served more than 40 years, starting in what was then Goror Forest. He was involved mainly in establishment operations but was particularly associated with the nursery both there and at Maelor.

Latterly the Department of Transport benefited from Stan's experience as he has spent a considerable time on trunk road agency work, the quality of which has been of immense credit to the FC in general and Stan in particular.

Friends and colleagues gathered in Weston Rhyn, on October 27 to wish Stan and his wife Rita a happy retirement.

District manager, Mr Hugh Clayden, presented a card signed by all of Stan's colleagues before Mr D. Hughes, assistant conservator, regaled the gathering with amusing tales of "Goror past," and presented a long-service certificate.

Ralph Williams (ganger) presented Stan with a chiming carriage clock while Rita received a magnificent bouquet from Mike Williams (forest craftsman).

GOOD-BYE, MARY!

MARY CAMPBELL (EO) of Mid Scotland, has retired after 44 years with the Commission.

Over 60 colleagues from past and present gathered to say good-bye to Mary at a party in Glasgow when she was presented with a bracelet and pendant by A & FO Jim Anderson.

Mary began on 28 December, 1943, as a trainee typist and worked for the last 10 years as EO, operations section, Mid Scotland.



Stan Jones of Ruthin receives his long-service certificate from M. D. M. Hughes, assistant conservator, operations. Stan had 40 years service.



BIG JACK'S 25 YEARS

DAVID JOHN VILE, (Big Jack), retired for health reasons after 25 years with the FC — the last three with the Department of Transport Agency. With his wife and son he was joined by colleagues for a farewell at the Five Dials. He was presented (above) with a propagator, and his wife was given a pot plant.



As reported in our last issue, Paul Kurowski has retired after 31 years' service. Here he is surrounded by a host of friends and colleagues of Brechfa Forest District.

Home and away

BY TRAM

BY COACH



MID SCOTLAND Conservancy staff took a trip to Loch Awe in Argyll... Loch Awe and Kintyre district girls did the journey in reverse, and visited the Garden Festival, which lies on the doorstep of Mid HQ. A definite case of home and away...

AWAY: Office staff from Mid Scotland HQ were welcomed at Lochgilphead by Mr P. Quelch, district manager for Loch Awe Forest. The party toured the offices at Whitegates;

visited the new workshops and stores complex at Cairnbaan; had a picnic lunch on a hill high above the Crinan Canal; saw a scarifier at work alongside Loch Awe, plus other modern harvesting machines; visited a new wildlife project at Add ponds which will provide an ideal habitat for many forms of wildlife in the area; and rounded off the trip — by coach as the picture above illustrates — with a visit to the forestry quarry at Bridfield.



Another mode of transport, the old tram, was one of the attractions which caught the eye of the girls from Loch Awe and Kintyre district staff when they came down to Glasgow on their annual "educational" tour. It was, in fact, voted the best office outing yet... the unanimous opinion being that Glasgow could be justifiably proud of its great Garden Festival.

Which brings us to (below) more thoughts about that exhibition...

Take a gallon of tadpoles... a long dyke... some twigs...

Those magic statistics



The peregrine falcon is boxed up for its "flight" home from the miniature forest, and (below) the Ancient Forester makes his exit.



THE DATE, Tuesday, September 27, 1988, may not have any significance to many of you but it marked the end of an era for a small group of Forestry Commission employees, a chance to inject some form of normality back into their work and social lives.

For this group of people this was D for Dismantling Day. The Glasgow Garden Festival had come to an end. So had months of 5.30 am starts each day to get maintenance done before the gates opened to the public.

These are the people who for nearly two years worked behind the scenes at the Magic Forest.

The location and preparation of materials, the countless deliveries to Glasgow, assistance with site construction and the continuing maintenance programme were just some of the many tasks they had to perform.

They also helped to develop methods for gathering and filling some 3300 bags of pine and spruce needles, lifting over 1300 rooted trees between one and seven metres high, and lifting in the region of 4000 square metres of woodland grass, bracken, heather and blaeberry turf.

Then there were the unusual requests such as the dismantling, transporting and reconstruction of 6 metres of drystone dyke, a gallon of tadpoles, or what about eight 22" diameter twisty oak or birch branches about 4 metres long with all twigs cut off and delivered separately.

Or what about the one lorry load of dry bracken stalks and long, dry grass (the request was accompanied by a sample of long, dry grass!!).

Then there was the sculptor who wanted 500 1" thick Larch discs of about 8" diameter.

Paths were kept surfaced with over 2500 bags of bark and let us not forget the request for small mossy stones up to 1 metre in diameter.

The list goes on and on. As forest craftsmen, road engineers and a variety of contractors began the dismantling of our exhibit, each would admit to feeling just a tinge of sadness.

By **PETER FORD**
Aberfoyle FD

Even the ancient forester seemed to shed a tear as he was unceremoniously hoisted on to the back of a lorry to go back to his native Grizedale.

The badger sett was last seen in bits on four FC lorries heading south for pastures new.

As the last support pole from the audio-visual tent thudded to the ground we all swore that we could hear the first few bars of music from "Under Heaven," even though all the equipment had long since gone to Edinburgh.

Now that it was all over, was it all worth it? Ask any of this group and they will give you a resounding "Yes."

They were able to stand back and watch the public's reaction as they wandered through the site. They saw the enjoyment on people's faces, they heard visitors discuss the realistic quality of the exhibit, and they watched as people gazed in amazement at the tape slide presentation.

All members of this group are rightly proud of the part they had to play in the exhibit.

They know that more than one million people who visited our site are more aware of what Forestry Commission forests have to offer them.

The audio-visual show "Under Heaven," is now housed and running in the David Marshall Lodge.

I can exclusively reveal that several members of the festival maintenance team have to make regular visits to get "their fix... Under Heaven!!"



Amanda and Diane of Loch Awe and Kintyre staff pay a call on Para Handy at the Garden Festival.

Art contest — deadline on March 24

DUE to special demands from employees and former employees it has been decided to extend the time limit and categories of our arts competition. Employees and retired FC staff have until March 24, 1989, to submit entries. Selected work will be displayed in Headquarters. Complete the box below and return no later than March 24 to Art Awards, Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh.

RULES

1. Works of art in the various categories must be attested as the original work of the artist.
2. Only employees and retired staff of the Forestry Commission are eligible.
3. Work submitted must not be done as part of the normal duties of the entrant when an employee or in retirement from the Forestry Commission.
4. Works may be sold by the originator after the prize-giving ceremony.
5. Winners of each category will receive a small trophy to be held for one year.
6. Winning entries will be displayed, at the Executive Board's discretion, for one year in Forestry Commission Offices.
7. Entries must be delivered to (and later removed from) 231 Corstorphine Road, at entrant's expense. No responsibility accepted for loss or damage of the work of art in transit.

CATEGORIES

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. OIL PAINTINGS | 4. SCULPTURE |
| 2. WATER COLOURS | 5. JEWELLERY |
| 3. WOOD TURNERY AND CARVING | 6. OTHER ARTS |

Name

Location

.....

Category Entry

Telephone Contact No.