



In the picture

... and you can put your shirt on it, the two lads in the centre are a delighted pair. John Westlake and Douglas Boyd, both of the Forestry Commission, were runners-up in a national photographic competition featuring woodlands. They went along to collect their awards from David Bellamy, the conservationist and TV personality, and were also congratulated by the FC's Director-General, Gwyn Francis. Their award-winning pictures, and that of the outright winners, are on the Back page.

RALLY RUSH TO FORESTS



Television viewers who are enthusiastic followers of car rallies may well have noticed that the public are being much more aware of what the Forestry Commission does for these events.

Information Officer Jill Mackay — something of a speed merchant herself — has become much more involved with major rally organisers and has helped to promote the facilities that Commission forests provide for drivers and the supporting public.

Large FC banners appeared in the right places where TV cameras could not fail to screen them and commentators were provided with detailed route information.

Engineers consult with harvesting and recreation staff to ensure that routes selected are away from felling operations and that the route is safe for drivers and spectators alike.

Designed primarily for 38-tonne timber lorries, forestry roads are easily damaged by high speed rally cars which can take off the top surface.

It may be thrilling to watch, but spare a thought for road crews as they watch four-wheel drive sports cars ripping the gravel, especially at corners!

The RAC Lombard Rally is Britain's biggest international rally. Over 80% of the stages take place on Commission land and this year North England Conservancy decided to award a trophy to the crew who performed best in the forest stages on one day of the rally.

Appropriately, as the prize was an antler mounted on a presentational block of wood, the eventual winner was the Spanish "Matador" Carlos Sainz with his co-driver Luis Moya.

A recent survey reported that rallies are watched by over five million people in Britain with the majority enjoying the forest stages best. Without such high commitment and involvement from Commission staff there would be no British rallying.

It would be nice to think that suitable recognition could be shown.

But after being closely involved in covering the Lombard/RAC she has decided that too many of the rally followers want to practise what they have seen as they travel to and from Kielder and other centres.

Each year District Offices all over the country organise and prepare routes for over 60 car rallies. Some of the best known rallying stages such as "Killer Kielder", Twiggles, Dalby or "Grizzly Grizedale" may be used many times at international, national or local club level and although a rally car may take only seconds to whizz along a stretch of forest road, it takes months of organisation.

Call me Spriggy!



In the last issue of "Slasher" we asked readers to name this character which features in part of the "Handle Plants With Care" campaign aimed at reducing the damage to young trees.

There was no great flood of bright ideas but we received a nice cross-section which included a couple of Sylvias, Connie Fir, Elfie, Sprog and Hanwica, among others.

And a nice thought came from Mrs A. MacLeod, Lorne FD, who suggested SPROUT — Special Plants Require Our Utmost Tolerance.

But the popular choice was SPRIGGY, submitted by Tony Egan, manager of the Chirk Workshop in Wales, who said it was the name he uses for his youngest son, James, who apparently bears some resemblance to our little green fellow!

Chairman hails the future FIVE POINTS TO SUCCESS

While the continuing disposals programme attracted the attention of most of the media when the Forestry Commission's annual report was published, the Chairman, Raymond Johnstone, directed attention to a five-fold success story ...

- The highest ever planting by private woodland owners of 25,000 hectare.
- The FC timber harvest record of 3.6 million tonnes.
- New investments in wood processing, including the £125m Caledonian Paper Mill at Irvine, the biggest ever inward investment in Scotland.
- The clearance of timber from the gale of 1987 through an orderly marketing programme.
- The popularity of our forests shown by a survey which showed that up to 100 million visits were made by the public.

Mr Johnstone said: "Forestry is a major industry in Britain. It is one of the main alternatives for the use of farmland seen in the context of the European Common Agricultural Policy; it provides stable and long-term employment with 40,000 people working in forests and the processing sector; and it produces as good an overall economic return as most other land uses while providing more widespread opportunities for leisure and recreation."

Better understood

The Chairman pointed out that changes in tax relief, introduced in the 1988 Budget, raised serious questions over the likely level of new planting over the next few years.

"Changes of such a nature always require a period of adjustment and while it is clear there will be a dip in planting this year I am encouraged by what is happening as the attractions of the new Woodland Grant Scheme become better understood."

"In the first 15 months of the scheme, for example, we received applications for nearly 50,000 hectares of new planting and these are coming in at the rate of 3000 hectares a month, much the same as the rate of applications for the former schemes."

"More up-to-date figures show that in the first six months of the current financial year we have paid grant for the planting of more than 10,000 hectares of new planting. Of that total 20 per cent was with broadleaved trees. These are useful indications of what we expect for the future."

In close touch

He pointed out that the new grant scheme carried with it important conditions for the protection of the environment. "These 'safeguards' relate to landscape, water, conservation and the protection of archaeo-

By SLASHER REPORTER

logical remains. They have been embraced by the private sector and I am encouraged by their willing response in providing the information required and putting forward programmes of work which meet these conditions.

"I see it important to keep in close touch with my opposite numbers in the conservation agencies — to seek their co-operation in the search for the right balance for forestry in the countryside; a balance which takes account of the sometimes conflicting interests of conservation, agriculture, forestry and amenity."

"The public look to foresters — both in the Commission and the private sector — to create forests which are attractive and interesting to visit, where wildlife flourishes and where the objectives of timber production are fully realised. Britain is still importing nearly 90 per cent of its wood requirements and I want to ensure that we continue to grow more of our own needs by producing more timber. In this way we can play our part in taking the pressure off the indigenous forests of the world by a programme of sustainable forest management."

Quality management

"Many fine woodlands have been created in Britain in the past 70 years since the Commission was set up, but in environmental terms — at least — a forest is only as good or as bad as the quality and sensitivity of its design and management."

"A lot has been learned on this subject in the last 20 years and we are now also able to improve forests as they mature."

Mr Johnstone concluded: "I see an important facet of my task, as Chairman of the Forestry Commission, to be that of taking forestry forward in a way that is balanced to meet the needs of the public for both wood and for the amenities which forests provide."

Broomsticks OR IS IT FIDDLESTICKS!

During the summer, several members of Lorne FD staff were taking lunch outside the Oban office when a car drew up and this conversation ensued ...

DRIVER: Do you have any of those birch fire beaters? My old aunt who lives down South wants one.

REPLY: I don't think so. Most of our beaters have wire netting heads but you can look in the shed if you want.

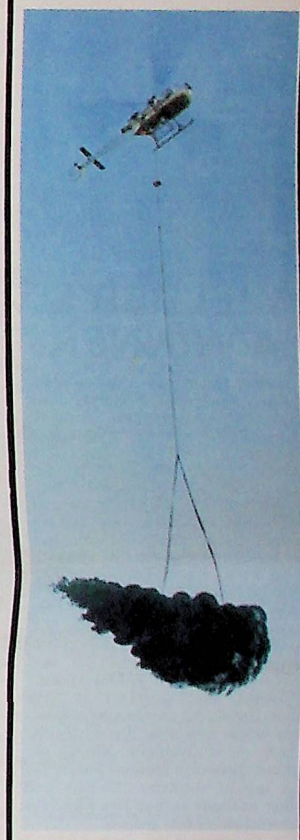
DRIVER: No. It's one of the birch ones she wants if I can get one.

REPLY: The local parks people come here and cut their own birch for brooms during the winter.

A pause, then an un-named FD hardy ventures: "Does she want something for sweeping up the leaves in the garden?"

DRIVER: Oh no ... she's a witch! We kid you not!

Lift off



A 60-footer takes the air en route to London from Kielder, demonstrating the friendly face of forestry yet again. It's TREE-mendous ... full story in our centre pages, with colour pictures.

Go . . go . . go!

How forestry types are making their marks in all sorts of sporting fields ... Page Three.

Retiring

... certainly doesn't mean sitting back. Not for the members of the Retirement Association. See Pages 6 and 7.

LATE NEWS

Gwyn is honoured by Queen

Congratulations to our Director-General, Gwyn Francis, who was created a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the New Years Honours list.

TOMMY'S A WINNER



For the third time Tommy Dodds, of Wallace, Barrhill, Ayrshire, was chosen to represent Scotland at the British Border Fancy Canary Show at Winsford, Cheshire.

And from an entry of more than 2500 birds, Tommy won top award with a canary he bred this year. He received a trophy for the best exhibit from Scotland and a trophy presented by the Border Canary Club of South Australia.

Tommy has already had wins at shows in Girvan, Dumfries, Ayr and Prestwick and was hoping to win at the Scottish National in Musselburgh next month.

KIELDER'S A WINNER

Kielder recently won the accolade "Highly Commended" in the Ford European Conservation Awards, writes Bill Burlton, Environment Forester.

Kielder's entry stemmed from a joint initiative between the Commission and the Mountain Bothies Association in which four derelict cottages within the Forestry District were refurbished and made suitable for use by hikers, mountain cyclists and horse riders.

The bothies pre-date the forest by many years and all four had lain empty for some time.

Kielder Management Officer, James Ogilvie, said: "This venture underlines the legitimacy of large scale forests in comprising wilderness areas, reflecting the aim of the MBA — to maintain simple unlocked shelters in remote country for the use of walkers, climbers and other outdoor enthusiasts who love the wild and lonely places."

And we've just heard that Kielder came runner-up in the coveted Laurent Perrier Champagne Award for Conservation which carried with it a £1500 prize and a case of "bubbly". Full details in the next issue.

Sponsors wanted

Sponsors are sought in the South-west and Midlands for six forest classrooms.

Activities on offer are limited by shortage of cash and now the Commission is seeking partners from business people and companies throughout the region.

DISPOSALS DETAILS

Director General Gwyn Francis, at the press conference to launch the Annual Report told the assembled journalists about the latest state of play on disposals. Conservators will, by now, have had meetings with their staff and trades union representatives at which details have been announced, but the following is an extract of Mr Francis' statement to the media:

BY OUR OWN REPORTER

"Until 1981 the Forestry Commission had no powers at all to sell forest land. Of course over the 60 years or so of its existence up to then it had been buying land and for most of that time, buying land to create a strategic reserve of timber.

"There was a tremendous pressure to buy land as it became available and, like any other large estate, when you look at it 60 years later you find that there are some things that you are glad you bought and some things that perhaps you are not so glad you bought. The Forestry Act of 1981 gave the Commission powers to sell forest land and in the period from 1981 to the end of March 1989, 72,000 hectares of plantations and 68,000 hectares of other land were sold.

to reach some conclusion in the first half of 1990.

"The programme of disposal is over a period which extends to the end of the century and it will be carried out in an orderly manner. I anticipate that the rate of disposal will be more or less equal annually and in those circumstances I don't anticipate any job losses in terms of people involved in management in the forest. So far as the people who work in the forest is concerned, there might be examples, although where a forest passes into new ownership the opportunity for work remains.

"But I am convinced that by comparison with other things that have happened during the last ten years, and other things which I have no doubt will continue to happen over the next ten years, the influence on jobs of the disposal of 100,000 hectares will be small. There is firstly a very active programme of mechanisation (and we have done that because it is more cost-effective, it's safer and the opportunities for higher earnings are better). That has got the support of our Unions I might say.

Rationalise

"This was carried out as a programme of rationalisation, improving land management. This programme will now continue, as was announced in June 1989 by the Secretary of State for Scotland. Between now and the end of the century we will sell 100,000 hectares of our forest land and property (out of a total of today of 915,000 hectares that represents about 11 per cent). The purpose of that programme is a continuation of what was happening before to give us opportunities to rationalise and consolidate the forest estate.

"In the time between now and the end of the century, as we have since 1981, we shall also be planting, and buying new land for planting, and we expect to continue planting at the rate of 4000-5000 hectares a year.

"So in effect the net position on that basis would be that by the year 2000 the Commission would still be responsible for managing over 850,000 hectares of forest quite a considerable forest area.

Distribution

"We have been planning this programme since June and looking into how we might implement it. I met with our Trade Unions early in December and explained how far we had got in this process. The plans I outlined are that in England we will sell about 23,000 hectares, in Wales about 13,000 hectares and in Scotland about 64,000 hectares. The distribution of forest of course, between those three countries, is quite different with almost 550,000 hectares of the area that we manage being in Scotland.

"The Secretary of State also announced that he had asked the Commission to consider ways of ensuring that public access was preserved after sale and this we are now doing, exploring a variety of ways so that we can come to the conclusion of what really is the best way to do it. We haven't decided yet but I certainly hope we will be able

Flexibility

"Over the last five to 10 years we have used the services of contractors more where it is more cost-effective and where it allows flexibility to cope with the year to year peaks and troughs in forest work. Those two influences, mechanisation and contracting, have had a much greater impact on job numbers than the disposal programme; and I think their influence in the future will be much greater. Today we have something just under 2000 people who are working on contract in our forests. I don't, however, see a situation where there will be any significant redundancies but I do see a situation where the number of people employed may be less in 10 years time than it is today.

"I am not going to be drawn on the question of which woodlands are to be sold and when. We are talking about a programme that extends over a period of 10 years. We are engaged in a marketing exercise and in that regard the first time that particular properties will appear on the market is when they are ready to be marketed."

Mr Francis told Slasher: "Staff will hear from Conservators and managers the general distribution but I don't think that with a programme like that you itemise for each of the years from now to the turn of the century exactly what you propose selling each year. There is always the possibility that the pattern of sales, or the order, will have to change for some reason or another."



TOUR TAKES IN GLENMORE PARK

President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Mr David Male and other RICS officials visited Glenmore Forest Park, as part of the presidential tour of the North of Scotland.

Mary McLellan, the Commission's first woman land agent, explained to the party those aspects of management at Glenmore which came under her sphere of responsibility as a chartered surveyor. The party also gained a valuable insight into the Forestry Commission's role in countryside recreation and amenity.

Conservancy land agent Brian Mead outlined the Commission's structure and explained the role of land

agents in the organisation. Mr Mead highlighted the fundamental requirement for the Commission to conduct its operations in a commercial manner while still catering for conservation and amenity interests.

Pictured at Loch Morlich within the Forest Park are (left to right): RICS deputy secretary, Bob Sneddon; RICS senior vice-president, Douglas Burgess; RICS secretary-general, Michael Pattison; area land agent, Mary McLellan; Conservancy land agent, Brian Mead; RICS president, David Male; RICS local area chairman, Jim Low; RICS Scottish chairman, Andrew Peter.

TUS DIARY

By Kenny Murray

Pay wait-and-see

As we prepare for the festive season and the ding-dong merrily on high, this poor temporal soul has been involved in a not so merry ding-dong in the FC. Problem — Performance pay and annual staff report markings.

Many members have bitterly complained that their ASR performance markings have suddenly dropped from a Box 2 to a Box 3 with no explanation and no indication of a drop in performance through the year.

Most members have squarely blamed this on a management push to "depress" markings thereby decreasing the number of people receiving a range point.

There is a great deal of truth in this. I understand Treasury instructed Departments to ensure that Box 3 performance is the norm and that officers will need to be exceptional or outstanding to surpass this marking.

Why should this be the case? Well, I think the answer is simple. When the Long-Term Pay Agreement was agreed with the IPCS, as was, there was no push for this depression in marking. When the Long-Term Pay Agreement for Grades 7-5 was signed there was no requirement for unrealistic or superficial marking. But now that other Civil Service Unions are included, Treasury have been terrified by the possible cost of their merit pay schemes.

So if we feel cynical about the motives behind this move to "realistic" marking — let's not be quick to condemn. Let us wait and see the summary of ASR markings which are due to be published in February — I'm sure they will provide revealing reading.

I RECALL casting a nasty Christmas spell on our bosom buddies the Adam Smith Institute last year. Well, they're at it again.

Another example of their superlative wisdom regarding forestry is due to hit the presses. I just wonder what new crackpot scheme this lot will come up with.

The people who gave you the Poll Tax and the proposal to create a new home for the residents of Hong Kong in the Outer Hebrides — among other things — will have to come up with something really novel for our stocking.

I think I'll take bets on their making their usual sound, national interest, good for the taxpayer, spread shares widely argument in regard to the forestry; proposing that only in private hands can sound conservation and environmental policies be pursued. Watch this space!

I WILL touch on disposals in the next issue because local meetings are currently taking place and I consider it only fair that representatives have the opportunity to discuss the proposals fully with Conservators before I comment in "Slasher."

THE NEW YEAR will herald a major change in the non-industrial promotion procedure. This document will be circulated soon for inclusion in the Staff Handbook but you should have already received a notice of the main changes. The TUS can only hope it works because, in negotiations, as many personal scenarios as possible were explored in order to satisfy as many people as possible. Will it work? Only time will tell and we have agreed to review the procedure in 1992.

THE THIEVES' KITCHEN . . .

Into Slasher correspondent John Grieve's hands in Lorne Forest District came this item, entitled "This is a record" . . .

Steve Cooper of Abertay wrote: While the dumping and frequent burning of stolen cars etc., is a regular occurrence in our local district, just one week in August saw a record even for us:

FRIDAY . . . One Escort minus wheels (stolen).

MONDAY . . . One Fiesta burned out (stolen).

WEDNESDAY . . . One dumped Astra, window broken (stolen).

THURSDAY . . . One bus (stolen). Yes . . . a bus!

Well . . . it IS a record, isn't it? Anyone challenge that?

IMAGINE you are a young person about to leave school and have chosen a career as a Forest Officer. You go through university and obtain your degree. Most go through either Inverness or Newton Rigg (with a two-year probation period) do not know for certain that they have a job until seven years have passed.

I am not going to develop here any argument regarding the totally sensible proposition of common entry — I am querying the necessity of a body called the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF).

When either diplomats or graduates enter the FC, they've done their work and their progress should be dependent on their abilities. This however, is not the case. Membership of the ICF is a major pre-requisite to progression beyond FOII.

I cannot see the sense in this "barrier" being there at all. Many eminent individuals in the Commission are involved in the ICF, however I would suggest they need to look at the necessity of their organisation's existence. To me it smacks of pure elitism.

If you don't have full ICF membership you probably won't get further than FOII. Why not?

When officers have shown themselves to be able, experienced and promotional individuals, why should they need a series of examinations for membership of an Institute to get any further? I think we ought to be told.

On that note of proletarianism, I wish you well for 1990. For us all — I wish change. For administrative staff at Forest Districts, I wish to see the duty of "making the tea" dropped from Job Descriptions; for the Adam Smith Institute, a new entrants course to learn about the FC; for industrial colleagues I would like to see an end to redundancies and a return to our social commitment. I could go on, but let's hope the next decade sees a tide of change that will bring us all some stability.

To you and yours, best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

New reserve is opened

FDM Syd House and District Forester Steve Cooper welcomed representatives from several local conservation groups to the official opening of Redmyre Forest Nature Reserve in Abertay FD.

Syd and Steve thanked in turn all those who had contributed to the work at Redmyre and invited the outstanding Scottish wildlife artist, Keith Brockie, to perform the opening ceremony.

Keith paid tribute to the way all the various groups had worked together with the Forestry Commission in a successful project of this kind and hoped that it would lead the way to further co-operative ventures within Abertay and the Forestry Commission in general.

Our photograph shows Keith and Dr Hugh Muir, shooting tenant at Redmyre, who gave his full backing to the project.



All go . . . go . . . go!

YES . . . it's just that. All go. Our sporting lads and lasses have been making their mark in all sorts of fields in 1989. Marathon fun run; a night hitchhike (all 25 miles of it); an assault course test; success on the snooker table; not so successful on the cricket pitch; and golf . . . all figuring in the fun o' things.

Not for the first time have we underlined in these pages the truth of the old maxim, "All

work and no play make Jack and Jill a dull boy and girl" — so here in this page we record the various activities in which FC staff have shown their mettle in recent months.

And don't forget, if you have something to crow about, let us know. Don't show reluctance to boast of your own personal triumphs . . . drop a line to The Editor, Slasher, at Forestry Commission HQ, Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh. And let's have your pictures, too.

Here and there

... highlighting this sporting life

Silver 'pots' for our ace potter!



JOHN GRIFFITHS, District Forester Morgannwg, recently won the Civil Service national snooker championship at the Willie Thorne Snooker Centre in Leicester.

John, who won the title once before in 1985, beat the holder, Scottish international Norman McLachlan 3-2 in the final, and also recorded the highest break of 74.

This follows a particularly good season in which he won the Welsh Classic championship, reached the quarter final of the European title in Holland, and remained unbeaten in the home international championships on the Isle of Man, during which he beat the English champion, Barry Pinches, now a professional. He also had the satisfaction there of revenge wins against the Scot who had beaten him in Holland, and the Irishman who had defeated him in the 1986 world championships in New Zealand.

Marafun Magic among the hills

A MARAFUN that drew families and friends together from Northern England and all over Scotland owed much of its success to FC workers.

Chief among them were FD Manager Jim Hamilton of Minnigag and Recreation Manager Colin Brookes of the Galloway Forest Park.

Towers of strength, they were, shouted the organisers of the event, a Scottish Sunday newspaper.

FC staff — and not a few of their wives — acted as stewards, cooks, car park attendants and gophers!

Among them were these girls pictured left: Chris Tracey, Frances McMillan, Margaret Laurie, Ann Hamilton and Annette Phillips, plus the trio at the back, Colin Brookes, Andy Walker and Clyde Phillips.

If there were a team prize, it surely would have gone to the girls of the FC who ran the barbecue, added the organisers.

The emphasis was on fun — a clown joined in the big trek — and the weather helped tremendously to make the event the huge success it was, not forgetting the wonderful scenery of the Galloway Park area, which covers 240 square miles.

But most of all — as the general verdict had it — it was the companionship and friendliness that won the day.

As one policeman said: "I couldn't tell you when last I saw so many happy, smiling faces in one place."

That, surely, summed up the Marafun Magic.

Yes . . . a great day! Thanks to FC staff and other helpers.

What would we do without them!

As the local slogan has it, Galloway dings! (which means "surpasses" to the uninitiated).



Two pictures courtesy of the Sunday Post . . . girls of the barbecue, and the general scene of the marafun starting point, taken from a helicopter.

NIGHT HIKE

FOUR members of staff from Dorset FD went over the border to the New Forest recently to take part in a Charity Night-Hike.

The sponsored hike, in aid of Leukaemia Research and the West Dorset Children's Hospital Appeal, took from 11.30 pm to 9.15 am and involved completing treasure hunt type questions and assault course events.

Basil holes out

EXCELLENT weather, a fine course and good hospitality meant a great day out for members and their guests of the E(E) Golf Society for their autumn meeting held at Flementon Golf Club near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

With an impressive total of 42 Stapleford points, Basil Carter (handicap 8) won the Matabele Cup with John Kellie runner-up on 39 points.

Cricket gladiators

YET AGAIN the Huntly team did battle in the annual trades league competition. In the oval green arena of silly mid offs, leg before and, of course, leather-whacking willow, the team once again came second bottom. Not a bad position as the team includes ball-shy fielders, tortoise speed bowlers and geriatric Bob, we are told.

Now as evenings darken and the box is put away, it is time to dream of next season and the joy of bowling a maiden over.

Player of the Year Award — the Sitka Spruce Memorial Log — went to Mr B. Cartledge for what was described as childish enthusiasm.



Charity swimmers

THIS team of hunky chaps from headquarters made a big splash when they took part in a "Swimathon" relay and raised £205 for the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind.

Information Officer Howard Hart was first to brave the water and quickly chalked off 10 lengths before handing the baton to Alan Chalmers (Design). Further 10-length swims by John Henderson (Finance) and John Gibson (Drawing Office) meant that the "Tree Fellers plus one" team steadily piled on the lengths.

By the end of their heat the Commission team had swum over 106 lengths — a great effort all round.

FORESTERS HORIZONTAL AT THE BAR(S)

AN intrepid foursome from Somerset & S Devon FD took on the Royal Marines assault course at Lymington in aid of the British Leprosy Relief Association (Lepra) . . . and they scored best of the 30 teams who entered by raising the most money in sponsorship (£370).

The team of Foresters, Foremen and Industrials managed a very respectable time, finishing with the fifth fastest time. With virtually no training the foursome tackled walls, ropesprings, bars, tunnels, bridges and even the sadistic warm-up by the PTO Marine, which was harder than the event itself! Next year they are "going for gold."

Pictured receiving a shield for their efforts from a Lepra organiser (left) are Edward Shepherd, Nick Salter, Rory Gogan and Richard Shelston.



THE FRIENDLY FACE OF FORESTRY . . . COMMISSION HELPS MAJOR HOSPITAL

Tree-mendous!

LIFT-OFF . . . FOR THIS SEASON OF GOODWILL

The friendly face of forestry abounds up and down the land . . . there for all to see.

The motto seems to be, if there's a problem . . . if you need a helping hand, then call on the Forestry Commission.

And we're not slow to answer, as these pages show conclusively.

TAKE, for instance, the major effort needed to get a tree down from Kielder Forest to London to help in the campaign to raise £1 million for the Royal Marsden Hospital which specialises in the treatment of cancer.

Just one of our hundreds of good deeds throughout each year to help in fund-raising and other campaigns.

Early in September the "Daily Star" asked our Information Division if we could help in finding "the biggest . . . best . . . tallest" Christmas tree to feature in their hospital campaign.

Through H&M Division the message went out to all districts, and eventually Kielder Forest came back with options — an extra-tall Norway spruce "slightly ragged at the base" or "a beautiful 60-footer."

The tree was duly checked out by PID, a Star reporter and photographer, and James Ogilvie and Mike Strachan on location.

The message from "Star" bosses Brian Hitchen and Ken Bennett came back: "It's brilliant."

That was just the start of the tree's journey to Blackfriars Bridge on the South Bank of the Thames in London. The roadway into the forest block was unsuitable for a transporter capable of carrying that length of tree. So the newspaper contacted Dollar Helicopters, who do a fair bit of work with the Commission, and they agreed to send in a helicopter to airlift the tree to Bellingham depot in Northumberland where the transporter would be waiting.

Fine! Until the day of the event when fog closed in on the Dollar helicopter at Coventry and media representatives waiting for an airlift stood around in the cold at Kielder.

Eventually the helicopter and its support

craft to be used by photographers arrived and, just before darkness fell, the tree was lifted out of the forest and into the depot.

Overnight, it was taken to London and at daylight on the Sunday was winched by mobile crane on to the site between the road and rail bridges that cross the Thames and are used by tens of thousands of commuters every day.

From the "Star" came the message: "Thanks to all the Forestry Commission personnel who took the time and effort to find this magnificent tree and then gave up their time to fell it and ensure its safe transit to London. The Royal Marsden campaign is certainly benefiting from this gesture."

So daily, the tree stands proudly as mute evidence of our friendly face . . .

TAKE, for instance, a more permanent reminder of the FC's willingness to help . . . a rooted tree that now stands in the grounds of Tynecastle High School, in Gorgie, Edinburgh.

It was planted at the school in time for Christmas, and should be there for many, many Yuletides to come.

The tree was presented to the Better Gorgie / Dalry Campaign by our Glentress sales centre following a plea from Gorgie / Dalry folk.

Keith Wishart, of the FC, said: "The tree was planted at the school as a symbol of Christmas but by planting here we also hope it will help the pupils to appreciate and care for trees in their environment."

Helping the FC to plant the tree was Mike Hay, the headmaster, and Ken Anderson from the Better Gorgie / Dalry Campaign.

Mike said: "This is another example of the very good links between our school and the community. The Campaign has achieved a great deal in improving the environment and we are delighted to receive this tree from the FC as another step forward."

TREE-WHIZZ!
We're lighting the way
Eighteen magnificent Daily Star has given London its greatest ever Christmas tree. The 60ft giant Norway spruce, donated by the Forestry Commission, stands proudly outside our offices on the bank of the Thames. Decked out with 350 fairy lights, it stands as a shining tribute to the efforts of all who have supported our great City. ing For Living Campaign in aid of Britain's leading cancer hospital, the Royal Marsden. Tree (left) — See Centre Pages

How the Daily Star heralded their major hospital campaign.



PERMANENT REMINDER of our friendly face . . . a rooted tree is planted at Tynecastle High School. Pictured are John Simpson of the Commission with head boy and girl Colin Emm and Wendy Knox, with Joanne Nicholls and Ros McCathie.



GROUNDLED . . . the helicopters wait in the mist for the all-clear, so that the Kielder lift-off can get under way.

Another lift-off to help others



Talking of lift-off . . . and more friendly acts . . . here's the Royal Navy going into action in Dorset County Council's Avon Forest Park.

The FC's local Forest District and the Navy came to the help of the council who needed an 80-metre pole for a world record tree-climbing attempt at a new visitor centre in the Forest Park.

The tree used was a 55-year-old Douglas Fir, weighing over 2 tonnes from Dorset's Puddletown Forest. Due to its size and narrow roads, extraction looked to be a problem, until 772 squadron RNAS, were brought in to air lift the tree 25 miles by Sea-King helicopter. A team from the Navy's technical support until at Brize Norton attached a sling to the butt end, and it was up, up and away.

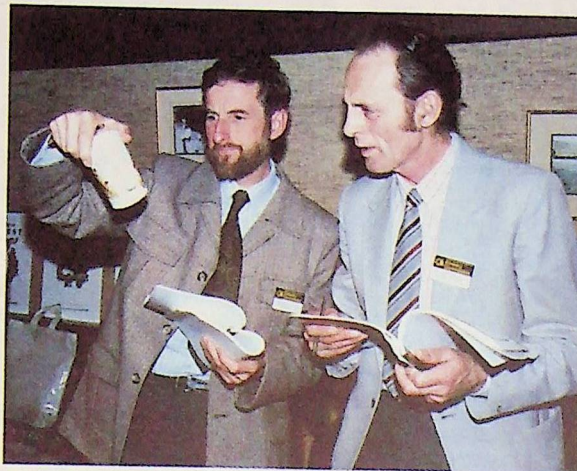


ON A HIGH PERCH . . . lighting specialist Chris Tyman prepares the bright lights. Then they are displayed in all their glory for the benefit of the Royal Marsden and tens of thousands of daily commuters. There are 350 bulbs, to be exact. LEFT . . . Foresters Mike Strachan and Jim Potts, both of our Kielder staff. Mike said: "We have never harvested a bigger Christmas tree. We are delighted it's going to such a good cause."

Pictures courtesy of the Daily Star.



Shop talk aiming to make friends



From Glenmore in the north to Bedgebury in the south, shop managers and buyers from the Commission's 17 forest shops met near Grizedale (Lake District) in the first Forest Shops meeting to be organised.

Forest shops are an important resource to the Forestry Commission — they make a profit (turnover of more £300,000) and provide a friendly face for the customer.

Delegates were welcomed by Graham Gill (Environment) who stressed that this was an opportunity for everybody to learn through participation.

The two-day meeting saw lively debates and a vast wealth

of experience and ideas shared. Topics discussed were shop identity, merchandising, stock control and customer care.

On display were goods which provided ideas and the chance to test a wide range of products for forest shop sales. Bob Jones (Design Branch) presented (and modelled) a range of proposals for FC products.

The meeting organisers, Richard Broadhurst and Peter Ford (Environment) plan an annual get together.

Above, two of the delegates at the display of goods... Caradoc Evans and Paul Sherrington from Maesgwm Visitors Centre.



Making friends with our wildlife... Senior Rangers Desmond Green and Tony Reeman installing bird boxes in Thetford Forest. In a joint project between Thetford FC and a college at Newton Rigg, the boxes were made by the students and installed by the FC.

Letters to the Editor

History of the Mires

Sir, It was good to read about the conservation of the Border Mires (Oct. 89). When I first knew the Butterburn Flow in 1951, it held breeding widgeon and probable breeding greenshank as well as dunlin, golden plover and other species. In autumn it drew great packs of blackgame to feed on cranberries.

There was some taller vegetation far out in the centre and later when the surface was frozen, I confirmed this as scattered sallow scrub in an area normally too wet for sheep or muirburn to get to. However, it had been browsed and as the years went by it became less prominent.

Because flows fall towards the centre, shepherds could do little to drain them and it looks as if this one has been getting drier from other causes.

Although most of Butterburn was to continue as a farm, centuries of muirburn came to an end when the afforestation of adjoining land began. It was in a nearby bog in 1952 — a vole, weasel, fox, short-eared owl and hen harrier year on planted ground — that we proved the presence of pine marten, unnoticed in the Borders since the days of Abel Chapman: 1954 saw the first roe.

As for research, the Commission laid out replicated fenced and unfenced plots near the Yearning Flow at Newcastleton as long ago as 1935 to compare the different effects of grazing, burning and draining with untreated controls. This was relevant to assessing plantability before we had Cuthbertson ploughs.

More was known about mires when all drains and turves were cut by hand and dubs and customary peat rights were still being worked for fuel. Any bark from the bottom of the dubs was usually rowan or locally hawthorn, the survivors on some sheep farms today. Counting pollen in peat gives a distorted picture of the past. These two scarcely shed any, whereas birch and hazel discharge it profusely. As foresters well know, oak makes mast, and therefore pollen, late in life and less frequently and heavily on poor soils at higher elevations in the north than on better soils at lower levels in the south.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Chand,
Wilderswood,
Beacon Edge,
Penrith, Cumbria.

CAN ANYONE REPLACE JOHN'S STOLEN SPUDDER?

I was Land Agent FC in North Wales Conservancy from 1952 into the 60s. While foresters carried their slashers, I always had a walking stick with a spudder blade on the end.

The walking stick/spudder is 37 years old and was recently stolen from my car. I have tried high and low to find a new spudder blade without success.

Can any reader suggest where I might obtain one?

JOHN HOOPER, FRICS, M.I.Biol.,
36 Coton Manor, Shrewsbury SY1 2LU.

Editor's note: Write to John Divot or call him on 0743-51055.

Big clean-up — keep it going

Sir, Congratulations! I am writing to congratulate you on your progress of cleaning up the rotting wood from the "great storm" in 1987.

It is obvious that you were prepared to recuperate from your losses and rebuild. But that is what it is all about. Rebuilding is a very necessary part of life. Never give up.

Your efforts are well publicised and privately noticed. But down here in Surrey still in forests, debris litters the floor and makes the idea of ambling, walking the dog or orienteering, very unrealistic.

I understand that the task in hand is quite enormous, but keep going and don't forget that we are all behind you.

I am sure that these questions will be answered in future correspondence:

1. Is there a picking brigade that pick up seeds to plant, in restoration of forests?

2. Is tree felling reduced after the great storm, or could it be banned temporarily to ease the pain on forests and trees?

Yours hopefully,

A reader in Ewell, Surrey.
(Sorry, your name is indecipherable. — Editor.)

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Editor of The Slasher, Roy Gregor, and all connected with your regular newspaper take this opportunity of thanking all correspondents for their worth-while efforts over the past twelve months, and wish them — and ALL readers — a tremendously successful good New Year. And he reminds you that the columns of this newspaper are YOURS... they are open to you all for your news and views.

Let's hear more from you on what is happening in your area — sporting events, fund-raising, humorous side-lights, views of FC plans and on forestry in general. And keep the pictures coming in. And if you have any ideas on how Slasher can be of more help to you, then drop us a line. We are always receptive to fresh ideas.

Note your regional correspondents. You can keep them in touch with what's happening, or items can be sent direct to Roy Gregor, Editor, The Slasher, Forestry Commission, Corstorphine, Edinburgh.

CORRESPONDENTS

NORTH SCOTLAND	Sheila Ferguson
MIDSCOTLAND	John Grievet (Lorne FD)
SOUTH SCOTLAND	Winnie Maloney
NORTH ENGLAND	Sandra Wills
WEST ENGLAND	Peter Foxford
EAST ENGLAND	Brian Llewellyn
WALES	Brina Evans
ALICE HOLT	Brian Hibberd
NRS	Chris Smith
TUS	Ken Murray

KEEP IN TOUCH!

FORESTRY PEOPLE ...FORESTRY PEOPLE ... FORESTRY PEOPLE FORESTRY PEOPLE ...FOREST

The Master of our woods!

DISTRICT Forester... and county-class bowler. Definitely a master of the woods twice over.

That's George Marshall, who retired last month on his 60th birthday after 45 years' service, all spent in East England Conservancy.

A farewell and presentation was attended by nearly 70 colleagues and members of his family.

He joined us as a forest worker at Rendlesham Forest in 1944 and was promoted to Forester at King's Forest, Thetford, in 1960.

Following spells in Lincolnshire, North Norfolk and back to King's as Chief Forester, George transferred in 1985 to Thetford FD office at Santon Downham as District Forester H&M.

Here he was responsible for supplying logs to sawmillers and pulp and chipwood material to national manufacturers.

He was also involved in the clearing and marketing of timber from trees blown down in the hurricane of October 1987.

As a result of the storm he was responsible for the creation and management of the first log store in this country at Thetford which now contains 73,000 tonnes of timber.

At a tree-planting ceremony at Lynford Arboretum, George planted a Canadian Maple watched by Conservator Norman Dannatt and FDM Len Simpson. He said he was glad to redress the balance somewhat by replacing at least one of the estimated 3 million trees he had been responsible for felling at Thetford.

In retirement George plans to spend more time on his hobbies of golf and bowls. He is captain of West Row Bowls Club, a Suffolk County player, and is a qualified bowls coach and umpire. He is also a member of Flempton Golf Club.

George, who has a married son and two daughters, will continue to live at Lackford, near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.



George Marshall plants his tree "to redress the balance" and (above) poses after the task with former colleagues together with Conservator Norman Dannatt, and District Manager Len Simpson.

TRIO NOTCH 111 YEARS



WILF MEEK and NORMAN DANNATT

THREE men with a total of 111 years' service with the FC — all in various parts of England — have also joined the ranks of the retired.

WILF MEEK (Weald FD) tops the list with 41 years.

A native of the Dean, Wilf started part-time in August 1941 a couple of months before his twelfth birthday. He continued to work during holidays throughout the war and recalls having coupons for extra cheese ration and points for essential items such as wellingtons, alarm clock and thermos flask.

After leaving Grammar School in 1946, he started full-time on the old North Beat under the watchful eye of Head Forester George Lees. His training was broken for National Service with the Military Police during 1947-49. He returned to North Beat before going to Lynford Hall in 1951, then to spend the rest of his career in the old SE England Conservancy.

He was at Alice Holt, Bramshill, Rogate Nursery, Challock, Bedgebury and latterly on private woodlands and plant health in Kent.

Conservator Mr Norman Dannatt presented Wilf with a crystal decanter and matching whisky tumblers; a suitable memento to grace the decanter was also presented.

Wilf and his wife Christine are staying on in Tenterden and will be pleased to see any friends who may be passing through.



Stan's tree



Another tree planting ceremony was by Stan Scott, of Bellingham, Northumberland, whose retirement was recorded briefly in our last issue.

Stan and his wife are seen planting the tree and (below) with some of his colleagues at his presentation ceremony, at which he received his long-service certificate from Conservator N(E) to mark 42 years' service.

Craftsman Stan worked with the Ministry of Supply during the war, and joined the FC in 1947, since when he has undertaken about every type of forestry job in Kielder Forest.

Pictured below are Stan and Mrs Scott with, from left, Alan Wood, craftsman; Bob McIntosh, FDM Kielder; Andy Neustein, Conservator, and Andrew Thompson, craftsman.



JOE HANNAH (North Lakes FD) also served 35 years. Below, Mr Andrew Neustein, conservator N(E), is seen presenting Joe with his long service certificate.

At North Lakes, Joe worked on all aspects of forest management and harvesting. He worked on the skyline for 15 years and was operating chainsaws right up to retirement.



JOE HANNAH and ANDREW NEUSTEIN

Fourth generation



Harold Cutler, Keeper for 37 years in the New Forest, was joined by many friends, relatives and colleagues at Burley Club to mark his retirement.

Harold, one of nine children of a forest family, was a fourth generation New Forest Keeper.

An uncle and two cousins also followed the family keeping tradition.

With the main part of the Forest's Sika deer herd resident within his beat, Harold became expert in the management and conservation of the species.

To mark his retirement, colleagues presented him with a long case clock, carving of a kestrel and a pair of binoculars.

Harold is seen here with his wife Thelma, flanked by Deputy Surveyor David Perry and Recreation and Range Manager Roy Hughes.



BILL HENDRY, Senior Ranger 1, and a popular member of staff in Scotland North, was given a good send off and presented with binoculars with tripod, a refurbished 12-bore shotgun, plus a cheque.

A small party went along to his house where he was presented with his long service certificate by FDM, John Keenleyside. A lovely afternoon tea with home baked cakes was then appreciated by all who were present.

And (left) CES JACQUES, Forest Craftsman at Hamsterley, Durham, also retired after 31 years. Ces was involved with most aspects of forest work as well as being involved with trunk road planting and maintenance for the Department of Transport in East Durham. Ces will continue to live locally and work his small holding.

Ces is seen being presented with a picture and his service certificate by FDM Mark Pritchard.



Our veterans renew old friendships

ONE of the success stories of the past twelve months has been the mushrooming of the Retirement Association — our veterans may not have the spring in their step that once they had, but they certainly are progressing by leaps and bounds in their activities!

Among those showing how it's done are the Alice Holt group, old boys and girls of Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and the Forest of Dean, and members of the Mid-Wales section.

They were particularly active in the autumn, and below are reports of some of their events. Secretaries of other groups are invited to keep other Slasher readers in touch with their plans — there's nothing like hearing from (or about) old friends, so drop the editor a line.

Here are some of the reports . . .

W(E) BRANCH: There's a flourishing group in the Peninsula (Devon, Cornwall and W. Somerset) and another in the Forest of Dean area. Both have a full programme of events, the former meeting every month.

In addition Wessex group (covering a scattered membership in Wilts, Dorset, Avon and East Somerset) have planned several events for 1990. It is not easy, we are advised, to get together, but the group plan to move around the area so as to enable all members to have a chance of joining in.

In October, the three groups got together at Westonbirt Arboretum for a picnic under a sunny, cloudless blue sky — the first event on what is hoped to be an annual gathering (at least) on a Conservancy basis.

The Peninsula Group held a Christmas lunch in a hotel on the western side of Dartmoor at the end of November, and invited the chairman of W(E) branch, Brian Tipping, and the secretary, Audrey Child, to join them. About 40 people had an excellent meal and convivial time meeting old friends and new acquaintances.

The group in the northernmost part of W(E) — the Marches and Midlands — is proving rather slower to get going. Any reader in that area should contact Ron Macdonald of Upton Magna, Shrewsbury. As yet he has not had much response to his efforts to organise reunions.

● Dean Group committee is headed by Fred Savage; the Peninsula by Ray Braine as chairman, with Mary Hockin as secretary and Peter Wood as treasurer; and Wessex Group is led by John and May Taylor as chairman and secretary respectively, with Don Chainey as treasurer; while treasurer of the W(E) branch is John Thomas.

Contact any of them for information if you have lost touch.

MID-WALES GROUP enjoyed a fine day out in the Welshpool area in September, including a visit to Leighton Estate. David Williams acted as host on a tour of the famous Redwood Grove owned by the Royal Forestry Society and managed under a Dedication Agreement.

After picnic, the 19-strong party visited Powis Castle and gardens. A further outing is being planned to the Dolgellau area next April.

● Details from Denis Fisher, 16 Maesceinion, Waun Fawr, Aberystwyth. Tel: 624848.

ALICE HOLT GROUP: Members had a successful outing on October 12 to Westonbirt Arboretum. They were rewarded by a rich display of autumn colours, especially from the maples.

Their guide was Mr Les Pearce, one of the "Friends of Westonbirt," and they were joined by members of Alton branch, Civil Service Retirement Association, plus two from the Haslemere branch.

On Thursday, November 30, 28 members visited Chichester Theatre for a production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

A committee meeting is to discuss future plans.

● The Alice Holt contact is Mrs Lena Birchall at Woodbury Down, Holt Pound, near Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4LA.

All groups send ALL retired members their seasonal greetings, with the message: Don't forget . . . keep in touch in 1990.

Three women bid farewell

WHEN the amalgamation of Brechfa and Llandovery took place at the beginning of the financial year, it meant a cut in administrative staff and three women at the Brechfa office left on redundancy terms.

They were: — Mrs Ceinwen Johnson (nee George), AO, who joined the FC in 1966 as a forest clerk. She saw various amalgamations in that forest before it became the centre of the Brechfa FD in 1984. This was when she was promoted to AO, earned by her hard work and dedication.

Mrs Angela Douch, typist and H&M clerk, who joined the staff at Brechfa Forest in 1976 as a forest clerk and was up-graded in 1984. Most of her latter years were spent assisting the H&M staff with computer input and other clerical duties. Angela had a bright and cheerful nature and was very popular with all the staff. She has since found work in the Dyfed/Powys police department.

Mrs Jean Jenkins, AA (part-time), who started her association with the FC at the Treglog Workshop in 1978. In March 1986 the workshop clerical duties were centralised into Crychan Workshop and Jean was transferred to Brechfa FD on general office duties. Jean has since found part-time employment at Glangwili Hospital, Carmarthen.

All three staff had separate farewell parties and were presented with gifts from friends and colleagues.



Role reversal . . . Mrs Ceinwen Johnson makes a presentation to her office colleague, Mrs Angela Douch, then (below) is seen at her own farewell presentation with Mrs Jean Jenkins.



STILL IN WALES . . .

Llanrwst loses four stalwarts

IN the last eight months, there have been four retirements from Llanrwst FD.

Each of our former colleagues were notable in their own way and very well known within the Forest District and adjoining districts. Each qualified for a long-service certificate.

The first to retire was DENNIS EVANS — 37 years' service. He was well known to many Commission staff and the public alike as he was storeman at Maesnewyddion Depot near Betws-y-Coed.

Not long after, we bade farewell on the same day to DAI ROBERTS and MALDWIN OWEN.

Dai, a leading ganger with 49 years' service, started his career on the Penmachno beat of the former Gwydyr Forest. He was highly respected and very well known in the local community.

One-time right winger for Machno United football team — known as the Canaries because of their bright yellow shirts — after his playing days he became a mustard-keen supporter.

Maldwyn retired on health grounds after 36 years' service, originally on the roads squad with the major part of his career on Gwydyr Forest.

During October HUGH MORGAN retired after 32 years, all of them on the former Llyn Forest.

Most of his career was spent as ganger in charge of the team on the large nursery which closed down in 1975.

He was well known to lorry drivers and others who visited the nursery.

Since the mid-70s he was involved with the silvicultural work in the Commission's woodlands on the Llyn peninsula.

Another retirement in Wales is that of ALF BRANDON with 48 years' service, first as a general forest worker at Cannock Chase and later as a plough operator in Mid and North Wales.

Alf transferred to the Mid Wales roads department in 1963 and oper-



Alf Brandon receiving his gifts from John Morgan, Conservator Wales.

ated excavator and dozers for several years.

He was perhaps best known over the last 20 years as a survey assistant in Aberystwyth and Newtown areas, and during this time he received the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal.

At a presentation in Llanidloes, Alf received a sundial, electric bench drill and his rather special service certificate from John Morgan (Conservator Wales), who also presented a bouquet to Mrs Brandon.

Hugh No. 2 in the North

Hugh Insley, head of economic planning branch, HQ, has been promoted to Assistant Conservator, Operations, North Scotland. Taking over his post is David Henderson-Howat, who moves from FDM Aberfoyle.

Leslie's Highlands farewell



Another candidate for membership of the Retirement Association is LESLIE CRAN of Area CE North Scotland. His retirement was marked by a social at the Smithton Hotel near Inverness, when Leslie reminisced over his 29 years with the Commission working all over the Highlands on earth-moving machines. Originally from Buchan, Leslie is retiring to Smithton not really so far away from his roots. He was presented with binoculars and a wallet with notes.



PETER BUSS, industrial foreman at the New Forest has retired after 38 years' service. During his career Peter also worked at Alice Holt and Ringwood Forests.

He will be missed at Lyndhurst for his conscientious work and his humour and good nature, writes a correspondent.

In recent years Peter took charge of the vegetation management on the Open Forest (the cut and burn programme). On many occasions it was due to Peter's experience and expertise with fire-fighting equipment that many wildfires were dealt with so effectively.

Because of his youthful appearance it came as a surprise to many that Peter was of retirement age and his farewell went off on a light-hearted note.

Keen as ever, Peter turned up early at the venue and because nobody else had arrived he inquired of the steward if some "do" was on. The reply was "Oh yes, some old bloke is retiring!"

Some of Peter's previous colleagues from Dorset Forest District attended, and the Deputy Surveyor, Mr Perry, presented him with his long service certificate and a gift of oil paints on behalf of colleagues. Peter's wife Liz was presented with a pot plant.

WINNERS...INTHEPICTURE!

Forest views are the tops

A photographic competition aimed at capturing the beauty of woodland attracted more than 2000 entries and the winning entries "conveyed the peace and tranquillity of our forests," according to the Forestry Commission's Director-General, Gwyn Francis.

Winner of the competition was Roy Fowler who photographed a bluebell-carpeted piece of coppice in Forest of Dean, close to where he lives at Plumhill. Among the runners-up were two keen FC amateur photographers, John Westlake (Wales) and Douglas Boyd (Argyll), pictured right with David Bellamy, who presented the awards.

The Commission, together with Pentax, sponsored the competition in *Photo Answers* magazine and were delighted with the nationwide response, as was leading conservationist David Bellamy, who travelled to Edinburgh HQ to present the principle awards.

He said: "People are becoming more and more aware of the importance of trees to our environment. Properly planned and managed forests are vital to the future of mankind and provide essential habitats for an abundance of wildlife. They also provide photographers with some of the most exciting opportunities."

He said that an expanded forest area was vital to Britain; nationally and internationally it was important that people recognised the sustainability of a wood-growing resource.

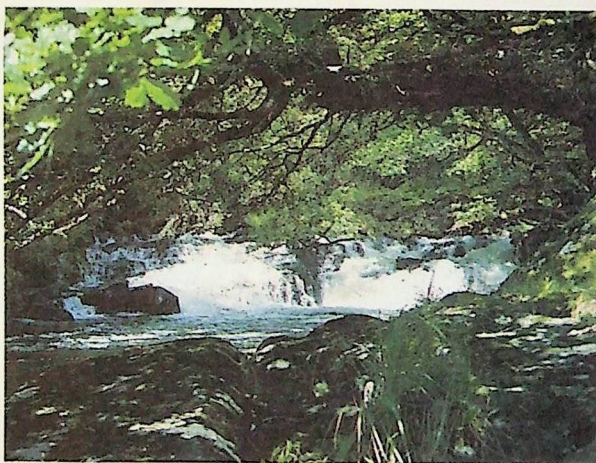
"Coppice rotation forests, for example, are some of the most beautiful woodlands we have in this country. "I hope the Forestry Commission will go on to manage more and more of our landscape in this way and woodland managers should follow the FC lead — even if they have to be driven, pushed or dragged."



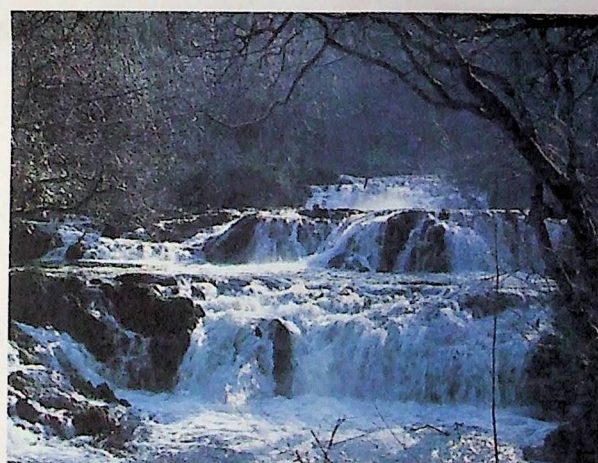
David Bellamy flanked by John Westlake and Douglas Boyd.



WINNER . . . this coppice scene in the Forest of Dean.



RUNNER-UP . . . a Welsh scene by John Westlake at Felindre Pennal.



RUNNER-UP . . . a forest walk by the River Avich, submitted by Douglas Boyd of Argyll.

Obituaries

Canada tribute to Ken Mayhew

KEN MAYHEW, former A&FO North Wales, died in November, following a stroke in Aberystwyth Hospital, writes E. H. Bradford, from Toronto, Canada.

Ken and I joined the office of the Assistant Commander for E&W at No. 1 Whitehall in July, 1928, from the first open competition held for the Civil Service since the beginning of the First World War. He has been my very good friend ever since.

Born in North Wales 78 years ago, he achieved an ambition to return there when he was appointed Divisional Accountant to North Wales Division in 1937.

There in the typing pool he met the lady who was to become his wife. He was a glutton for work, never cut a corner, and devoted himself completely to the job in hand. The Commission has never had a more devoted servant.

At the outbreak of war he was transferred to the Home Grown Timber Department and set up the office in Shrewsbury, which he ran until his call-up in 1941.

He did his military service in the Navy and when the Shrewsbury office was amalgamated with Aberystwyth, Ken elected to accept demotion rather than leave North Wales.

After his 43 years' service, he remained there at Llanon throughout his retirement, which was marred by recurring trouble from an arthritic hip.

He leaves his wife, daughter, son-in-law and three grandchildren. Ken will be missed by all who knew his kindly, honest personality. They don't come any better.

ERIC WYNNE JONES has died at Dolgellau, aged 75 years. He retired in January 1979, after serving as foreman and forester in North Wales for 33 years. His wife and two sons also worked for the Commission making 115 years' FC service collectively.

TOM FRASER (former Head Forester, old Rowardennan Forest), Milton of Buchanan Church, Drymen, was packed on 15th December when old colleagues, private forestry representatives and members of the community joined the family to pay their respects to Tom.

Although he retired in 1970, Tom stayed on in the area he had grown to love through his Commission work and he continued his service to the community as church elder, treasurer and latterly as session clerk.

He leaves a wife, May, and four sons.

DAVY MASTERTON (former Executive Officer, old West Scotland Conservatory). Davy was a stalwart in the old West Conservancy Office (apart from a short sojourn in North Conservancy) for nearly 30 years until his retirement in 1975.

Roger named as Deer Commissioner

Roger Larsen, now in retirement in Glendarroch, Argyll, has been appointed to the Red Deer Commission from January 1, 1990.

Roger, former head of what was then called Conservation and Recreation Branch, was nominated as a Commissioner by the Institute of Chartered Foresters to represent the forestry interest.

When with Conservation and Recreation, Roger kept up a close interest in the development and management of deer in our forests.

He tells us that in between co-ordinating the Scottish Woodland Awards Scheme for the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, he is chairman of his local Deer Control Group. Retirement is busy and fun," he writes.

THE 12 DAYS OF . . .

As as finale to this festive edition of Slasher, what better than this light-hearted effort.

It came into our office from E(E) Conservancy . . . you all know the tune, don't you?

On the First Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, A Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme.

On the Second Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Two Computer Terminals.

On the Third Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Three Grant Claim Forms.

On the Fourth Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Four Felling Licences.

On the Fifth Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Five Parliamentary Questions.

On the Sixth Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Six Set-Aside Schemes.

On the Seventh Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Seven Statistical Returns.

On the Eighth Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Eight Irrate Agents.

On the Ninth Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Nine District Managers.

On the Tenth Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Ten Farm Wood Schemes.

On the Eleventh Day of Christmas, Headquarters sent to us, Eleven Illegal Fellings.

On the Twelfth Day of Christmas, we sent our HEO, Twelve Resignations.