

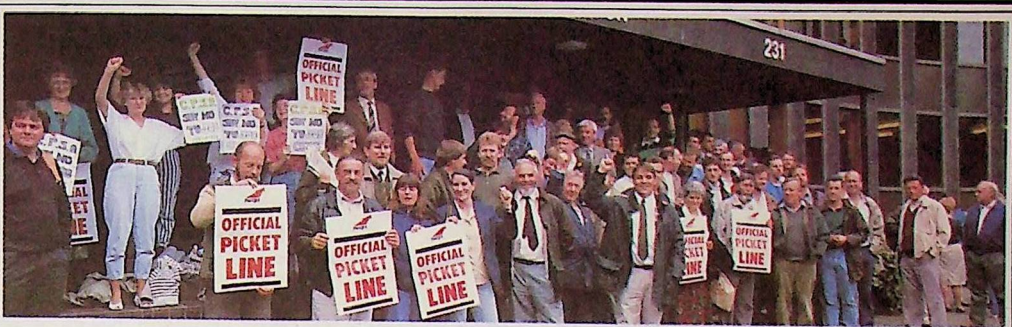
SLASHER



Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

September 1991

No. 353



Action this day

... and the official picket signs are out in force at HQ. Report in Page Two, together with Ken Murray's regular TUS Diary.

Retirements

Round-up of the long service men and women who have called it a day. Pages Six and Seven.

BRIGHTER BRITAIN

How our forests are sign-posting the way to success — Pictures and stories in Centre Pages.

Action men

How two hardy adventurers tackled the Pennine Way ... first part of a personal diary in Page Three.

Action men

... and women too, as the sports types of Scotland have a fun day out. Back Page.

Major study points the way forward

Expansion — by team of 14



An example of one area of British woodlands improving landscapes.

UP to a million hectares of land in Britain could be taken out of agriculture and used to create new woodlands and forests according to a major study published by the FC.

The Commission invited experts to write papers assessing the main factors bearing on decisions about the future direction of forestry expansion.

Fourteen specialist authors, including economists, foresters, ecologists and biological scientists wrote about current knowledge.

It is intended that the papers will form the basis for discussions of the location and type of forestry that will best meet the demands of society for wood products, jobs, recreation, amenity, wildlife conservation, carbon storage and the other uses and benefits supplied by forests and woodlands.

Professor Ian Cunningham of the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute steered the study and wrote a comprehensive summary. The key recommendation is a dramatic increase in forest cover in Britain over 50 years which could ease Europe's problem of agricultural over-production, help to tackle global warming, and provide areas for recreation and commercial timber production.

"What we're really trying to do is set the agenda for forestry expansion in an environmentally friendly way," said Prof. Cunningham.

The most important direct benefits would be ...

- Increased wood production, to permit a sustained expansion of wood processing in the UK over the next 50 years.
- Greater provision for outdoor recreation and sporting.
- Support for remote rural communities through job creation and widening the base of local economies.
- Improvements to degraded landscapes and derelict environments and reinforcements of the woodland components of other landscapes.
- Expansion of scarce wildlife habitats.
- A contribution to international efforts to reduce environmental damage through cross boundary pollution, notably global warming.

The FC's Director General, Robin Cutler, said: "The studies show that to achieve expansion without damage to other land use interests, attention has to be paid to the effects on farming, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, landscape and archaeology, and must also recognise the general dislike for rapid change in the countryside. Provided that this is done there is much scope for forests that serve multiple uses."

Forests are the natural vegetation of the whole of mainland Britain, save for the high mountain tops and permanent bogs. Early man found the country densely wooded but this primeval forest was cleared so comprehensively for agriculture that, by 1990, only 5 per cent of the country remained wooded.

Pete's peaks



Pete Collin, Assistant Conservancy Mechanical Engineer at Inverness, recently celebrated his completion of climbing all 277 Scottish mountains over 3000 feet, known as Munros.

On the summit of Beinn Alligan in Torridon, Pete was presented with an inscribed slate and a bottle of champagne from his hillwalking FC colleagues. Also present were friends from the Inverness Mountaineering Club and Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.

Unusually for a 'Munro-bagger', Pete's first Munros were the inaccessible Pinnacle and Sgurr nan Gilleann in the Cuillin of Skye six years ago.

After a transfer from the Department of Transport in London to N(S) Conservancy five years ago, he was able to tackle the remaining Munros in earnest.

One hundred and fifty of the summits were climbed alone and around 30 with a companion.

Also under Pete's belt are all the mountains over 3000 feet in England, Wales and Ireland.

Apparently his future plans are to tackle the Munros by ski!

Our picture shows Pete with FC hillwalking colleagues (from left) Jim Muir, Ray Cameron, Alan Duncan, Hugh Insley, Terry Confield and Bryce Reynard.

Survey shows gaps in recruiting

THE results of the staff ethnic origin survey have been a bit of a blow to the FC's equal opportunity policy. Only one industrial and five non-industrials claim to be of ethnic minority origin, a representation of 0.1 per cent compared with a population representation of 4 per cent throughout the UK.

Doug Goddard, Equal Opportunity Officer, told Slasher:

"Even allowing for the fact that the Commission does not have offices in those parts of the country with the highest levels of ethnic minorities, our results are very disappointing, all the more so given that the Civil Service as a whole has succeeded in attracting and recruiting ethnic minority applicants in proportion to their representation within the community."

Work hard

"It may well be that the vast majority of our recruitment schemes have been for singleton posts in rural or semi-rural parts of the country where the numbers of ethnic minorities are fairly small and the competition from white applicants is severe," he said.

"But whatever the reason we are going to have to work hard to improve the position over the next few years, given the limited recruitment opportunities."

Programme

In common with the rest of the Civil Service, the FC has drawn up a Programme for Action, concentrating on initiatives to attract more applicants from ethnic minority groups.

Doug added: "If the Commission is to project the Government's developing environmental and social forestry policies, clearly its staff should be more representative of the public it serves."

David's job

ASSISTANT Conservator, Wales, David M. Hughes, has been appointed Chief Conservator of the Forest Authority National Office there under reorganisation and takes up his new appointment next April.

He was appointed from a short list of five, and will immediately be responsible for forward planning in consultation with existing Conservators and HQ staff.

● Further details in our next issue: meantime, turn to Page Six for a new column detailing appointments within the Commission.

Anglian survey

OWNERS of broadleaved woodlands in East Anglia are to get special advice and support in a new project announced by forestry Minister Baroness Trumpington.

A recent survey in Norfolk and Suffolk has shown that three-quarters of woodlands there are in a state of neglect. An increase in active management of the woods would benefit the landscape, wildlife conservation, historic features, wood production and employment.

Pest hunt

LOCAL householders' and woodland owners' help is needed in the hunt for the serious tree pest, the Great Spruce Bark Beetle.

Commission experts want people to allow access to their gardens and plantations to check spruce trees. They are also appealing for information about other spruces in the area.

'CAPER' GIVES EDDIE THE BIRD!

IT was no caper when Eddie McIntosh ventured too near to a courting capercaillie. It sent him flying!

Eddie, a civil engineering foreman, tried to photograph the bird in a Perthshire forest as it spread its colourful plumage.

Capercaillie objected strongly. The species is known to be somewhat aggressive during the "lek" period, and this particular one charged Eddie, knocking him to the ground.

This was just the latest of a number of similar attacks in Perthshire this year.

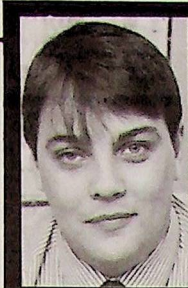
Harvesting foresters Mike Cheesewright and Mike Flinn had to retreat when a capercaillie prevented them carrying out a crop inspection. "I thought I was in for a rough time," said Mike. "I wasn't able to get out of the way as quickly as the bird wanted!"

Malcolm Wild, Environment Forester for Perthshire FD, said: "It is encouraging to hear that capercaillie feel confident and secure enough in our forests to establish their territory in such a positive way!"

Continued Page Three

quote

I hope we start involving the people of this country in the forestry of their country. That is important.



**TUS
DIARY
—by Kenny
Murray**

WHEN I suggested in July that the Forestry Commission was in some way being prepared for Agency status and the fate of Forestry Enterprise eventually was to be privatisation, some of you may have thought I was kite-flying. No way. This information came from reliable sources outside the Commission. But let's look at what has happened since.

In my July column in *Slasher* I asked for unequivocal assurances that no discussions had taken place between senior FC officials and Treasury.

Well, our DG, Robin Cutler, has indeed through the Personnel Newsletter given this written assurance. What a surprise! Did we really expect anything different? Did you expect them to say, "Okay

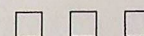
we've been rumbled?" Or to say, "Yes indeed we did talk to people in Treasury about this but we can't tell you anything — let's wait until the 'Daily Telegraph' does it at some point in the future"?

This may sound cynical — it is cynical — I feel cynical right now. HM Treasury is keeping close tabs on what is occurring at the moment within the FC. Just remember, for umpteen years the FC has categorically stated — and this was accepted by Treasury — that our accounts were so complicated that they could never be split and we therefore ought to stay as one entity and that nobody should make any further inquiries and leave us alone.

Certainly this was the foundation of Lord Sanderson's evidence to the Select Committee on Agriculture. We now find ourselves in a totally new ball game. A high-risk gamble which, by the way, only the bookies can win.

I want the Forestry Commission to succeed. I believe in the Commission — I believe in it passionately. I just don't believe that what we are doing right now can escape the politicians' notice. I don't believe it can escape the dogmatists' notice.

I can only hope along with you that we really can tie the FC to the public; that we can really regain the ground lost over the last 10 years to pressure groups; that we can really start practising multi-purpose forestry instead of talking and writing about it; that we start involving the people of this country in the forestry of their country. That is important. I believe that people at the top of this organisation think that. I can only hope the method they have chosen to deliver that is successful, but . . .



Staff's day of action



Good idea! And it's in line for new award

A design for a guard for the new fleet of Akerman harvesters has won one award for £50 and is in line for yet another award.

The South Scotland Staff Suggestion Committee have said that after analysing the problem, a staff member had devised a method of guarding vulnerable areas to reduce damage risk. If his design prevents lights being broken only once in a machine's lifetime, then the guard will have paid for itself.

So effective is it, that the guard is now standard on the Akerman harvesters, and Central Committee have been asked to consider a further award.

Two other awards have been made by the South Scotland scheme: £25 has been paid for a suggestion for a payroll upgrade to calculate individual average earnings; and £10 has gone to an employee for his development of the semi-circular spade made locally. This has led to cost savings.

The payroll idea has been passed to Business Systems Division for implementation when time allows.

Birthday tree gift

THE 200th anniversary of the Ordnance Survey was marked by the Forestry Commission with a commemorative tree.

When Keith Ball from Forest Survey Branch, a major customer of the OS, heard of the anniversary, he suggested to the Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, David Perry, that the gift of a tree would be a fitting gesture.

The OS had lost a fine Cedar Atlantica from their office grounds at maybush in Southampton in the 1990 storms and a replacement was chosen.

Forestry Commissioner Ron Hancock presented the tree to Peter McMaster, Director General of the OS, and the planting was carried out by the Duke of Richmond whose ancestor was involved in the formation of the OS in 1791.

Some of the FC workers from all over Britain who travelled to HQ to protest against proposed redundancies following reorganisation.

The rally by members of NUCPS and CPSA marked the first strike action ever taken directly against the Commission and was planned to coincide with a scheduled Commissioners' meeting.

Proposed cuts of 158 jobs represent 8 per cent of the FC's non-industrial staff and the unions felt that proper procedures used in fixing staff complements had been ignored and a staffing review was required.

A statement from management side said that a review conducted by management had resulted in agreement with the unions to set up five consultative committees to look at staffing levels.

It added that management had explained the reason for the planned reduction in posts with staff but said no final decisions had been taken. "All the issues are still under discussion with the unions."

It was argued that the type of review sought by the unions could take between a year and 18 months to complete and so delay the process and continue the uncertainty.

A number of meetings took place between both sides and,

Agreement reached on talks over cuts

following detailed talks agreement was eventually reached.

The Whitley Council agreement on reorganisation will enable consultations to proceed between the Trade Union Side and management to establish complements in the new FC organisation.

Main points of the agreement are:

- No set targets regarding the future size of the workforce have been established.
- No conclusions over the scale of job losses have been reached.
- The four Special Joint Committees which have been established to consult on complements and the departmental level Reorganisation Consultative Committee (RCC) will seek to resolve all difficulties by mutual agreement.
- In the event of failure to agree on the Complementing Committees, important subjects of principle or complementing problems which have departmental wide implications may be

referred to the RCC which is chaired by the Commissioner for Administration and Finance.

- Any matters which remain unresolved by the RCC may be referred to a Joint Committee composed of the Executive Board (chaired by the DG) and representatives of the trade unions up to General Secretary level. The Joint Committee may consider methods to resolve disagreement such as staff inspection or external consultants.
- Any staff reductions arising from reorganisation will be achieved so far as practicable by natural wastage, early retirement on a voluntary basis, control of recruitment, staff transfers on public interest terms and voluntary redundancy.
- Unions and management agree that it is in everyone's interest to co-operate as fully as possible throughout the reorganisation to achieve a strong, effective, Forestry Commission as the Government Department responsible for forestry.

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the time of going to press, 'Slasher' was unable to carry the news of the latest Complementing Committee meetings. It is important that both management and unions keep all staff fully informed over developments that concern their future.

We are perhaps unique among other Government Departments in that our policy role is envied by other organisations and subtle 'bids' are continually being made to take the British forestry initiative.

It is therefore important that all members of FC staff keep themselves aware of the current situation. This is a time of rumour, speculation and uncertainty. Only facts and certainties should be discussed and developed.

An organisation is only as strong as the people within and we must ensure together that we emerge as the unquestioned authority for British forestry.

OBITUARIES

BOB FIFE, who retired from Mendip Forest SW(E) in November 1975, died on July 9, aged 76.

Following training at Lynford, Bob was forester-in-charge Fernworthy, Dartmoor; PW Forester Somerset; SW(E) training forester; and finally head forester Mendip.

Bob will be remembered not only for his ability as a forester but for his military bearing and no nonsense approach to bureaucracy. He is survived by his widow, Margaret.

We hear also of the death of **Basil Jackson**, Ranger attached to Bramfield in Hertfordshire for 18 years until his retirement in 1978. He

was fortunate in that he spent his working life doing what he most enjoyed in his leisure time — being in the countryside with his gun and dogs.

He leaves a wife, two sons and much loved grand-daughter.

SIDNEY GEORGE KING died at home, in Northampton after a long illness, on August 7, 15 years after retirement. He had nearly 30 years' service in forestry, including periods at Lynford Hall, Sheeringham, Norfolk, Great Hockham, Thetford Chase and private woodlands. He leaves a wife, three sons and a daughter.

TALKS on complements continue apace in England, where the Special Complementing Committee (SCC) has been a refreshing change from some of the others that I have heard of and participated in. There is a genuine will to ensure that the job is going to get done.

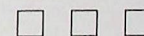
But let's not kid ourselves. The one issue that governs everything to do with this reorganisation is that this is meant to be a nil cost exercise.

This means that, in effect, all complementing committees are hamstrung by cost rather than efficiency. This seems to make a nonsense of some of the platitudes thrown to staff in recent weeks. In Scotland, several problems have been encountered and concerns expressed, but we can only hope that matters improve there.

Wales, however, has proved to be something of a problem due to a reluctance to supply full and considered information to back up proposals made. Our job is to ensure that members are properly represented: we will continue to do this. We can only hope that commonsense will prevail and that we will be able at some point to make sure that the FC in Wales is effective and strong.

Some of you may have heard about the debacle concerning welfare provision within the new structure. In Wales, despite assurance from Commissioner Grundy that the same number of welfare officers will operate within the new structure, the Conservator has refused to reinstate the welfare officer post for Wales! When this was brought to the attention of the Reorganisation Consultative Committee at HQ, the TUS witnessed some appalling behaviour from management over an agreed issue for some considerable time.

Management totally refused to state that the welfare post in Wales was reinstated. Now, you know that it has and I know that it has; the RCC has acknowledged that it has; and the Conservator knows that it has but he refuses to concede this and management at HQ level refuse to insist that he does. One thing must be made perfectly clear as a result: management must tread warily of decisions taken at HQ level. We expect the RCC to oversee matters of general principle within the Forestry Commission. Unless the RCC is seen to be doing its job properly, the TUS and the membership have no confidence in it whatsoever.



MANY OF YOU will be aware of the recent publicity surrounding the disposals programme. The "Mail on Sunday" carried a prominent article on its front and inside pages concerning loss of access to FC woodlands after sale. This was followed up recently by articles in the "Guardian" which also attacked the Government's disposal programme and Government reluctance to make a clear and concise policy with regard to access to those woodlands. This public campaign is long overdue.

Privatisation of state industries was the flavour of the 1980s. The reason given by the Government for transferring these industries was that they could be better managed in the private sector. No such excuse can be given for the FC or for its forests. No such excuse dare be given. So why is it then that the public find that almost 400,000 acres of their land has passed into private hands in the last 10 years?

If it's not for reasons of sound management what can it be? It is merely the old adage that land is power. There is no sense behind this policy. *It must be stopped.*

I am delighted that politicians and journalists are taking an interest in this issue. The Government has avoided for far too long answering fundamental questions in regard to their disposals policy (or assets stripping). Trade Union members within the Commission should also take heart from this. Members should write to their MP or to a Minister about disposals and reorganisation and ask what is going on. Ask them why we have no direction and no clear overall policy. Why do the Government not care?

We can only hope that the judgment of those in senior positions within the FC is sound. If not . . . then I am afraid that the FC as we know it, or even as we are beginning to know it, will not exist in three to four years.

Everyone in the Commission ought to know and has a right to know precisely what the future holds. If management want to carry staff with them they should divulge the Commission's objective — where we are heading. If the workforce is to be motivated they have to be informed. A "let's get them before they get us" philosophy in isolation just will not suffice.

Two intrepid explorers test their mettle... and their legs

HERE we begin a stirring account of a sponsored walk of the 265-mile long Pennine Way undertaken by two explorers from HQ. Joint expedition leaders were Keith (Sir Ranulph) Gliddon and Ken (Sherlock) Milsom — the latter so called because life is a complete mystery to him. This article is based on extracts from Keith's daily diaries. Although primarily a personal account of their experiences they hope it will give a good enough overview of the Pennine Way to encourage others to follow in their footsteps.

Oh! What a lovely walk...say some!

DAY 0 — Edinburgh to Edale: Off to a good start... Ken locks himself out of his house with his rucksack still inside. And this is the man who had booked our accommodation for the next two weeks!

Drive to Sheffield, drop off hired car and then encounter our first navigation test — to find railway station. Need the help of friendly natives but eventually catch 17.28 to Edale. Starts to drizzle as we leave train — an omen perhaps! A quiet night at the hostel studying tomorrow's route.

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DAY 1 — Edale to Crowden (15 miles): Start: 9.00. Finish: 18.00. Feel somewhat put out by 1.5 mile walk from hostel to The Old Nags Head, official start of the walk. Take obligatory snaps of each other below the sign. (Find out later than Ken has cut off the sign in taking my photo).

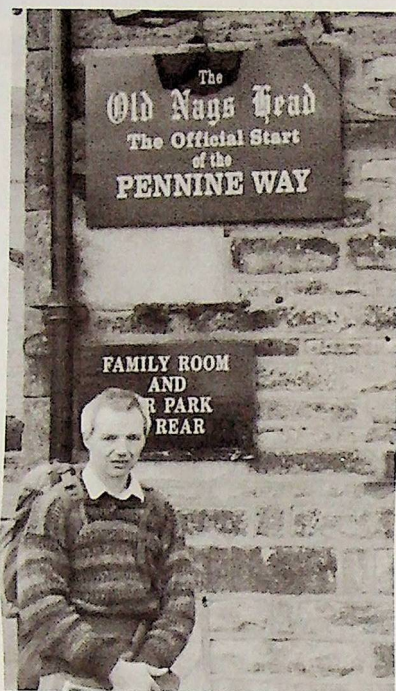
Make our first error as we climb from top of Jacob's Ladder to Kinder Plateau, a notoriously wild and boggy place, but soon re-discover the route. Alas the hell-hole of Featherbed Moss awaits us. We must have zigzagged twice the official distance trying (not often succeeding) to avoid the peat bogs. Freezing cold and windy to boot. Somebody with a warped sense of humour had put duckboards just beyond the deepest bog on this stretch and I have to laugh when, having avoided the trap myself, Ken goes in above his knees.

Lunch at the Snake Pass is a cheerless affair, eaten wearing gloves and balaclavas. Serious error coming off Bleaklow Head sends us down wrong valley as we descend to Crowden. An extra hour's walking puts us right but Ken was not a happy man. Feeling better after a shower and a meal in the hostel but then more bad news: we are assigned washing-up duty. Sounds OK until we realise that over 70 people have taken the three-course meal! Takes six of us over 1.5 hours but we make friends with fellow walkers. We like the cut of "bearded chap from Rochdale" who impresses us with his knowledge of route.

Well, that is the first day over and our feet are still sound. Ken reports that his left knee, still being nursed after a cartilage operation, feels slightly "fat." That worries me because there is worse to come tomorrow.

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DAY 2 — Crowden to Mankinholes (25 miles): Start: 8.30. Finish: 19.30. A long day in prospect but we have recovered well and set off in good spirits for Laddow Rocks and enjoy the climb to the crags. Glad the strong wind is blowing on to the crags as we walk along the steep edge. Just before the summit of Black Hill, a plateau of badly eroded peat, we are caught by a chap called Andrew who cheers us further by telling us that he made the same error as ourselves yesterday at Bleaklow. We team up until Standedge where Andrew will stop. Black Hill is easily found and thankfully dryish! On the descent to Standedge we are passed by "bearded chap from Rochdale" moving well. We join him for lunch at the wayside tea van. Ken gleefully gulps down large mug of tea then another while "bearded chap from Rochdale" dispenses more free advice. We continue but four miles further on Ken spots another tea van on the A672. We indulge again before crossing the trans-Pennine motorway. Still some way to go and reservoir roads seem to go on forever. Ken is feeling the pace but



An apprehensive Ken Milsom contemplates the start of the Long Walk... but spirits are soon revived by his copious cuppas of cha!...

follows gamely as I show no mercy. By the time we reach Mankinholes we are on autopilot but we get a cheery welcome and a big meal — not easy to take after 11 hours' walking. Ken has a sore shin and Achilles tendon but on different legs but we don't feel too bad. In fact we don't feel much at all... just happy to have survived what should be our hardest day until the last.

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DAY 3 — Mankinholes to Ickornshaw (20 miles): Start: 9.30. Finish: 17.30. Easier walking north of Hebden Bridge but Ken tries to spoil plans by putting his foot through the slabs of packhorse bridge — this man is jinxed! A dog of indeterminate make falls in with us near Walshaw Dean reservoir. We stop for lunch but can't shake off the dog which follows us through Bronte land to Top Withens and beyond. We have no desire to be accused of dog-napping so eventually resort to violence which seems to do the trick. Ken is bitterly disappointed that the tea room at Ponder Hall has gone. I remind him that it was 16 years ago but this is little consolation to a man weaned on tea. We catch up with three campers who are having route-finding difficulties and smugly inform them where they went wrong. Competition is fierce on the Pennine Way. Their packs look heavy but we encourage them by mentioning the Black Bull awaiting them at Ickornshaw. We leave then slaving and press on.

Just before we reach Ickornshaw we catch Ron and Alan, fellow washers-up at Crowden. They are staying in the same B&B as us and we become regular companions over the next week.

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DAY 4 — Ickornshaw to Malham (17 miles): Start: 9.00. Finish: 16.30. Excellent

breakfast at The Hawthorns and we look forward to the Aire Gap and the easiest stretch of the Pennine Way. We make good time and don't stop until we lunch on the towpath of the Leeds-Liverpool canal. At Gargrave we look for a cuppa but get more than we bargain for. The hostess at the Dalesman Cafe is a saleswoman par excellence and a real character to boot. We hear ourselves agreeing to take her special salad sandwiches having lunched only an hour back. These are real doorsteps and Ken is on his fourth cup of tea before we finish. While eating we are kept amused by four wise-cracking Yorkshiremen — cyclists all — and we also sign the Pennine Way book placed in front of us. There is a depth of feeling in some of the entries that only fellow sufferers can truly appreciate. I like the one which reads "RIP Robert. Dropped out after seven miles but not forgotten."

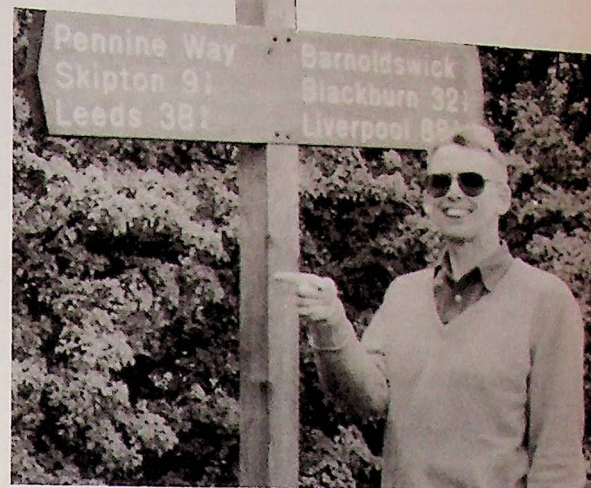
Highlight of our afternoon is Ken's "Jimmy McGregor" style interview of a dry-stone waller hard at work. Ken opens up with the classic "Are you a dry-stone waller then?" to which the reply is a simple "yes." The interview continues in similar vein for several minutes until all concerned are bored and we move on. Gosh, life can be exciting on the Pennine Way! As we approach Malham we do our good deed for the day by helping out two men and a woman who are having route-finding problems through a farm.

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DAY 5 — Malham to Horton (13 miles): Start: 9.00. Finish: 15.30. The start of a period of shorter days, the sun shines and we risk shorts for the first time. The limestone scenery is great and we get some good snaps as we climb up Malham Cove and walk carefully along the famous limestone pavement on the top. Easy but impressive walk to the Tarn where we "bird and plant spot," using comments in Ken's guide book as clues. A guessing game really and we regret that we are not more knowledgeable. Beyond Fountains Fell we see the unmistakable stepped profile of Pen-y-Ghent for the first time. This part of the walk is also on the Three Peaks walk and is suffering badly from erosion. We pass several of the Countryside Commission's attempts to renew the paths but it is hard to be optimistic of any lasting success. On the summit of Pen-y-Ghent we see a party of about 40 schoolchildren measuring the effects of (while adding to) erosion.

We home in on the Pen-y-Ghent cafe in Horton, famous as the start and finish of the Three Peaks walk and for its Pennine Way book. We are a bit short of inspiration and scribble some trite comments while, you've guessed it, drinking tea, this time from pint mugs. I decline Ken's offer of a second pint and we book in to The Crown Hotel, our bit of luxury for the fortnight. I offer Ken first go at the bath as his need is greater than mine but discover to my chagrin that he has used all the hot water. No more Mr Nice Guy! Another convivial evening in the company of fellow walkers. In addition to Rod and Alan we now know three walkers from Yorkshire — Colin, Christine and Archie, who we met yesterday and who, from our first conversation with them, have exactly the same schedule as ourselves all the way to Kirk Yetholm. Ken's appetite is voracious and he has a meal in each of the two pubs that Horton has to offer. He'll suffer for that tomorrow!

MORE IN OUR NEXT EDITION



A picture of contrast... Keith Gliddon is showing a much braver face as he points the way forward. No looking back for this man...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Juniper riddle

Dear Editor, More about the Juniper riddle, which I was interested to read about in the "Here & There" section of the July *Slasher*.

There is another mystery about this species in the South of England: it grows well and is fairly common in the Wiltshire chalk downs but stops abruptly along the Dorset border. Why is this — did some landowners object to it?

Some botanists have supported that the Dorset chalk areas are too close to the sea — but does this not apply to sites in

north Dorset just over the border from the Wiltshire boundary.

Has anyone a good answer to this oddity?

Of course there is another amazing thing about juniper — it thrives in very acid soils in the Lake District and Scotland — yet loves the alkaline sites on Chalk Downs!!

May I conclude by saying that despite having been retired from the FC for 23 years I still much enjoy the *Slasher*.

Yours MAURICE NIMMO, of PEN-Y-CEFN, Haycastle Cross, Haverfordwest, Dyfed.

Up the pole — and down!

Sir, I well remember that flagpole mentioned by Jock Low in the April *Slasher*. During my time at Crychan Forest in the 1960s, two forest workers were detailed to paint it before a visit by the Prince of Wales. A colleague (I think it was forester Hoskins) rigged up a boatswain's chair. The man with the paint was about 50 ft. up when his mate holding the rope suddenly sneezed!

For a moment he lost control

of the rope and the man on the pole shot rapidly downwards!

His mate regained control and the painter's neck was saved when he was pulled up with a mighty jerk three feet short of the turf. After regaining his breath (and wiping paint from his eyes and mouth) he naturally berated his mate, whose only retort was: "I told you to put your bl---y helmet on!" — Jack Jennings, Hampton Bishop, Hereford.

Feely tree

Sir, The Chiltern Feely Tree (*Latimus Boothensis*) is not of French origin as indicated in your April issue. Research shows that the Feely Tree is native to the abandoned watercress swamps of the Chess Valley, Buckinghamshire. The hollow stems and feely holes evolved over aeons of time as

nesting sites for a rare form of resin-coated duck.

L. Boothensis was first recorded in 1990 on discovery by Alan Booth, the talented Chiltern plantsman. — Yours spoofingly, Bert Dover, Wellwood, Coleford, Glos. GL16 7LZ.

Expansion study

From Page One

Sporadic efforts to conserve and reforest in Britain, occasionally with Government help, achieved very little by the First World War in contrast to other European countries.

Since the FC was born in 1919, successive Governments have pursued an expansionist policy for forestry. The main purpose of the programmes of afforestation and regeneration was the creation of a resource to supply the domestic market.

The result of this sustained support for forestry expansion is a forest estate of over two million hectares — 10 per cent of the land surface — but Britain is still the second largest importer in the world of wood

and wood products. This new study guides the way in which further expansion should be considered.

The community forests initiative is already up and running but this work is likely to blossom into the creation of hundreds of urban woods close to towns and cities designed for the public.

Mixed forests in upland / lowland margins for commercial, social and environmental benefits and restoration of native woodlands, particularly the Scottish pine and birch woods, will ensure that continued forestry expansion takes in all the uses and benefits trees can give.

Picture special ... how our forests are making their mark

Take the M from Mabie . . . the A from Alice Holt . . . the R from Rendlesham or Radcock, then the K from Kielder. Put 'em all together and they make a MARK! Add many other bright and breezy areas that initiate and encourage activities galore and there you have it: the Forestry Commission is certainly making its MARK.

And that's what it is all about . . . keeping the FC image squarely in front of the public, getting the people involved. As the picture and stories that abound in this page clearly illustrate.

Even more areas are undoubtedly involved in "selling" the Forestry Commission, yet are backward in coming forward to boast of their successes through the columns of *Slasher*. Let's hope that this round-up will encourage them to keep us in touch.



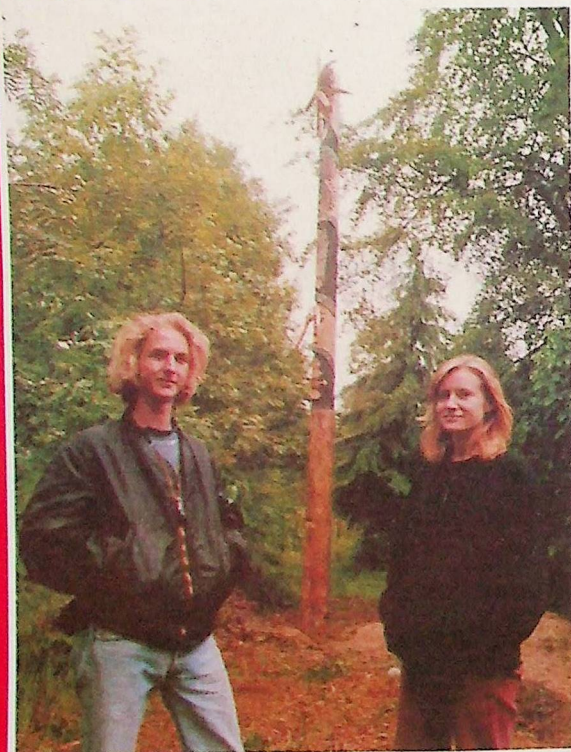
AT WORK ON THE TOTEM CARVINGS

Up the pole!

A Forwarder machine had an odd job in West Downs FD recently . . . placing a 20 ft. totem pole sculpture just outside the Visitors Centre.

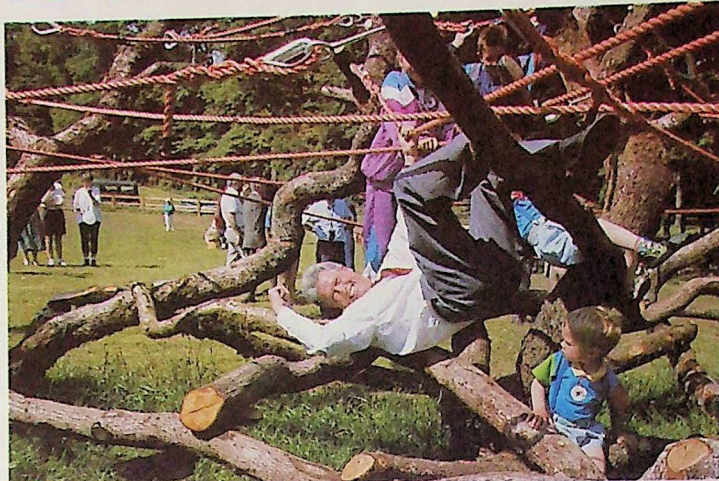
Students from West Surrey College of Art and Design have created six sculptures from the natural materials they found in the forest. Their project was to observe the forest environment and to express their response to it.

Sculpture lecturer Sharmian Thomas said: "It was a great challenge to work with natural materials and the group has done well. The foresters have been really supportive and I think the sculptures will be an added pleasure for visitors to enjoy." Welcoming groups into the forest to work on projects with the Commission is important to District Forester Ken Shuker. "We want people to tell us what they want to see so we can work and enjoy the West Downs forest together," he explained. "We particularly want to encourage local people to produce similar pieces that fit in with this landscape."



THE JOB'S DONE . . . THE POLE'S UP!

BRIGHTER BRITAIN



THE ROAD to a brighter Britain is signposted in many Forestry Commission areas . . . not least down in Dumfries and Galloway. There — at Mabie Forest just four miles from the centre of Dumfries — TV personality John Craven was their VIP visitor last month when he opened several new features.

Forestry has been an important part of life here since about 1800 when policy woods were planted around Mabie House and a great variety of tree species and ages can be enjoyed by visitors. The forest itself was acquired by the FC in 1943.

Last year a car park was constructed to cope with the growing popularity of the forest and as Valerie Shipp, Nithsdale FDM, explained: "We are seeing an increased interest in the countryside and through our new facilities we now cater for the whole family."

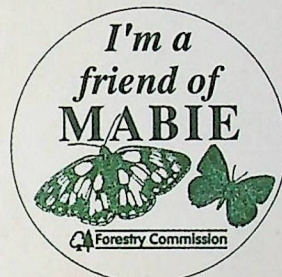
John Craven was tempted (above) to try out the Adventure Trail, an activity route set in deep undergrowth where children can climb through and across specially constructed child-sized 'forest homes.'

They are able to crawl in a spider's web, creep into a squirrel's drey, burrow into a badger's sett or visit a tree house. While the children are burning off some energy, adults can enjoy the views from picnic tables scattered over the area.

John Craven also launched the opening of 200 miles of new way-marked forest cycle routes which run throughout Dumfries and Galloway. The outcome of a detailed study conducted by John Taylor, a keen cyclist and retired forester, the initiative is the largest and most comprehensive cycling project developed in the UK.

John Taylor spent many hours trying to assess the suitability of routes for mountain bike enthusiasts as well as those graded for family enjoyment. "In the forest you can't go anywhere without encountering a hill but we tried to make the steepest downhill rather than up!" he explained.

Exploiting the rare opportunities presented by the great forests of Galloway, six forest cycling centres are being launched. These span from Mabie Forest and the forest of Ae to



Dalbeattie Forest and three centres in the Galloway Forest Park at Kirtcubbin, Clatteringshaws and Glentworth.

The role of the FC in encouraging public access to its estate was praised by John Craven. "It's wonderful the things the Commission are doing these days," he said. "I get very worried when I see children on country lanes on their bikes. At Mabie, children have the chance to use mountain bikes in the right kind of terrain in safety."

Forest cycling routes also have an important role in a broader strategy planned by Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board, whose director, Andrew Llanwarne, said: "We very much welcome these latest measures to open up the forest areas to recreational use."

John Craven echoed the tourism potential: "This is a beautiful area and part of that beauty is the forest. The FC have provided an attraction for families on holiday which is a wonderful asset."

To further encourage visitors, Nithsdale FD have set up a "Friends of Mabie" scheme. A season ticket allows reduced parking costs; car stickers, badges and newsletters are given out. As Valerie explains: "It's good getting people out into the countryside and getting them interested in what's happening."

Border moorland plan

The maintenance and improvement of the conservation value of over 10,000 acres of heather moorland along the England-Scotland border was formally recognised by the signing of a management plan of the area at Kielder Castle in the Border Forest Park.

The culmination of several years of effort, the Kielderhead management plan is also the product of a partnership between several organisations involved in nature conservation.

The plan was drawn up by members of English Nature, Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland, Northumberland Trust and the Forestry Commission.

Co-operation by the FC both north and south of the Border ensures that the moorland is managed in such a way as to maintain and, where possible, improve its conservation value.

The Kielderhead area, a Site of Special Scientific interest, supports a rich variety of breeding birds (golden plover, dunlin, lapwing, oystercatchers, curlew and several species of raptors). Plant species (heather, cottongrass,

crowberry and cloudberry) thrive; altogether there are more than 200 species of flowering plants, 150 species of mosses and liverworts, and 30 lichen species.

James Ogilvie, Kielder FDM, said: "When you consider the Kielder area has the largest man-made forest in Northern Europe, it's important we ensure a balance between trees and open ground. Kielderhead provides a marvellous habitat for moorland birds, plants and animals as well as enhancing diversity for wildlife within the Border Forest Park."

PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS PENNY!

Travel-tired commuters at Marylebone weren't the only weary ones . . . as this lovely study above of Penny Knock shows.

She had given the travellers at the London railway station a taste of the country life when Chilterns FD staff set up a forestry display there to show what it can be like away from the hustle and bustle of the big city.

Keith Wallis, District Forester, explained: "Wendover and Hodgemoor Woods are less than an hour away from Marylebone station and we set up this exhibition for a week to encourage people to enjoy the forests which are easily accessible and provide a great day out."

The display was manned each day by FD staff who answered questions ranging from the new Woodland Grant Scheme to the lack of litter bins on the station!

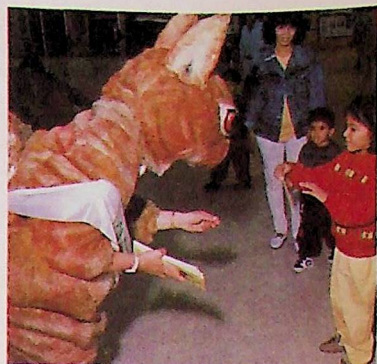
Penny, the Recreation Ranger, was clearly visible among pin-stripes dressed as a red squirrel — courtesy of Thetford FD.

The Forest Fitness Trail in Wendover Woods is a popular attraction and one of the exercises was set up at Marylebone for people to test their fitness.

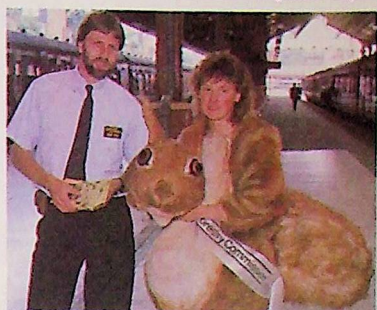
The week was considered to be a great success with more than 3000 copies of the Chilterns guide leaflet given away. Interest was shown by a wide variety of travellers ranging from the local MP, foreign tourists, to a forester from FAO based in Rome.

Still on the travel theme . . . and the Forestry Commission teamed up with other organisations in North Yorkshire to form a new initiative for the summer called "Steam and Stroll" which combines guided country walks with the magic of steam railways.





Penny hands out guide maps.



Mark Prior and Penny at Marylebone.

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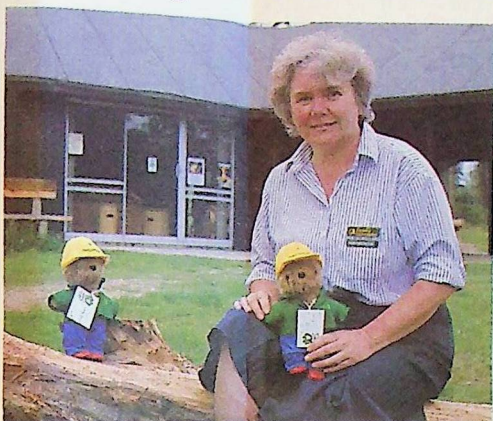
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Phew... and squirrel Penny Knock loses her head!

Tony reaches the heights!



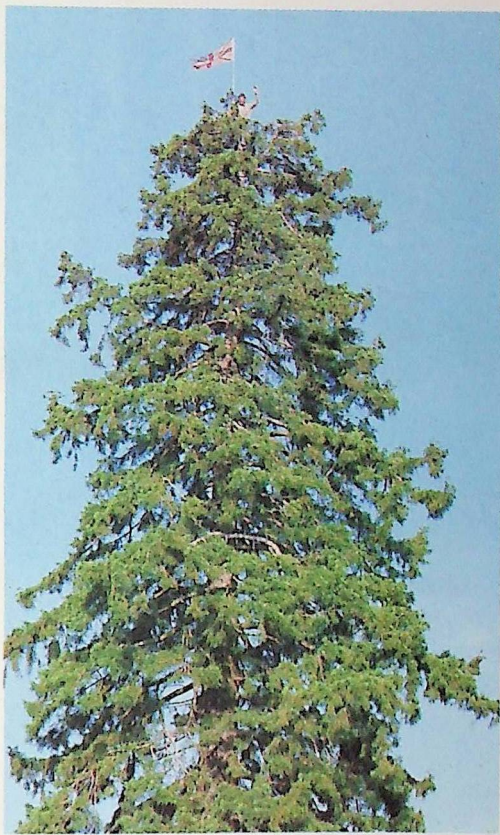
Just peering above the top-most branches... birthday boy Tony Waddell flies the flag at fifty! Staff at Alice Holt came to work one recent morning to find this Union Jack flying from the top of a 100-foot Wellingtonia.

Tony (of Seed Trading Branch), celebrated both his 30th and 40th birthday by flying the flag and repeated his "Tarzan" act for this 50th, marking the occasion as only he knows how! "The view from up there is marvellous," he claims — but admits that although the tree hasn't changed much over the years he certainly has. "It took me half an hour to climb the tree as the branches droop and make the ascent quite difficult."

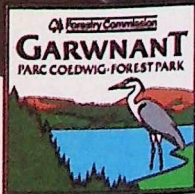
What will happen in July 2001? Watch this space for Tony's retirement presentation!

Still at Alice — and there's a new species of wildlife there. Recently discovered near the Information Centre were these two cuddly forest bears, shown with the shop manageress Mrs Muriel Ballard.

Each has its own personal name (Sid Spruce, Dougie Fir, Oscar Oak, Henry Hemlock, etc.) and is fully dressed in FC clothing complete with logo! All available from Alice Holt Information Centre at £9.95 each.



From left at Garwnant, John Morgan, Conservator, with Craig Paddle, Justin Evans, and Jonathan Vizzard of Fitzalan High School, the Cardiff, who were presented with the Garwnant Wayfaring Challenge Trophy by Roy Noble of the BBC.



A NEW-LOOK WELCOME IN THE VALLEY

Garwnant Visitor Centre set amid spectacular scenery overlooking the Llwyn Onn reservoir north of Merthyr Tydfil was re-opened by BBC Wales personality Roy Noble following a year of extensive refurbishing.

Alun James, Morgannwg FDM, said: "Garwnant has always been a popular attraction. The centre now includes a new tearoom and forecourt, and a great deal of work has gone into improving the surroundings. Inside the centre, we have an audio-visual display and 'classroom' for schools and other groups."

A heron is prominently featured on the new logo, designed by the FC Design and Interpretation team. The bird has a long association with the area which contains a number of reservoirs. A heronry is situated in surrounding forests.

A long-distance 'Taf Trail' from Cardiff to Brecon passes through the centre, offering splendid views of the South Wales valleys.

In addition to growing trees for timber, skilful management of the Brecon forests also provides environmental education, wildlife conservation and recreation opportunities. An adventure play area and orienteering course have been set among the trees.

Radnor rules the weeds

FIELD DAY SHOWS HOW IT'S DONE

While their Northern cousins at Roslin celebrated the coming of age of NRS, staff of Silv (S) had their own "field day" when English Forestry Minister Baroness Trumpington visited FC research plots in a working farmer's fields at Radcot Bridge Farm near Oxford.

The Baroness opened the joint FC/private sector event "Profitable Farming, Practical Conservation." She toured the farm on an open tractor and trailer and examined FC research plots in detail.

W(E) Conservator Roger Busby played host while Alice Holt Silv(S) project leader David Williamson filled in the technical details of his team's work at the farm.

The FC has about two hectares of research plots at the Farm and is working with a herbicide firm, Willmot Industries, and with Tilhill Economic Forestry to produce practical solutions to problems associated with establishing farm woodlands on arable land or improved grassland.

The plots are divided into a number of distinct areas which typify woodlands planned for a number of farm objectives:

GAME SPINNEY — a practical demonstration of how to lay out a commercial woodland and designed to be attractive to game birds. In conjunction with Tilhill Economic Forestry, the spinney demonstrates how to gain a commercial return on a woodland planted for a most popular objective — game cover — on the farm. The farmer therefore could gain financially in two ways: shooting and timber.

HERBICIDE SCREEN — herbicides already exist to control arable weeds in agricultural crops. To achieve good weed control in woodland plantings, some herbicides must be used. This plot examines what these products do to tree and hedge saplings.

GROUND FLORA — Management plots show the importance of active management of farm woodlands. This is particularly relevant now, as this month the Commission is offering farmers and other landowners new grants for managing woodlands in addition to the planting grants already available.

An untreated control plot shows, as a contrast, the problem of prolific weed growth on fertile sites if there is no management. The plot also demonstrates the effect on trees — i.e. poorer growth.

STRIP WEED AND MOW — The cheapest practical option, offering good tree establishment due to weeds being controlled by regular mowing.

STRIP WEED AND KALE — Offers good tree establishment due to weed control but also provides a woodland of use as game cover, so is a clear contender for shooting enterprises very early after initial planting. The kale excludes the weeds.

BARE GROUND — The so-called "scorched earth" policy is an option farmers may be tempted to use. But it looks awful, brings problems of soil erosion, demands a high pesticide input, and leads to nitrate leaching into ground water.

STRIP WEED AND GRASS/WILD FLOWERS — Best all-round option, giving good tree establishment due to weed control by a herb rich sward of wildflowers under the trees, most attractive and has considerable conservation interest.

Sick and tired

David Williamson comes from a background in agriculture — he qualified in Agriculture and worked as an agricultural rep before taking his Forestry degree at Bangor — and he feels strongly about the inadequacy of many people's attempt to talk to farmers about farm woodlands.

"Farmers are sick and tired of being given advice," he says, "especially about how worthy they should be. It's no use talking to farmers in foresters' or conservationists' language; you need to talk about their problems in terms they understand. Of course they are in favour of conservation, but they will be asking questions like, 'What it will cost?', 'Can I use farm machinery?' and, most important, 'What will it do to solve my problems?'"

David foresees disaster if advice to farmers is not properly co-ordinated: "If they try to establish a tree crop and it goes wrong they will simply give up and never try again. We need to talk about planting with spacings to allow mechanical management using techniques that they are used to, and encourage weed management in ways that are familiar to them. They also need product advice alongside silviculture advice, so that they can cost the alternatives, a partnership that forms the kernel of our approach here at Radcot Bridge Farm."

More incentives

The Baroness seemed to agree: "No-one doubts the value of conservation in the countryside. The key, however, is in exploring ways in which conservation on the farm can be achieved in tandem with real advantages to the farming enterprise. The idea of wildflower-rich grassland on field margins or under trees, bringing not only conservation benefits but solutions to farm problems, appeals enormously."

"The Government is committed to seeing more trees planted on better-quality land in the lowlands, especially on farmland. The Woodland Grant Scheme now offers more incentives than ever before for planting trees on arable land or improved grassland. But to ensure the successful establishment of trees on suchland, farmers will need to have proper advice on such matters as weed control. The demonstration plots here go a long way to exploring practical solutions to real problems."

"Well-established woodlands on farmland are potentially rich in conservation value. We are keen that they continue to be looked after, hence the Government's support for farmers and other landowners with these grants."



Grizedale staff keep their new T-shirts dry in the main marquee . . . but it's never mind the rain for Baroness Trumpington as she raises a smile AND her umbrella.



THE EXCELLENCE OF GRIZEDALE . . .

Baroness Trumpington had another open day in her diary . . . that at Grizedale Forest where she said: "Access to woodlands is something which this Government encourages."

"While much has already been done to open woodlands to the public, there is still much untapped recreational potential to be realised. Woodlands are marvellous places in which to seek peace and solitude and Grizedale is an excellent example of multiple-use forest management. It is able to cater for the needs of tourism, specialised sport and wildlife studies; cope with day visitors, naturalists, holidaymakers and picnickers; and all the while being managed as a productive forest."



A better day among the wildflowers of Radcot.

Butterflies safe

FORESTERS and butterfly experts have joined forces to protect three rare species of butterfly.

The FC and Lincolnshire's branch of Butterfly Conservation have established a butterfly sanctuary at Twyford Wood, near Colsterworth, to protect three rare species — the dingy skipper, grizzled skipper and green hairstreak.

Only fifty years ago the species were a common sight in Lincolnshire, but have declined because their natural habitat is fast disappearing.

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

APPOINTMENTS

Marcus guides community forest plans

MARCUS SANGSTER has just started at HQ as Community Forestry Officer to oversee the Commission's involvement in Community Forest projects throughout Britain.

Marcus, a botany graduate of Imperial College, London, worked for the Institute of Tropical Silviculture in Oxford for two years before completing a Masters degree in Forestry at Oxford and subsequently joining the FC in 1976. He then worked in Gloucestershire, Inverness-shire and the Lake District before moving to the West Midlands in 1984 as FDM where he has been closely involved in the 'Forest of Mercia' community forest initiative and the Black Country urban forestry unit.

He told Slasher: "My appointment reflects the FC's commitment to bring its considerable experience, expertise and resources to develop and shape this important land use which has so caught the public's imagination. From experience gained working with the forest project 'Forest of Mercia' in the West Midlands I realise the great interest shown by people in woodland projects close to where they live" he said.

● A young "dynamic duo" have been appointed to improve facilities at South Downs. They are Rachel Anderson, who at 23 becomes District Forester for recreation and amenity; and ecology graduate Ian Butterfield (25), who takes over as a Ranger (education and recreation). Further details with picture in our next issue.



Top community forest officer Marcus Sangster accompanies a certain VIP around this year's Royal Show.

PERSONNEL NOTES

On the move

INTRODUCING a regular column detailing movement within the Forestry Commission as compiled by Personnel Branch...

NEW APPOINTMENTS

NAME	GRADE	LOCATION
Cottrell, Dr J E	SO	RD NRS

INTERNAL TRANSFERS AND PROMOTIONS

NAME	GRADE	OLD LOCATION	NEW LOCATION
Stevens, A W	FOI	N(S) Inverness	N(S) Inverness FD
Petty, S J	FOII	RD Alice Holt	Promotion in situ to FOI
Charlesworth, P	FOIII	Wales, SE Wales FD	HQ Forest Surveys on promotion to FOII
Fleming, C	FOIII	RD NRS	Promotion in situ to FOII
Fletcher, M C	FOIII	E(E) South Downs FD	E(E) South Downs FD on promotion to FOII
Proudfoot, J C	FOIII	HQ Forest Surveys o/s Alice Holt	RD Alice Holt
Sewell, B C	FOIII	HO education and Training Branch o/s Dyfi	M(S) Perthshire FD
Tarwinska, Miss I M	FOIII	M(S) Perthshire FD	HQ Education and Training Branch o/s Ae
Smith, K C	FOIV	N(E) Kielder FD	Wales Newtown FD
Burke, P D	SRII	N(E) South Lakes FD	N(E) South Lakes FD on promotion to HR
Stephen, D J	SEO	HQ Finance C	Wales Aberystwyth
Harmer, Dr R	SSO	RD Alice Holt	Promotion in situ to Grade 7
Houston, Miss T J	SO	RD Alice Holt	Promotion in situ to HSO
Crow, P	ASO	RD Alice Holt	Promotion in situ to SO
McEvoy, C	ASO	RD NRS	Promotion in situ to SO
Porter, T J	ASO	RD Alice Holt	Promotion in situ to SO

WALES

FOREMAN JOE IN THE PICTURE



SNAP! And Senior Foreman Joe Powell poses for a last picture that marks his farewell to the Forestry Commission at Llandovery Roads in Wales.

With him (left) is Area Engineer Colin David who had presented a microscope attachment for his camera, plus a cheque.

Joe is a keen amateur photographer and intends to devote more time to his hobby.

He has spent the past 25 years with the Civil Engineering Dept; before that with the Ministry of Agriculture.

At the informal presentation at Llandovery FD office, Joe also received his service certificate from Conservancy Civil Engineer David Killer.

Forest Craftsman Brian Marshall, retired in June after 38 years' service. During his early career Brian was employed on forest management and harvesting and marketing duties, and for the last 13 years he was warden at the Bwlch Nant yr Arian Visitor Centre.

Brian was presented with his service certificate by Bob Farmer, Forest Management Officer.

Ganger Verney Hamer of Ceredigion FD, retired after 33 years and he received his service certificate from Conservator John Morgan. A former FC lorry driver, Verney was the last



VERNEY HAMER
33 years

member of the old Tarenig gang employed on forest management duties.

Gwyn Thomas Jones retired on medical grounds earlier this year after about 29 years' service, mainly in mid-Wales. Before Gwydyr Forester Training School (1964-66), Gwyn worked on pre-school practical work in the Dyfi forest. He served as a forester at Coed-y-Brenin, Lake Vyrnwy, Clocaenog and (from 1982) at Aeron, which was amalgamated on two occasions to the present Ceredigion FD.

David Hughes, Assistant Conservator Operations, presented Gwyn with a watch and cheque from colleagues past and present at a farewell dinner in Aberystwyth.

Gwyn's wife, Anne, was presented with a bouquet by Mrs V Davies, AO, Conservancy Office and former AA at Ceredigion FD.

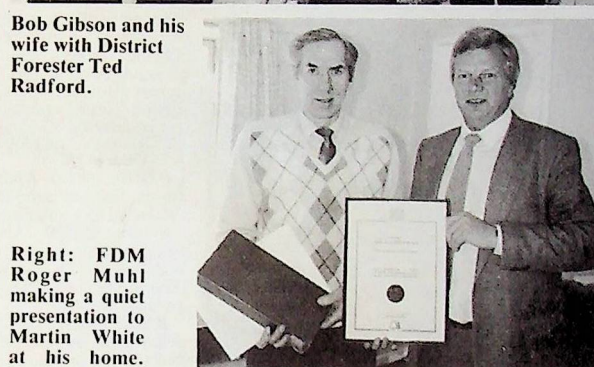
Five Scots take their bow



Betty Wilson and husband Ronald with FDM Kevin Wilkinson, and two AOs Rhoda Keenan (with flowers) and Cathie Galbraith.



Bob Gibson and his wife with District Forester Ted Radford.



Right: FDM Roger Muhl making a quiet presentation to Martin White at his home.



Fred Menzies with his wife and grandson and FDM Kevin Wilkinson.

FOUR men and one woman of the Scottish forests have taken their farewells of colleagues.

Their service ranged from 26 years to 40 years.

Leading the way are two men of Lothian and Tweed FD, Martin White (40 years) and Bob Gibson (36).

Much of Martin's time was under the old Glentress banner, and District Manager, Roger Muhl, said that never were the words on a long-service certificate more appropriate as Martin had indeed given loyal and faithful service. His quiet gentlemanly manner had endeared him to many friends and colleagues.

He is an accomplished artist and at a ceremony at his home Martin — who had requested a quiet farewell — was presented with a complete set of watercolours.

At Glentress in May, District Forester Ted Radford paid tribute to Bob Gibson as a quiet man who had given loyal and faithful service and like Martin had commended himself to everyone by his quiet conscientious manner.



Jimmy Milne with FDM Charlie Taylor.

Bob's career began at Cardrona forest — just across the Tweed from Glentress and he lived at Kirkburn for 30 years. Latterly during long service as a ganger, Bob spent much of his time on harvesting.

Bob was presented with a radio and cheque, with which he intends to buy a bowling jacket.

Colleagues, family and friends gathered at Strathgry in June to mark the retirement of forest ganger Fred Menzies after 34 years' service.

When presenting his service certificate, FDM Kevin Wilkinson remarked how Fred's range of skills and abilities had been a great asset to the Forest District. Having such a range of skills was the key quality for forest craftsmen in forestry today.

Fred was also presented with a radio-cassette recorder and his wife, Catherine, received a vase and bouquet. They are continuing to stay in Strathgry village.

Jimmy Milne SRI retired after 33 years, most of which was spent in Perthshire FD (alias Tummel FD, alias Tummel Forest, alias Glenorchy Forest).

In Aberfoyle FD, Betty Wilson AO has retired after service starting in the old Loch Ard Forest 26 years ago. A woman of many hobbies — walking, badminton and golf among them — she intends to buy a motorised caddy with the cheque she received at her presentation. She also received a flower arrangement.

Saddle-sore!



INTO the bucket has gone Don Kearl's motor-cycle gear... and he has threatened never again to ride his moped! Don travelled daily to work in the New Forest from his home in Lynton and he admitted ruefully at his retirement presentation that he could not have faced another winter riding the infernal machine into work. So to celebrate, he had thrown his gear into the dustbin. Or so he said...

Don, a Forest Craftsman, had 37 years with the Commission, and at his farewell in Lyndhurst Club — where Forest Operations Manager Roger Newland made a presentation — there were many tales to tell of his interest in the horses (racing variety), and of other unreportable incidents...

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



CONGRATULATIONS TO PHEMIE



CHEERFUL CLIFF FENNELL



ALBERT EDWARDS AND PROUD FAMILY

RARELY, if ever, does a Queen's Honours List go by without reference to men and women of our forests . . . and here's a trio to prove it.

Special award ceremonies were held to honour Phemie MacKinnon of Scotland North: Cliff Fennell of the New Forest; and Albert Edwards, in Wales . . . all FC stalwarts, and all appropriately linking the three countries that make up the British mainland.

Phemie MacKinnon (62), of Strontian, Acharacle, Argyll, is the widely respected former Administrative Officer at the Strontian office and is a driving force in the local community.

She started with the Commission in 1964 as a forest worker at Polloch, Glenhurich, undertaking a variety of manual tasks on woodland maintenance. In 1966 she transferred to Polloch office as a forest clerkess, and then she was promoted to Administrative Officer when Strontian became the office for the new Forest District in 1985.

Phemie has given outstanding service.

Her personality ensured that all visitors were made welcome and her application of well-honed office skills, coupled with her profound knowledge of the Commission's operations throughout the Forest District, made her an invaluable assistant to the many

Medal moments

professional staff who have worked with her over the years.

She is very much involved with community activities and is the main driving force in Strontian Women's Rural Institute, organising numerous events such as whist drives, sales of work, etc., for charity. For many years she has also helped to raise money for, and subsequently organised, sports days and children's Christmas parties. She is a member of Sunart Community Council and of the hall Committee and a long-serving member of the local garden show committee.

Phemie MacKinnon received her BEM from the Lord Lieutenant of Inverness-shire, watched by (above left) Jim Atterson, Conservator N(S).

Down to the New Forest . . . where Cliff Fennell, Forest Craftsman, was presented with his BEM by Lt. Col. Sir James Scott, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, in a ceremony in the Verderers' Court, Lyndhurst.

Cliff started with the Commission 50 years ago and has continued to date apart from four years' service with the Coldstream Guards in the 1940s.

He is particularly skilled in the selective felling of large broadleaved trees and was given the task of bringing down the New Forest oaks which contributed to the Commission's gift to help to restore York Minster after a destructive fire.

Cliff has represented the Commission many times on local and national TV and radio. His dry wit and calm philosophy ensure that everyone meeting him remembers the encounter. He gives his time freely to demonstrate his crafts to hundreds of visitors to the New Forest and each year talks about his job with visitors from the Summer School for the Blind for whom he has developed a wide range of techniques to explain his work by means of touch, smell and sound.

Finally to Wales, where Albert Edwards, Forest Worker at Llanryst FD, was presented with his medal by R. E. Meuric Rees, Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, at a ceremony in the Pritchard Jones Institute, Newborough. In our picture above are Albert's wife and daughter and Conservator John Morgan.



FDM Jack Nicholson presents Frank Cox with his service certificate after 41 years at Arundel Forest, and (below) a similar ceremony is performed by District Forester Colin Shanks for David Catchpole (right), who had 35 years' service.



Peter gets send-off

FORMER Head Forester at Rockingham, then latterly FO11 in work study at Santon Downham, **PETER LANE** has retired after 40 years' service.

In a rousing send-off at Thetford, he was presented with a handsome cheque, cartoon caricature, and a special "tree" (further details and picture in our next issue).

GORDON RICHARDS of Halwill, South-West England, retired after service extending over a period just a few months short of 40 years. Tom Fitzgerald, FDM Torridge, presented him with his service certificate and a pair of binoculars. Mrs Richards received a bouquet.

THE 40-YEARS-PLUS BRIGADE

Nursery bids Bill goodbye

Several FC workers with more than 40 years' service — one just 12 months short of his half century — are now into well-earned retirement.

Bill Bartholomew, Nursery Manager at Wykeham, retired at the end of May after nearly 42 years.

Bill started with the Commission at Benmore in 1948, then after two years in the Navy he went to the Forester Training School at Glentworth and from there to Sherwood and then Grizedale. In 1962, he transferred to the old NE(E) Conservancy, where he remained for the rest of his career, first at Kielder and subsequently in the North York Moors area. It was 1972 when he first struck up what was to be a long and affectionate acquaintance with Wykeham Nursery.

At an informal gathering at the Nursery Office, Bill was presented with a bottle of whisky and a potted Sitka spruce as a small farewell gift, then in the evening friends and colleagues from far and wide joined Bill and his wife Barbara for dinner. Mike Lofthouse (Nursery Officer) presented Bill with a card and cash gift, and Barbara received a bouquet from Helen Critchley (Nursery AO).

Bill, a keen golfer, intends to buy a motorised golf trolley with his gift.

AN exceptional 49 years of service has been notched up by Forest Craftsman **Donald Morrison** of Glenelg, Wester Ross FD, who was presented with his long-service certificate by Jim Atterson, N(S) Conservator at Glenelg Hall. Donald also received a wallet of notes from colleagues and his wife Nancy received a bouquet.

Before becoming a Forest Craftsman, for many years Donald had been a chainsaw operator and a winch operator. His father,



TOMMY AND VIOLET MACKELLAR

Angus, also worked for the Commission at Glenelg, as a ganger.

Still in Scotland . . . and in Buchan FD, **Jim McNaughton**, Forest Worker, retired at the beginning of July after 44 years' service.

Jim has always worked in the Bennachie area, starting in 1947 with the road squad then transferring to forest work. He was a member of the planting squad and helped in planting a large area of Bennachie and Oyne. In latter years he has marked a lot of these trees for thinning.

Sandy Calder, PF & EO, presented the service certificate on behalf of the Conservator. Jim also received a tankard and cheque at a party held by friends and colleagues.

Lorne FD saw the retirement of Ganger and Beat Steward **Tommy MacKellar** after 40 years. Tommy started with the FM Squad in Asknish Forest in 1951 before graduating to the West Scotland Ploughing Team for the next 27 years. Over 10,000 ha was put to the plough by Tommy with his TD9 and County Tractors in all forests from Saddell and Glenrickard in the west to Garadhban and Devilla in the east. Since 1978, Tommy has been Ganger in Barcaldine Forest and latterly Lorne FD on the FM function.

Keith Miller, FDM, presented Tommy with his service certificate and a watch on behalf of colleagues and friends.

Down to England, where Andy Neustein (Conservator N(E)) presented **Dicky Tyson** with his service certificate after 44 years working on all aspects of the forest at Thornthwaite.

Mike Scott presented Dicky with a pair of binoculars from all at Thornthwaite.

South Downs FD said farewell to two forest craftsmen, **Frank Cox** and **David Catchpole**. Both were presented with substantial cheques, a number of other items, some humorous and their wives received bouquets made and presented by Mrs Davis, AO.

Frank Cox served for 41 years on the various forests of the Arundel beat. After the story of 1987 he found himself clearing and replanting areas he had planted as a young man. Latterly he had been guiding many trainees, some of whom will be the foresters of tomorrow. A few days after his retirement he received his service certificate from FDM Jack Nicholson at the old Arundel Forest office.

Retiring due to ill health, **David Catchpole** had 35 years' service mainly on the woods that make up what is now the Hursley beat. District Forester Colin Shanks presented him with his service certificate.



Bill Bartholomew with Wykeham staff.



Donald and Mary Morrison with (from left) Conservator Jim Atterson, Grant MacIntosh (DF operations, Wester Ross) and Ron Johnstone, FDM (right).



Jim McNaughton, Buchan FD (second left), receiving his certificate from Sandy Calder, watched by Brian Stanger, Bennachie, and Jim Findlay, Huntly.



Good sports of NRS make their mark again

Not content with hogging the headlines in our July issue, Northern Research Station at Roslin are doing it again . . . by showing a clean pair of heels (several of them, to be exact) to other sporting types in the Forestry Commission. For the NRS team came out overall winners of the annual FC sports day held at Muirhouse, Edinburgh. Five teams from NRS and HQ (Mid Scotland were unable to compete) took part in eight sports, ranging from frantic mixed football to hockey, bowling and putting. There was some difficulty in recruiting participants for the over-35 races . . . are the "seniors" so unfit or merely shy about their age? It says something for the calibre and training of FC staff that when Graeme Coulthard (Finance C) took a nasty tumble on the hockey field and dislocated a kneecap, eight fully-qualified First Aiders were already on the pitch! Special thanks must be given to Alison Prior for her smooth organisation of the contest though more support from some senior members of staff would have been welcome. Results were announced at a Karaoke night, with NRS emerging triumphant, though it's said they would have been severely penalised if their singing efforts had also been taken into account! For the record, the NRS victors were (from left pictured): Mo Donnelly, Linda Arbuckle, Kirsty Venner and Elaine Bell Jack, and (at back) Alistair Hendry, Chris Smith, Ewan Alexander, Derek Nelson and George Prior.

Here and there

Join the club

DID YOU KNOW that you can stay overnight in the heart of London for as little as £28? That's the bargain offered if you join the Civil Service Club just off Whitehall.

Membership can now be enjoyed by you, simply by authorising deduction from salary each month — £2.17 for Londoners, or £1.67 for country members. If over 25, there's a joining fee of £17 — membership forms can be obtained from the club membership secretary at 13-15 Green Scotland Yard, SW1A 2HJ.

Facilities include a bar, diningroom, social evenings and outings, holiday discounts and reduced insurance rates.

Phoenix signals a start

Agriculture Minister John Gummer signalled the 'rebirth' of Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk, when he unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of a Phoenix Trail.

The forest, which was almost completely destroyed in the Great Storm of October 1987, has now been cleared of the debris from more than one million trees lost in only two hours. A replacement planting programme of more than 4 million trees is now underway.

The Phoenix Trail, a five-kilometre way marked route through the forest, marks the beginning of its restoration and will be a permanent feature of the forest as it slowly grows to maturity.

Bob Hands, Suffolk FDM, says, "The trail is the first of a series of new public facilities planned for the future. We have organised guided walks and a number of special events including a nightjar watch and a bat box workshop.

"These provide an opportunity for the community to see and discuss the complexities involved in rebuilding the forest for the benefit of both wildlife and people."

Rare birds

In addition to planting using a mixture of native broadleaved trees and Corsican pine, many areas are also being left unplanted to maintain open heathland — an important conservation characteristic of the area.

Derek Moore, director of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, explains the landscape importance: "The storm created great open areas which were absolutely wonderful for two of the rarer bird species in Britain — the woodlark and nightjar."

Six special conservation sites are being managed to maintain suitable habitat to ensure the woodlark's survival. This involves providing a mixture of bare land and short vegetation which is the species preferred nesting site.

The Phoenix trail is only the beginning . . . slowly but surely Rendlesham Forest is rising again.



John Gummer . . . in on the re-birth.

SEND-OFF FOR KEN



Ken Roscoe, the cricket-playing Lancashire man who supports Clachnacuddin football team, has ended his reign as A & FO in North Scotland by retiring after 39 years with the FC. Almost half of his time was spent in N(S); the remainder in Aberystwyth, York and HQ. At a dinner dance in Inverness attended by colleagues from many parts of Britain, Ken was presented with a handsome cheque and was later pictured here with wife, Margaret. Ken, long remembered for his pawky comments which illustrated his recognition and understanding of human nature, is staying on in Inverness. ● More retirement reports and pictures in Pages 6 and 7.

Benefits for all as society ups dues

Two changes directly affecting the general membership of the Post Office and Civil Service Sanatorium Society were adopted at the annual conference held in Scarborough.

They involve cancer care benefits (now available to all regardless of previous health history); and the contribution rate (increased to 45p a week from next January).

DHSS Branch proposed the benefits change pointing, out the society does not place any other conditions to benefits, nor does the society request a medical examination prior to joining.

In presenting the annual reports, the society's secretary, Mr Laurie Horam, said: "That our work is necessary is evident from the continued increase in the number of members seeking help and support. In the past two years the society has arranged some 55,000 specialist consultations; it has treated 10,000 in-patients; and has come to the aid of over 1500 cancer sufferers."

The society's 41st conference was attended by 300 delegates, representing 70 branches, plus a further 150 visitors and observers. Thirty amendments and 13 restrictions were put forward.

● More information about the society from POCSSS, 29 St George's Place, York YO2 2DT, or 'phone (0904) 642222.

Tour date

The next Retirement Association outing will be a conducted tour of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Dawyck on Wednesday, October 16. Because of its special interest to tree lovers, it is hoped all interested will note the date and join the party. At least one DG and a varied selection of Directors, Estate Staff Chiefs and "humble charcoal burners" are expected.

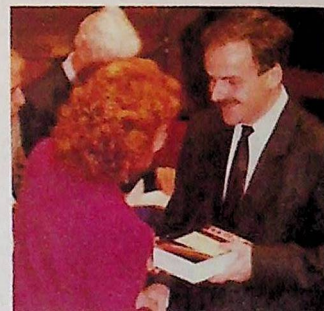
Bring picnic lunch, waterproofs and suitable footwear. Cars leave HQ at 11.30 am. If you have spare seats or if you require transport contact Bill Sutherland, 20 Cairnsmuir Road, EH12 6LP. (Tel. 031 334 6898).

An association meeting will be held at Glasgow People's Palace on September 17.

Rab's top student

RAB BECK, cartographer FSDO, has been named top student of his year.

Here he is receiving the first-year prize for his Scotvec topographic studies course at Glasgow School of Building from Mrs Pignatelli, wife of Strathclyde's director of education.



On yer bikes

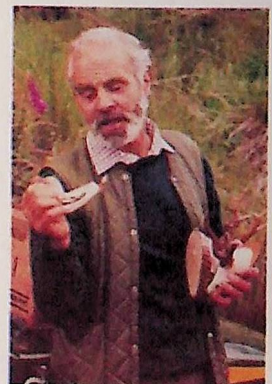


TWENTY adventurers from N(E) Conservancy office at York took a day out to visit Kielder Dam where FDM James Ogilvie led them on an eight-mile cycle tour. Later Brian Long guided the party on a tour of Kielder Castle and the information centre.

Gordon honoured

Gordon McReddie, Head Ranger at Kielder, has been elected an honorary life member of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation.

It is in recognition of "his enormous contribution to the extremely worthwhile success of the BASC/FC Roe Management Scheme at Spadeadam Forest in Cumbria since its inception in 1984."

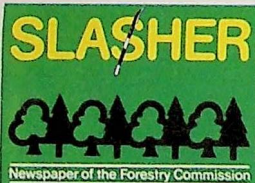


Director wanted

The RSFS are looking for someone to take on the new position as Director of the society to take office in May 1992 on the retirement of the present secretary. A three year part-time contract will be offered and further details are available from Secretary, Royal Scottish Forestry Society, 11 Atholl Crescent EH3 8HE.

Broadleaf talks

Various speakers are involved in a symposium organised by the SCI Agriculture Group and the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland to be held in Belgrave Square, London, on November 19. The subject: Broadleaf trees — potential for lowland production. Registration forms are available from SCI Conference Secretariat, 14-15 Belgrave Square, SW1X 8PS. Fees range from £12 (students) to £44 (non-members).



PASS ON THE NEWS

There's much happening in the forestry scene, as the activities in these pages testify. We would like to thank all who have contributed to our columns . . . and appeal to others to give us their news (and pictures).

Copy and pictures can be sent direct to the Editor of Slasher, Jill Mackay, at HQ in Corstorphine, Edinburgh, or to the regular correspondents listed below

ENGLAND
N(E) — Sandra (Sandy) Willey
W(E) — Carol Gill
E(E) — Brian Llewellyn
ALICE HOLT — Brian Hibberd

SCOTLAND
N(S) — Bryce Reynard
M(S) — Dawn McNiven
S(S) — Winnie Malhoney
NRS — Chris Smith

WALES
Brina Evans

● Correspondents and contributors should note that the deadline for material for the next issue is September 29.