

SLASHER



Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

No. 346

MAY 1990

BOMB BURST!



No split for FC, say Government

As 'Slasher' went to press, the Government's response to the House of Commons Agriculture Committee's report on land use and forestry was published.

It says the Government are pleased to note the committee's support for the continued expansion of forestry to serve a multiplicity of purposes.

In the space we have available in this issue of 'Slasher' we shall deal only with a few of the committee's recommendations of particular importance to staff.

The Government say they have seen no evidence of a conflict of interest between the Forestry Authority and the Forestry Enterprise, and reject the committee's proposal that the two functions should be split.

"The Government believe the present structure of the Commission provides an effective means of implementing the Government's forestry policies," says the response.

Not useful

The Agriculture Committee called for a review of existing forestry policies. The Government reply that forestry policy has already moved substantially in directions favoured by the committee, and that a general

review would serve no useful purpose.

In another recommendation covering licensing and consultation on forestry proposals, the Agriculture Committee suggested regional advisory committees should be made more representative and accountable.

In their response, the Government say that while legislation would be required to increase the size of RACs (a move favoured by the Forestry Commission), the committee chairmen can now call on experts from many fields to give assistance when required.

The Government have also asked the FC to look at the possibility of an account of RAC meetings and RAC advice to Commissioners being published.

Drawing on its own experience of providing access, the FC is to publish guidelines to help owners of private woodlands.

The Government response supports the MP's view that more public access to private woods should be encouraged and shares their view that landowners must enter into agreements of their own free will.

The committee made 26 recommendations in its 50-page report after taking evidence over a two-year period.

Steve Cooper, the District Forester in Abertay, was on hand with his camera for this dramatic shot . . . It was only an exercise . . . but it was the prelude to the real thing, for the late, dry spring then scorching May weather brought fire hazards to various areas. In all, the Commission lost nearly 500 hectares of forest in this year's spring fires.

These outbreaks followed close on the heels of the fire-control exercise when teams from Abertay and Perthshire FD simulated fire-fighting operations in Blackraig Forest to test use of helicopters, from trailers and radio communications.

A neighbouring owner, Mr R. Constable, imparted some realism into the exercise by setting alight a small area of heather due to be burned for grouse moor management. They put the helicopter and beater teams through their paces . . . and gave Steve the chance of his picture.

A big dipper bucket was effective in extinguishing the fire with water, and also in laying a foam trace directly in the path of the oncoming flames.

Tayside Fire Brigade was also in the picture, so to speak — they recorded the action on video camera for training use within the service.

The whole operation was planned and organised by Perthshire District Forester, Malcolm Wield, helped by staff and crews from Perthshire and Abertay with communication equipment provided by Derek Smith and staff, R&E Inver. PLM Helicopters provided the skilled pilot and efficient and friendly ground crew.

My priorities -by Robin Cutler

NEXT D G TALKS OF CHALLENGE AHEAD

Much-travelled Robin Cutler, named this month to take over as Director General of the Forestry Commission, will soon be settling into a new home.

He steps into the post in September at HQ in Edinburgh, succeeding Gwyn Francis when he retires in the autumn.

In his 55 years, Mr Cutler has seen much of the world: born in India, educated in Scotland, work in Kenya, then in New Zealand, where he is leaving as Secretary of Forestry in the NZ Ministry of Forestry to take over the Director Generalship in Corstorphine, Edinburgh.

Mr Cutler said of his appointment: "I'm greatly looking forward to my move back to Scotland and especially to take up the challenge of my new and very demanding post."

"My experience in New Zealand will, I believe, stand me in good stead since developments in the formation and management of forests in both countries have much in common and the achievements in both countries have been impressive in creating an important wood resource."

Multiple uses

"I am a strong advocate of the management of forests for multiple uses and I see the recreational and environmental values of forests assuming greater importance in the future."

Chairman of the Commission, Mr Raymond Johnstone, told a Press conference on May 11, the day of the announcement: "We all see an increasingly important role for forestry in both rural and urban development throughout Britain. In the countryside we have taken many initiatives in areas such as landscape design, the creation of new wildlife habitats, the protection of water courses, the development of Forest Parks and, most importantly, the delivery of increasing quantities of wood into Britain's expanding timber processing industries."

"In towns and cities we are bringing our expertise and experience to new developments such as the Central Scotland Woodlands and the Community Forests in England and Wales."

"Under Gwyn Francis' leadership in the past few years I believe we have shown that the Commission is



The new D G, Robin Cutler, who takes over from Gwyn Francis in September.

alive to the new demands which society is placing upon it. And in seeking his successor we were concerned to find a person with the right qualifications, the broad experience of multi-purpose forest management, and a political awareness which would equip him to meet the challenges, and lead the Commission in its task as the authority in forestry matters."

Robin Cutler was born in India and was educated at Banff Academy. He is a forestry graduate of Aberdeen University. In 1958, after two years' service in the Royal Engineers, he joined the Colonial Forest Service in Kenya. Soon after Kenya became independent, he joined the New Zealand Forest Service in 1964.

He was appointed Director of Forest Management in 1978 and became Deputy Director-General in 1986. Two years later he was appointed Chief Executive of the New Zealand Ministry of Forestry.

He is married with two children, a son who is working in the USA and a daughter who has just completed a university degree and a year at teacher training college.

Another Commission appointment is that of Dr Simon Harding as Director of the Development Division, succeeding David Grundy, recently promoted to be Commissioner for Administration and Finance.

A graduate of Oxford University, where he gained Honours in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, Dr Harding went on to gain a PhD at Aberystwyth and to teach economics. He joined the Civil Service in 1986 as an economic adviser at the Department of Energy.

Since 1988, he has worked at the Treasury on policy and expenditure for forestry, fisheries, agriculture and industrial and regional assistance.

Dr Harding is 37, married, and has a 10-year-old son. He will take up his post later in the summer.

Graham moves to Mid Scotland

The next Conservator of Mid Scotland Conservancy, Graham Hamilton, takes up the post in July, succeeding Sandy Morrison who is retiring.

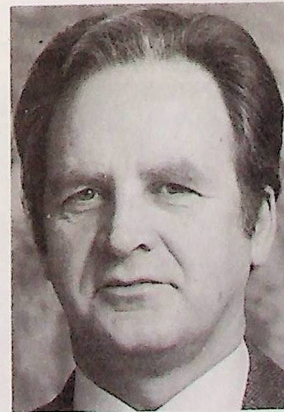
A native of Garelochhead in Dunbartonshire, Mr Hamilton, who is 49, joined the Commission in 1965 as Assistant District Officer at Dingwall and later at Dornoch in North Scotland Conservancy after graduating with honours in Forestry from Edinburgh University, where he had also obtained an MSc.

During an eight-year period following his appointment in 1968 as Mensuration Officer at Alice Holt, Surrey, he produced the handbook, widely known as the "Blue Book," which has become a standard work on measurement for foresters throughout the country.

In 1977 he returned to North Scotland and mainstream forest management work as District Officer in the old Fort William FD and later in the then East Scotland Conservancy, where he became Assistant Conservator for harvesting and marketing in 1983.

Since 1985 he has been working at head office Harvesting and Marketing division, mainly dealing with supply contracts for major small roundwood users.

Mid Scotland Conservancy, based in Glasgow, is responsible for forestry throughout the middle third of Scotland — from the Hebridean



GRAHAM HAMILTON
'Blue Book' author

Islands of Jura and Islay to the East coast of Fife, from the Grampian Mountains across to the Mull of Kintyre and down to the Forth Estuary.

Consisting of over 400,000 acres of forest it produces over 400,000 cubic metres of timber every year

MASTERMINDS O' THE GLENS



Full report on Glen Affric and the search for "family trees" in centre pages.

SAFARI SUE IN KIELDER



— Page FIVE

DEREK RETIRES



Full report of the retirement of the Commissioner for Admin. and Finance, and other retirements are on Pages Six and Seven.

Two women named as Rangers

Two Forest Districts have named their first recreation rangers.

Gill Whyman stepped into the role in another major advance in Thetford Forest's development as East Anglia's first forest park.

And Penny Knock, who is 21, began her new job a week earlier in the Chilterns.

Thetford Forest's development as East Anglia's first Forest Park took another important step forward on April 9 when the Forestry Commission appointed its first recreation ranger in East Anglia.

Thetford's Gill, who is 32, is a UEA graduate in environmental sciences with a doctorate in Hydrology. She is based at Santon Downham office, joining the Commission after a short contract with Norfolk Naturalists' Trust.

Her appointment will expand the work that the Commission has been doing with its recreation forester. Duties will include liaison with schools, youth groups, environmental, conservation and other organisations.

As "the public face" of the Commission in the park, she will welcome visitors, conduct groups on forest walks, and point out other activities.

Ana Chylak, Forest Park development manager, said: "This appointment further underlines the Commission's commitment to greatly increasing



Down in the woods . . . Gill Whyman of Thetford (centre, rear) with some of her "pupils" in the new park.

the use of its forests for educational and recreational purposes."

Thetford Forest is Britain's largest lowland pine forest covering more than 50,000 acres in an area stretching from Swaffham in Norfolk to West Stow in Suffolk.

Chilterns "public face" Penny Knock is a graduate in rural environmental studies from Wye College, University of London. Before joining the FC she was with the Nature Conservancy Council in Ashford, Kent.

To help her educational work, a classroom has been prepared next to the Commission's Chilterns office in Aston Clinton. This enables Penny to work with teachers and pupils on site, either before or after their field studies, or during bad weather.



PENNY KNOCK

Scout dies in storm

Nineteen-year-old Midlands Research worker Andrew Barden was killed when his car went out of control and hit a tree during a sudden and severe hailstorm at Easter weekend.

Andrew, of Nuneaton, started work with Research Division, Silviculture, Midlands, just last September. A scout since the age of eight, he was recently given the highest scouting accolade, the Queen's Award.

He was a happy person always willing to help those less fortunate.

He loved the countryside and had been involved in many conservation projects, and was delighted when offered his first job with the Forestry Commission.

At a packed funeral service at Nuneaton relayed outside to a large guard of honour of Venture Scouts, the minister quoted Andrew as having once said "that he was now actually being paid for doing the work he had always loved to do the most — caring for the environment."

TUS DIARY HAS A WORD TO SAY ABOUT WOMEN . . .

They deserve a better deal!

I had hoped that the "Sexy Sextet" headline in one of last year's issues would be the last example in our paper of the sort of portrayal of women colleagues that makes the majority feel embarrassed or angry or both — unfortunately I was wrong.

The March issue carried a photograph of five women staff of Cowal with a challenge to other Forest Districts to "match the good looks of the ladies of Cowal."

How utterly crass! These women were employed because management felt they could perform the duties expected of them; and they continue to be employed because they perform their duties. They are workers, not decorations.

The Equal Opportunity Officer has been deluging us with annexes to NIM86 in the last 18 months, not because the Commission feels like it but because these issues are Civil Service policy.

It is unfortunate that the volume of paper on equal opportunities may have turned some people off, but the fact is that we had to do it because the issue had been left drifting for too long.

The treatment of women in the service constitutes a large percentage of the work in the equal opportunities field. What the FC and the unions are concerned with is that women and men have the same opportunity to get as far as they can on their abilities. Part-time working, job sharing and the career break

KENNY MURRAY
pens his regular column



scheme are some ways in which we can positively help. The issue of child-care facilities is also being actively discussed.

Having spoken to many of you, I know that these initiatives do not meet with universal approval but we have to be realistic.

Women want to have fulfilling careers. Women want to be treated similarly to men — on their abilities, not their looks or mode of dress. The back page of the last issue made a mockery of this. Why is it that women who take time off to give birth and rear the next generation of foresters, executives or scientists are all too often seen as a liability in an organisation when a bloke who takes five years off on study leave or an overseas tour is seen as wanting to broaden his knowledge and experience for career purposes?

Women colleagues deserve a better deal.

We are entering a decade during which there will be a mad scramble to employ school leavers. Conse-

quently good employers are taking the pragmatic view that women must be attracted back to work quickly after maternity. Whatever traditionalist twinges any of us may have on this — we must face up to the fact that it is going to happen and therefore we must prepare ourselves for it.

Incidentally you may have noticed that Boyd MacKenzie, who supplied the picture and issued the picture challenge, is living on my home island of Lewis. I wonder if any of the locals have seen "Slasher" . . . yet?

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THE ANNUAL STAFF REPORT statistics have been published recently and will shortly be circulated by your union. The TUS asked management to distribute them but unfortunately they refused.

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The Forestry Unions' Action Group (FUAG), whom I mentioned in the last issue, held an extremely successful press launch in London on March 29 which kicked off the campaign against the new disposals policy.

As well as attracting a dozen journalists from newspapers, television and radio, a continuous stream of over a dozen radio interviews were given over the telephone.

The Ramblers' Association director, Alan Mattingly, attended and gave support to the campaign as did the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). Leaflets are being prepared and should be on display by early June.

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AT its recent Annual Meeting the Trade Union Side elected Doug Elliott (NUCPS) and myself as Chair and Secretary respectively for the forthcoming year. Ray Mulroney (CPSA) was elected Deputy Chair.

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FINALLY, let's wish Roy Gregor, Editor of "Slasher," a swift and successful recovery from his operation. Roy has been in hospital with throat cancer. Hurry back, Roy — "Slasher" doesn't like "going to bed" without you!

• • •

Champion Bill

Bill Cook ACE(S) based at Exeter FD has become joint championship winner in his class of the national rally championship of RAC/MSA Autosport. He won his class as co-driver driving a Toyota Corolla.

Here and there

Winning ideas

BRIGHT ideas are wanted by South Scotland Staff Suggestion Committee . . . they could earn you money! And that's always a good idea in itself, isn't it?

Mrs W. F. Maloney, of the private forestry and environment section at Dumfries, tells us that at their last meeting, the "ideas committee" discussed four new suggestions, and as a result the scheme made three local awards.

A £15 award was for a pro forma for use in private woodland administration thought to have some value for recording grants paid for small parts of large schemes. Second was an idea to make money from surplus publications by using a specialist bookseller; and a suggestion to make containers for drench guns from clear plastic to prevent spillage was referred to Work Study Eastern Team.

These two ideas each earned £10 interim awards, but the fourth contribution, a suggestion on cash-less pay, was turned down with thanks . . .

Details of any of the suggestions can be obtained from the secretary, Mrs M. Boyle. Meantime, any other good ideas . . . ?

Spring clean

New Forest Pride Week, the most successful "spring clean" held in the District, finished in early April. More than 6000 volunteers working all over the district collected 8000 bags of litter. The average litter pick per person was around 1000 items an hour, with 80 per cent of the litter being either food wrappers or cigarette material.

Close co-operation between the organisers, New Forest District Council and the Commission, allowed early collection of filled bags in most areas. Many schools took part and various organisations sponsored the provision of educational materials to schools. Total sponsorship amounted to £1500.

Doug, life-saver



DOUG MORRISON, Buchan's Kockum operator, is seen replacing essential fluids in his machine. Commendably, the sump capacity just equals his contribution as a blood-donor — 17.5 litres.

Recently, his efforts attracted the attention of BBC TV's 'Reporting Scotland' team covering the Transfusion Service — tracing the supply from the donor (the man at work) on to needy recipients. Doug started blood-donating in 1961 and had his enthusiasm sharpened by his own children's needs — he is Rhesus positive, his wife negative.

Spring spectacular

Wales Conservancy office staff has a spectacular front-seat view of storms and high seas that hit the area in February and into March. The sea completely washed over the road and up on to the front steps of the building at Aberystwyth. The waves themselves hit the windows on the second floor — and spray went right over the top of the office (4 floors) and down the back!

Viewpoint for George

A viewpoint overlooking Loch Awe has been opened by the Forestry Commission in honour of George Francey, MBE, retired chief forester at Inverliver.

George is ill and was unable to attend the ceremony but his wife, Betty, unveiled a plaque dedicated to her husband at the viewpoint three miles south of Dalavich.

Guests heard Peter Quelch, District Manager, Loch Awe, pay tribute to George's work at Inverliver.

Proud Pinetum

FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH was a lucky day for visitors to the Forestry Commission Pinetum at Bedgebury, Kent. As from last month, the upgraded Visitors' Centre at the Pinetum, where the national collection of conifer trees is held, is now open daily, and a new exhibition covers the history of the Pinetum and details some of the work done to repair the damage suffered in the gales of 1987 and this year.

Bill carries the banner

FC were one of the many exhibitors at the Scottish National Rhododendron Show held in Oban this month. Bill MacDonald, Lorne FD, held the fort, doing a stalwart PR job for the FC to the hundreds who attended the show.

● Gremlins are devilish intruders . . . they got into the works in our last edition of Slasher when the Page One picture caption said that Gwyn Francis had received the CBE. He was, of course, created a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the New Year Honours. And his daughter in that picture is named Kay.



Mike Williams, of Clwyd FD, who began his career at Ceiriog Forest 28 years ago, has retired on health grounds. During his time he covered all aspects of forest work, including driving, which earned him his ninth year Safe Driving Award.

At an informal presentation, Mike received a brass

companion set and coal scuttle from Mr P. M. Hughes, FDM; and his wife Bridget received a bouquet from Forest Clerk Sue Starling. Mike (second left) is seen with Mr Hughes and Ben Williams and Aneurin Davies. You'll find more Welsh retirements and news from around Britain on Pages Six and Seven.



Friendly Forester Steve Cresswell of Cropton and friendly frog.

For frogs that go a-wooing

SAFETY-FIRST IS THE CONSERVATION MESSAGE

Frogs and toads are finding safer havens ... thanks to the Forestry Commission.

It's all part of major initiatives by the Commission to safeguard our wildlife for future generations, a role in which staff are playing an increasingly enthusiastic part.

Take North Yorkshire Forest Park, for instance. There, a winter pond-creation programme has been completed in time for the frog-spawning season.

Frogs, toads and newts are already familiar with the park, making substantial use of ponds, small dams and even tanks originally constructed for fire protection purposes!

Forestry staff were optimistic that toads and newts would join their fellow amphibians to take full advantage of this new breeding resource sited in Newtondale, Cropton Forest.

This year's pond-building programme focused on providing several small ponds of various shapes and sizes in Newtondale. More ponds have been created on Sneaton Moor and in the Forest Nature Reserve at Deepdale, Dalby.

FD Manager John Mackenzie said: "This programme is part of the Commission's on-going forest habitat management policy with the particular objective of encouraging amphibian populations in the forest."

The work has been carried out by a local plant hire contractor, John Martinson of Scarborough.

Mr Mackenzie has been particularly impressed by the sensitive interpretation of the special site requirements by digger operator, Sam Featherstone.

And down in the Midlands, visitors to the Commission's Fineshade Wood will notice new road signs warning motorists of toads.

Signs have been installed either side of a major road crossing point to help to reduce the number of amorous toads squashed by traffic as they try to reach breeding ponds.

Toads filled with the mating urge return to the same traditional breeding ponds every spring and encounter many hazards on the way.

The Fineshade toads have to cross the lane leading to Fineshade Top Lodge from the A43 (Between Corby and Stamford) to reach ponds adjoining the wood near old Fineshade Abbey.

Toads are no longer common — like frogs and newts they have suffered as ponds have disappeared from the countryside.

VIDEO ON DEER

The Forestry Commission launched a new video in London last month for anyone with a direct interest in the processing of wild game.

East England Head Ranger Roger North takes the "starring role" in the video. His demonstrations of exemplary practice in the field and in the larder forms the bulk of the film's content.

"Processing and Inspection of Wild Deer — a Training Guide" complements the booklet "The Culling and Processing of Wild Deer" that the Commission and Arun District Council published jointly last year. Together the two form a comprehensive training and information package that covers the subject of the safe handling of wild deer carcasses and their hygienic processing by game dealers.

Norman Dannatt, Conservator for East England, and John Adams, of Arun District Council, co-authors of the package, launched the video at a Press conference.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FC-SPEAK — HERE'S THE ANSWER

HERE'S a merry Sherwood forester who believes in being just that ... merry. Or as he says, in a note to the editor, it's about time we published a flippant letter. We thought we did regularly, but if we have been lacking in that respect, here's P. Barwick's contribution to make up for our lapse!

He writes:—

Dear Sir,

My earliest days in forestry taught me some basic botany, how to cut myself with a reap hook and the benefits of silvicultural jargon, an essential requirement for sensible conversation with colleagues.

The advantage of jargon in this context was that it enhanced the efficiency of language within a profession to which it was common.

In recent years the Forestry Commission has become more and more diversely specialised to the extent that the language of each specialism has evolved to suit its own needs and has become correspondingly unintelligible to those outside it.

The most insidious form is the ubiquitous acronym. Making a pronounceable word from the initial letters of a many worded title is either a sensible way of shortening a sentence, or an unnecessary form of language mutilation. It depends whether you are the specialist or not.

Internal memoranda which incorporate acronyms and jargon into sentences already composed of technical vernacular are a pain in the non-specialised neck, with which the concise Oxford Dictionary is ill equipped to cope. I think it high time, therefore, that we had a dictionary of FC speak (apologies to Orwell) and agreed universal definitions of current usage.

I note below in alphabetical order some selected words and their definitions. It's a small start, and because of the size of the problem is confined to one specialist section, which I hope is self-evident.

Archive (n) A repository of greyish, fatty deposits.

Bacops (v) An involuntary, spasmodic intake of breath.

Bos Finder (n) A device for locating knobs and studs.

CCISP (v & n) The sound made by a computer printout failing to tear along the little perforations.

FAMIS (n) The cessation of individual existence.

FIAP (v & n) The sound made by an FC32 sliding off a desk top.

Main Frame (n) The Head Dalek.

Merlin (n) A subordinate Dalek.

Micro (n) A computer terminal too small to be seen with the naked eye.

Modem (v) A continuous low-pitched hum which gives machinery the appearance of function whilst remaining completely useless.

Multiplexer (n) A large knot with three ends.

Yours faithfully, P. Barwick, District Forester FM, Sherwood Forest district.

Lonely . . .

Some time ago I met up with an old forester colleague who I had not seen for many years. At that time I was stationed in the Forest of Dean. "Where are you living now?" he asked. I told him my house was Western Lodge in Nagshead Inclosure, now a RSPB reserve.

"Dear me," he commented. "That's lonely miserable spot to live in I should think. A bit out of the way for my liking."

"Whereabouts are you stationed now, then," I asked.

"Oh, I'm in East Anglia," he replied. "I live in Brandon."

"Do you like the place?" I asked.

"No I don't," he said. "Too many people about."

JACK JENNINGS.
(C/F retired), Hempton Bishop.

TEAM RALLIED ROUND TO SAVE RALLY

All go . . . that was after Dorset FD staff pulled out all the stops so that the Mazda winter rally could go ahead as scheduled despite a freak storm.

The rally was scheduled to run on January 27 and as always with rallies preparation had been taking place throughout the whole of the previous year.

At daybreak, on January 25, the great storm began. At one o'clock that day the organisers were told that they should seriously consider cancelling the event.

At that stage, the storm was at its height and it was too dangerous to send people out to assess the situation.

Understandably, the organisers were horrified. To cancel such a prestigious event, let alone the financial consideration, would without doubt have been a disaster.

Without any serious hopes of completing the task, Dorset agreed to try to clear the course.

J. G. Rastall of Environment W(E) told Slasher: "At about 3.30 pm, with the wind still blowing at about force 4 (gusting to 7 or 8), we decided that it was just safe enough to try to assess the position. Teams went in different directions around the rally route; each team looking at one or more whole blocks of forest."

"By about 7 pm we had assessed the situation and worked out a plan of campaign. Although it was clearly going to be 'touch and go' we felt it might be possible to clear the route, over which it was estimated were at least 300 trees."

STALWARTS

"To the rescue galloped the cavalry in the guise of Dorset FD staff (boys and girls!!). This band of stalwarts with chainsaw, band saw, crowbar, winch, tractor and bare hands worked around the clock on Friday 26th — assisted by motor club members and residents — and cleared all but one mile of the planned 70-mile rally route."

Was it all worth it? Well, 130 rally crews from all over the British Isles cheered long and hard at the prize presentation in appreciation of those who enabled the rally to take place.

"The result was only made possible by solid teamwork from everybody — from the foresters who organised the work, through the workforce who performed miracles, to the office staff who provided such a solid back-up service."

FROM AMPHIBIANS TO OUR WINGED FRIENDS Butterfly safety net

In a secluded North Yorkshire valley, staff are hard at work improving a clearing which has been chosen by a butterfly rarely found in Northern England.

The Small-Pearl Bordered Fritillary butterfly, a native species of Southern England, has declined in recent years, due to modern farming practice which has affected its only source of nourishment, the marsh violet. Now the species has been found thriving in the seclusion of the Keldy Valley in Cropton Forest, not far from the FC's tourist cabin site.

The Easter holiday coincided with the emergence of this species, and day trippers as well as holiday-makers at Keldy Cabins caught a glimpse of the butterfly, along with a number of other species.

The work, which involves clearing enough trees to

provide the correct balance of open space and shelter, is being carried out with the advice of entomologist Philip Winter, of Muston, near Fife.

Mr Winter attended a recent meeting of Yorkshire Environmental Consultative Panel, composed of representatives from varying organisations who are invited by the Commission biannually to give advice and comment on conservation and recreation matters.

FD Manager John Mackenzie said: "Providing the right conditions and correct balance of open space and shelter is most important if butterflies are to thrive in our forest areas."

"Forest habitats are dynamic situations and change as the trees grow. Management input in the form of tree clearance is therefore required to maintain the appropriate scale and balance."

TOP SHARP-SHOOTERS



North York Moors FD Office shooting team of John Machenzie (FDM), Peter Green (District Forester FM) and Charles Critchley (Head Ranger) show off the trophy they won at Malton Rifle and Pistol Club's annual knockout competition.

Twenty-six teams from local businesses and other organisations competed in the shoot-out over three nights. North York Moors scored 480; Rydale ATC 470; FC Foresters 459; and Hawby Hillbillies 383.

Highest scoring card of the competition (92) was shot by Charles Critchley.

The Yorkshire foresters have a good eye for darts,

too! At the North York Moors FD annual darts competition, the Cropton team of Alan Hodgson, Paul Jenkins, Andrew Knott and Anthony Stockdale retained the trophy for a second year by out-pointing five other teams. Runners-up were Dalby Contractors.

Quiz time, too, shows a sharp mind or two ... North York Moors FD won a resounding victory often gaining a convincing lead in an exciting first round encounter with York first team. York seconds made a valiant attempt to put Conservancy in front, beating Pickering second team, but the overall result was a win for North York Moors FD: 1 Pickering Team 1, 51 points; 2 York Seconds, 44; 3 Pickering Seconds, 32; and 4 York Team 1, 27.

All's well and thriving!

The Old Boys and Girls Network has had an extremely successful year — and looks like continuing its flourishing ways into the next 12 months, if reports from at least two annual meetings are anything to go by.

From North of the Border down to the South of England come reports of successful reunions of two groups of the FC Retirement Association.

MID SCOTLAND AGM was held at the David Marshall Lodge on April 10 and heard reports of a financially satisfactory year with membership fees being untouched. Fund-raising efforts covered all outgoings and even gave a reasonable surplus.

Outings are planned as follows:

Tuesday, May 29 — To Queen's View Visitor Centre, Killiecrankie, at noon followed by a guided tour around Blair Atholl Distillery at 3 pm.

Tuesday, September 18 — Guided tour to Loch Awe Power Station and visit to restored Bonawe Ironworks at Tainuill. Times to be arranged.

Members from other branches are invited to join Mid Scotland on their outings. If possible coaches or minibuses will be arranged from Glasgow, Lochgilphead and Fife with pick-up at convenient points en route. Failing that, says secretary, Andy Gallacher, we will try to ensure sufficient cars to accommodate everyone. It is hoped to subsidise travel costs from branch funds.

Anyone wanting to join an outing should get in touch with their local group secretary or with Andy at 24 Dunlop Tower, East Kilbride, G75 0BS (Tel. 03552 41024) as soon as possible.

ALICE HOLT GROUP: 36 members attended the AGM.

The committee was elected as follows:—

Mr Ron Brown — chairman (0420) 22224.

Mr Lawrie Tee — deputy chairman (0420) 23352.

Mrs Wendy Lampard — secretary (0420) 23414.

Mrs Alice Taylor — treasurer (0344) 776749.

Mrs Lena Birchall — publicity person (0420) 23213.

Miss Betty Page — social secretary (0420) 50279.

Mr Bill Taylor — committee member (0344) 776749. Programme for the year:—

Monday, June 4 — Social meeting at Alice Holt (the New Forest Group for Lyndhurst will be invited). There will be a speaker.

Thursday, July 12 — All-day trip to House of Commons with Thames boat trip in afternoon.

Monday, September 3 — Social gathering at Alice Holt. Speaker: Dr Julian Evans, Chief Research Officer (South) on 'Tree Aid.'

Wednesday, October 17 — Theatre matinee visit to London.

Monday, November 5 — Social at Alice Holt.

Monday, December 3 — Christmas gathering at Alice Holt.

Prospective members should contact any of the above committee members for information.

MID-WALES GROUP: Wet and murky weather may have spoiled the views but failed to dampen the spirits of 26 members who visited Coed-y-Brenin on April 26.

FD Manager Mark Yorke hosted the tour which began with a pub lunch overlooking splendid scenery of the Mawddach Valley. This was followed by a bus tour in an area of nature conservation, and finished with a video presentation and of tea at Maesgwm Visitor Centre. Conservator John Morgan accompanied the party throughout the visit.

New members would be welcome: contact Denis Fisher, 16 Maesceinion, Aberystwyth (tel. (0970) 624848).

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have been taken to task for lack of Retirement Association items in our last issue ... the truth is that we received no contributions. The Editor wishes to stress that this is YOUR newspaper ... it is up to YOU to help us to pass on information of your various activities.

So please keep us — and all fellow members — in the picture by sending in regular reports to Editor, Slasher, Forestry Commission HQ in Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh.

And talking of pictures, let's have them too. We can't promise that all will be published, but we do like to have the choice.

SO KEEP IN TOUCH!



After 26 years, and the last five as District Manager, Perthshire, Graham Jeffrey said his farewells ... but not until after remaining hard at work until the very last minute.

His last day consisted of organising and chairing a meeting of the FD Environmental Panel, which culminated in the signing of five management agreements for SSSIs with Dr Ros Smith of the NCC (see picture above). Unconfirmed reports suggest that champagne was also produced — unfortunately not courtesy of Laurent Perrier!

Typically, Graham had not wished for a fuss, but did not get it completely his own way.

In addition to staff organising a civilised tea, Graham was surprised to find a new colour TV waiting for him at home — just in time for this rugby officianado to watch Scotland win the Grand Slam!

Charles Taylor, FD Manager, Perthshire, tells us that Graham, a self-effacing man, will be sorely missed by colleagues. "His manner

Graham works till the last

disguised a passionate commitment to forestry and to the well-being of his staff. This is evidenced by the good work left behind and his sensitive handling of the recent merger of Tummel and Tay FDs to form Perthshire FD."

Still in Scotland, and Alexander Banks LCEA (Alec to colleagues) retired in February owing to ill-health. A native of Dunfermline, he came to the Commission as a CEA in 1966 from the Coal Board and started work at the old Cairnbaan camp office above the Crinan Canal, in West Scotland.

One of his more unusual tasks was in the early 70s when Lochgilphead office was established at Whitegates. The adjoining area was sold, in a

unique FC project, as a fully serviced residential 44-plot development. Alec was involved in the preparation of all drawings for roads, sewers, water, electricity and plot boundaries and also acted as the Area Civil Engineer's clerk of works and quantity surveyor for the contract.

In 1973 he was promoted to LCEA and moved to Aberdeen and then Perth three years later, where he remained until retirement. For a short time he found himself surveying anywhere from Arran to Angus.

A farewell lunch and presentation by the Director of Engineering (and former CCE E(S)), Mr R. M. Hay, was held at Scone Arms.



A gift for Alec Banks from Director of Engineering R. M. Hay.

WALES CONSERVANCY SALUTES OLD FRIENDS

CAROL'S OFF TO CYPRUS

Wales Conservancy has said its farewells to several long-serving staff in the past few weeks.

Mrs Carol Weston, of the Conservancy Office, started her career in 1968 as a CA in Accounts Section. Subsequently, as CO, she worked in H&M, Estates, Estabs and latterly Engineering — thus completing a full circuit of the office.

Carol, who enjoyed a joke and is remembered in many office exploits, is retiring with husband Harry to live in Cyprus.

At a large lunchtime gathering, a cheque and a bouquet were presented by the A&FO, Iain Miller, on behalf of all colleagues.

Two men of Llanrwst FD who between them have nearly 90 years' service have also called it a day.

Peter Westley started his career in 1946 at the former Salcey Forest on the Buckinghamshire / Northamptonshire border. After serving with the RAF, he returned to the Commission and attended Gwentress and Gwydyr Forester Training Schools before coming to the old North Wales Conservancy. He had spells at Carno and Rheidol Forests, eight years with the Forest Surveys team in Mid-Wales, then in 1976 took charge of Llyn beat, part of Beddgelert Forest, now part of Llanrwst FD.

He is now developing his interest in photography and setting up a freelance business.

Peter was presented with Edinburgh Crystal by Paul Tabbush, Llanrwst FDM; and his wife Iris received a bouquet from Veronica Williams, FD typist.

George Parker, Roads Foreman, retired in March after 43 years, originally with the forest side at Coed-y-Brenin. He was transferred to the Roads Department in 1956 (allegedly as a punishment for not joining the British Legion!)

He recently received a certificate for his part in the Llyn Parc Mawr project at Newborough, which won a Prince of Wales Award; but his true forte was bridge building.

Many of George's colleagues gathered to see Mr D. J.



CAROL WITH IAIN MILLER



PETER
44 years.



GEORGE
43 years.

Killer, Conservancy Civil Engineer, present him with his service certificate, and with a pair of light-weight binoculars, a gift from friends and colleagues.

Forest Craftsman Cyril Price retired after 38 years at Clocaenog Forest, in Clwyd FD, in the forest management gang.

At a retirement party, Cyril was presented with his service certificate by Bob Farmer, Forest Management Officer.

Elwyn Pugh had 33 years as ganger in Tywi forest. He was employed in the whole range of forest operations and, in latter years, actually thinning plantations he himself had helped to plant.

Many friends turned out to wish him a good retirement at his home town of Tregaron. His good humour, level-headedness and practical knowledge will be greatly missed by all colleagues.

Elwyn was presented with his service certificate by Bob Farmer, and some humorous episodes from Elwyn's past were recalled by Dai Morris, John Jones and Roger Gatiss, district foresters past and present at Tywi.

Two farewells in Easter Ross



Two worthies of Easter Ross have bid farewell — Peter McKenzie (above) and Colin McDonald (below) received their long-service certificate from Bob Dunsmore, PF and EO.



Other retirements include ... Ian MacDonald of Kintyre FD's industrial staff, after 44 years.

Ian joined the Commission after leaving the marines at the end of the war, and worked almost permanently based at Carradale carrying out general FM duties including work at the old Carradale FC nursery.

He was presented with a barometer and a clock by Howard Embleton, Kintyre FDM, in addition to his long-service certificate.

Charles Pritchard, who started with the Commission in 1947 in Wales following a short period with the War Agricultural Department and National Service with the RASC, mostly in Germany. His whole career at Coed Sarnau (now part of Newtown FD) was spent on forest management.

Owen Ingram started at Coed Sarnau in 1954 following employment on farms and a garage where he was engaged on general mechanical work, lorry and bus driving — experience which proved invaluable in his later days where he was considered a good all-rounder in the FC. Most of his service was on FM with the exception of harvesting early larch thinnings and roadline felling.

A correspondent writes: Both men will be greatly missed for their all-round practical ability and willingness, particularly for the Commission's area at the Royal Welsh Showground, where they also played a part in constructing the permanent FC pavilion and play equipment.

Charlie was recently presented with his long-service certificate for 42 years' service by FDM Nye

Nicholas; and Owen for 35 years' service by Conservancy PF and EO Colin Bancroft.

Forest Officer Lew Richards, Coed Sarnau, presented both with inscribed tankards on behalf of colleagues.

Jimmy MacKechnie retired this month after 27 years at Glenbranter Workshop where he was senior storeman.

Jimmy, accompanied by his wife Gina, and sons Neil and Alastair, met 60 friends and colleagues at his farewell when a presentation of garden furniture was made by John Turnbull (DCME), who reminded everyone of Jimmy's love / hate relationship with the "computer." Jimmy, in return, gave a comical insight into a day in the life of a storeman at Glenbranter.

The Euro design

Forestry Commission "know-how" has been exported to Europe . . . in just a foretaste of the growing links with the Continent come 1992.

In April, Simon Bell, the Commission's senior landscape architect based at HQ, and James Swabey, West England Conservancy landscape architect, went to Herning on Jutland, in Denmark, to run a training course for the Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

Our landscape architects have become increasingly well-known for the advanced state of forest design and the landscape and training courses they run. A request from overseas is an entirely new venture and came from the Director-General of the Forest and Nature Agency (which combines forestry, nature conservation and countryside protection) when he visited Scotland last September. To understand

something of the Danish forests and their set up, Simon with Richard Broadhurst (senior recreation officer, HQ) paid a preliminary visit to Denmark.

People on the course — all speaking excellent English — represented the Agency, local authorities (many of which have urban forests), the private sector and research institutes, and they were involved in an exercise to design a forest on the outskirts of town on old farmland. Our picture shows the group with Simon and James (second and third left) relaxing with a bottle of lager after site survey.

Denmark has a substantial area of forest and plans to double the area over the next 70 or so years. Recent Forest Acts have created the need for a multiple use approach to forest planning, of which landscape design is a key component.

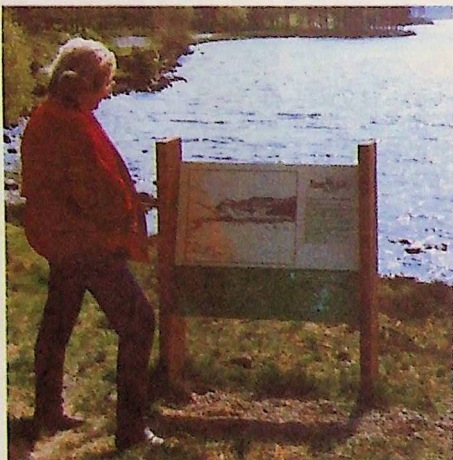


. . . and how new design for the Nineties put Thetford, Ennerdale and the Chilterns on the map

Trail-blazers!



Dr Jack Cunningham, MP unveils the start of the Ennerdale trail flanked by FDM Mike Scott (left) and Conservator Andy Neustein while (below) graphics officer Anne Baxter, who designed the illustrative panels, surveys her handiwork on site!



One of the sculptors, Timothy Shutter discusses with Keith Wallis of the Commission his stone table, just one example of the Chilterns displays.

KICK-OFF for the future of Britain's forests! And that the Forestry Commission is on the ball has been recently demonstrated by several major developments.

Trevor Brooking, MBE, the former international football star, officially launched Thetford Forest Park by booting a football; new trails have been opened at Ennerdale in the Lake District, and in the Chiltern Hundreds; and an "Easitrail" is to be opened in Wyre Forest in the Midlands this summer.

First to Thetford, and as chairman of the Sports Council's Eastern region, Trevor Brooking opened the Commission's latest park on May 11 by kicking a football instead of the customary "cutting the tape" ceremony.

After unveiling a threshold sign, he praised the work of the FC in setting up the park, which combined a working forest with one that met the needs for recreation.

As the father of two youngsters, "I see the park as an ideal place to spend a day out with them."

Thetford Forest covers an area of 20,000 ha and is the country's largest lowland pine forest with an interesting history. Producing timber is only one of its roles — it is also an important area for wildlife and people.

Ana Chylak, Forest Development Manager for Thetford, said: "Now with the status of a forest park, greater emphasis is to be placed on recreation, conservation and improved facilities for tourists to encourage visitors to spend more leisure time there. As well as horseriding, orienteering and carriage driving, we will have special events throughout the summer, with further plans later culminating in a seasonal walk at Christmas."

A major investment was made by the FC in developing the identity of the park. A new colour leaflet and guide map have been published, new threshold signs erected and a variety of publicity goods such as T-shirts, badges and stickers printed. All carry the Thetford Forest Park logo designed by Alan Chalmers (Design & Interpretation Branch).

A red squirrel will feature on all signs throughout the park in various lifelike postures.

Park facilities include a campsite, caravan sites, picnic areas, forest walks and

By SLASHER REPORTER

trimtrail living up to its proud claim as "Thetford Forest Park — a place for people."

Last word to Len Simpson, FD Manager at Thetford for 10 years: "I see today as recognition of what the staff here have built up over the years. A major and large working forest but balanced with the needs of the many visitors to the area. Our people have met the changing demands and I can see more projects being developed which will benefit all visitors. We are just stepping over the threshold to greater things."

Now to the Ennerdale Story . . . and a 13-mile trail illustrating the unique landscape history of Ennerdale, one of the most popular dales in the Lake District, was officially opened by Dr Jack Cunningham, MP for Copeland.

It starts at Bowness Knott and stretches along Ennerdale Water and into the forest. Along the way a series of information viewpoints explain the evolution of the dale from its formation by the glaciers of the Ice Age to how today's foresters are creating the forests of tomorrow.

Ennerdale was one of the first areas to be acquired by the Commission and the earliest plantings took place at High Beck in 1926 using labour from the high unemployment areas of West Cumberland. The conifers planted then are now reaching harvesting stage which gives a major opportunity to reshape and redesign the forest.

The second-generation forest will be carefully landscaped to add as much diversity as possible by varying species and following the natural contours of the landscape. Felling and new planting, particularly of broadleaves, has already



Furry friends, part of the Thetford logo series, join Ana Chylak and Trevor Brooking.



Trevor unveils the threshold sign after "kicking off" the new forest park.



started and the trail illustrates how the work is planned and what the dale will look like in the future.

Unveiling the first landscape board, Dr Cunningham remarked on his long association with the place and people of Ennerdale and called it "his most favourite place in his constituency." He praised the work of the Commission in "making very sensitive changes . . . people within the Commission should be congratulated for having the foresight and courage to make these changes and for preserving the special nature of Ennerdale."

Dr Cunningham was taken on a tour of the trail, and Liz McIntosh explained her role as a landscape architect and how factors of landform, scale and shape all combine in forest design.

Down to the Chilterns . . . a woodland walk meandering through 70 acres of FC woodland is set to become a major new arts venue. To be known as the Chiltern Sculpture Trail, this woodland display has been initiated by Oxfordshire Sculpture Project Group and the Commission.

They have invited six sculptors from the UK and abroad to take part in three-month residencies to produce site specific sculptures in response to the surrounding woodland environment.

Venues include a picnic area and access and parking for coaches and about 50 cars, and the trail is now open all-year round, with free admission.

Other plans in the pipeline include enhanced provisions for birdwatchers and a forest classroom for schoolchildren.

Still in the Midlands . . . and more people will soon be able to enjoy a walk in Wyre Forest as the FC begins work on a mile-long "Easitrail," which will feature an all-weather surface and shallow gradients to allow access for people with walking difficulties, those in wheelchairs, and families with children in pushchairs.

New walk

Baroness Trumpington, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, visited Kielder Forest to plant a maple tree to mark the beginning of a special woodland walk for disabled and able-bodied alike.

Sponsored by the Federation of Master Builders, the first phase of the walk is almost complete.

Prize pages

Slasher has done it again . . . winning an award from the British Association of Industrial Editors for its Christmas tree spread.

And the Commission's publication, "British Softwoods: Properties and Uses," has been listed as one of the top ten pieces of literature in demand from "What's New in Building."

Sorry, folks!

Owing to pressure on space, we have held back several features and pictures. We hope to publish them in our next edition of Slasher . . . meantime, let us assure senders of pictures that they will be returned as soon as possible after the July edition.

Some readers will know that Editor Roy Gregor has undergone a major operation. We are glad to report he is well and that he has left Edinburgh City Hospital. This issue of 'Slasher' has been put together by his colleagues, so don't blame him for any howlers!