

SLASHER



Newspaper of the Forestry Commission

December 1991

No. 354

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Up and up



How to get a new angle on life... take a bird's eye view: Centre pages.

YOUR CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

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TREES FOR LIFE WINS AWARD

BACK PAGE

FORT AND FOREST — A ROYAL LINK



Picture courtesy of "Press and Journal."

Trees galore in new-look sales drive



REAL CHRISTMAS TREES
Forestry Commission



AN EARLY VISITOR with his team of helpers in a blaze of colour, plus dogs... it all adds up to Christmas for the young patients of the Sick Children's Hospital in Glasgow. Aberfoyle FD and Glasgow Conservancy Staff formed the Santa team when they distributed much festive fun and gifts.

Another picture on Page Five.

THE Forestry Commission's Christmas Tree Sales Centres this year have a new look.

Each centre is displaying colourful sales and advertising material which contains the new "Real Christmas Trees" logo.

From Inverness-shire to Dorset, the centres are in some of the most picturesque parts of Britain where tree-buying can be combined with a woodland walk or trail.

As well as Santa Claus making an appearance at some centres, there may also be husky dog-sled demonstrations and refreshments.

Almost three million home-grown Christmas trees are sold in Britain each year and as one of the main suppliers, the FC can provide a wide range of sizes and species.

Donald Thompson of Harvest and Marketing said: "A forest is the natural place to look for Christmas trees and the FC makes a special effort to welcome families who want to visit their forest centres to buy natural trees to complete the traditional scene at home."

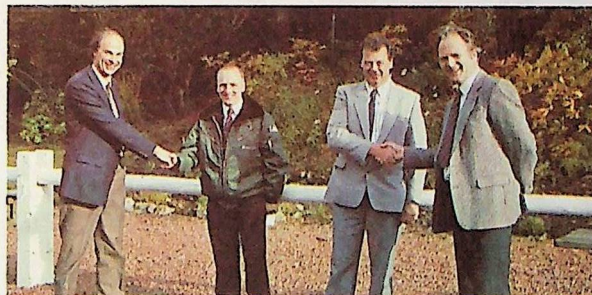
As with other customs there have been fashions and favours with trees. The popular Norway spruce is considered by most people as the "traditional" Christmas tree, but pines and firs are now familiar in many homes.

It was Albert, Prince Consort, who made the Christmas tree popular in Britain. In 1844, he presented a tree — after the "Weihnachtsbaum" fashion of his native Germany — to Queen Victoria and their family.

In 1848 *The Illustrated London News* described the Royal tree as: "About eight feet tall. On each branch are arranged a dozen wax tapers. Fancy cakes, gilt gingerbread and eggs filled with sweetmeats,

Continued Page Five

GREAT IDEA WINS £2500



TWO process operators at Loch Awe FD, Jimmy MacDonald and Roddie Munro, have been awarded £2,500 under the Staff Suggestion Scheme for a proposed work method which improves harvesting efficiency and leaves the site in a better condition.

The improvement suggested evolved from the original working practice.

Instead of removing the built-up brash from the side of the processor and placing it in line to form a mat for the forwarder to travel on, each second pass along the working face

lifts the brash and places it parallel to the working path in broader strips.

The benefits created are a much denser brash mat for the forwarder to run on, therefore less ground damage and less patching to be done; easier for the scarifier; and easier planting for the restocking squad.

Work Study Branch were impressed with the results of tests over a number of months on various ground conditions.

In our picture Commissioner David Foot (left) and Conservator Graham Hamilton are congratulating Jimmy MacDonald and Roddie Munro.

TRIO OF CONSERVATORS

JAMES F. OGILVIE, FOI Kielder FD, has been appointed Conservator, Northumberland and Durham, and Ken Buswell, Work Study, wins a similar appointment in West Country, while Brian J. Hibberd becomes Assistant Chief Conservator, England, Cambridge.

In Highland, Bob D. Dunsmore, FDM Easter Ross, has been named Conservator based at Dingwall, with Roger G. Muhl FDM Lothian and Tweed, becoming FDM Inverness.

More appointments are listed on Page Nine.

FORT William recently celebrated the 300th anniversary of the fort itself, and the Forestry Commission played a prominent part. An exhibition, "The Lochaber Experience," presented by various industries locally, including forestry, attracted the attention of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The N(S) Conservancy Land Agent and Civil Engineer rent an office in what is called the "Parade House" — it is reputed to have been occupied by the first Governor who felt safer living outwith the confines of the fort! A small exhibit was set up in the office consisting of a large disc of Caledonian pine from an ancient tree felled in Glengarry and panels describing the history of the Parade House and ancient woodland.

The ancient woodland theme was continued in the FC's contribution to "The Lochaber Experience."

Here the pine exhibit is being examined by the Queen, who is accompanied by, among others, Lord Strathclyde, the Forestry Minister (at rear) and Paul Biggins (centre), the Lochaber FDM.

Fancy a trip?

After a significant increase in requests from developing countries for experts and advisers by releasing staff on secondment, the FC is considering a permanent pool of experts, opening the door to the growing market for overseas contracts on a commercial basis.

Options are being examined by Donald Thompson and Ken Charles, Harvesting and Marketing Division, who want to hear from any staff, working or retired, who may be interested in a spell overseas, either on short-term contracts or for longer tours.

They advise: Don't be put off if

you think your experience may not seem of particular relevance abroad.

All types of work done by FC staff are being considered, including some not necessarily associated directly with forest operations.

The ability to be adaptable and get the immediate job done is important; but even more important is the ability to pass on your knowledge and expertise to a local counterpart.

If you have any ideas, or want to know more about this initiative, write to Ken or Donald, c/o Room 128 in HQ, Corstorphine, Edinburgh.

Merry Christmas and a Guid New Year to you all

Panto time is here again . . .

In the case of Punters v FC Board

THE following are some highlights of one of the most difficult, controversial and long-running cases in the history of the FC bar. This one could run and run.

Presiding over the proceedings is that eminent individual (with the notorious nickname "the nice judge") Justice Pollock, former educationalist and all-round good guy.

Counsels for the defence and prosecution respectively are Jonathan Punter QC MC and a liking for the bar, and Josephine Punter QC (no relation). It has been said of these two that on occasion they should have kept their own rather than the Queen's counsel but there we are, we can't all be perfect.

The scene: a packed courtroom. Defence counsel has decided he hasn't a leg to stand on so he decides to stay in the bar and get rid of the other one as well.

Justice Pollock taps his gavel, calls for order and invites Ms Punter to tear into anyone of her choice.

Call Robin Cutler!

Ms P — Are you Robin Cutler, Director General of the Forestry Commission?

RC — When I was in New Zealand . . . (*groans round the courtroom*).

Justice P — Answer the question!

RC — I always did, when I was in . . . (*more groans*).

Ms P — Let's accept that you are. Tell me, did you have to reorganise the FC. Were you told to do so?

RC — No. But when I was in . . .

Ms P — No further questions.

Mr Cutler walks back to his seat, cursing the All-Blacks defeat by Australia and wondering if (that's enough, Ed).

Call Commissar Grundy!

Justice P — Where is he?

Entire Courtroom — Gone Fishing!

Justice P — Well tear him off the banks of the Tweed and get him here!

Audit Branch — You've got it guy!

Call Charles Simmonds!

Ms P — Mr Simmonds, did you . . .

CS — I refuse to answer any questions on the grounds that I might incriminate myself!

Justice P — You are in contempt of court (Courtroom — "and the Promotion Procedure mate!")

CS — I was only following orders.

Ms P — OK, thanks . . . but are you sure you're not related to Gerald Kaufman.

Call John Morgan!

Ms P — Mr Morgan . . .

JM — (In Welsh) — stuff your Scottish justice, Wales is different. (He stands up grasps one lapel, a tear rolls down his cheek and he continues in quivering Welsh) — through a release of management vigour our social responsibilities in Wales . . .



**TUS
DIARY**
—by Kenny
Murray

Jeers from the gallery.

Justice P — Order! John this is not a Commissioner's tour! Step down.

Ms P — Justice, I must protest, the punters are getting no answers. They really are entitled to explanations!

Justice P — Indeed they are — carry on.

Call David Foot!

Ms P — Why, Mr Foot, are you going to be called the Chief Executive?

DF — That's what the head of every Agency is called!

Robin Cutler hisses a message to Mr Foot.

DF — No, no sorry! It's because it's a nice zippy title and we all love it and . . .

Ms P — Thank you.

Call Richard Smith!

Ms P — Is it true that you have admitted you are not sure what the FA workload will be in England.

RS — True, I do not know, but I do have a stonewall tip for the 2.40 at Newmarket.

Ms P — But you have decided to keep your surplus staff on in Cambridge just in case?

RS — Yes.

Ms P — A gesture which I am sure will not have gone unnoticed in Glasgow.

Call Kenny Murray

Ms P — Throughout this difficult period, did you ever believe the left hand new what the right hand was doing?

KM — Now listen comrade, any ideological differences on the TUS were dealt with by the Supreme Soviet at HQ and . . . (*Shouts of get on with it!*).

Ms P — Did you and the other reps do your best?

KM — Yes.

Ms P — But you lost 75 jobs!

KM — Of course we all feel terrible about that but . . .

Ms P — No further questions.

Justice P — Stand down and em . . . lose some weight will you.

Murray heads disconsolately for the Diet Coke machine.

Justice P — I've heard enough. We shall stand adjourned. This case will obviously continue for a considerable length of time. Meanwhile let's not forget those who are displaced as a result of this exercise. They are the real victims. Where on earth is Commissar Grundy anyway?

Nothing to sing about

WELL, it's almost Christmas time again and to add to your festive celebrations, the Centre for Policy Studies (virtually the same as the Adam Smith Institute) will provide an additional treat for FC staff.

It is rumoured that a document will be released, welcoming the FA/FE split in the Commission but asking the Government to go further. Privatising the Enterprise! is said to be the theme.

The document will, of course contain old chestnuts so far as the Commission is concerned. Why?

Because the Adam Smith Institute have already had bites at this stale cherry; so now the Centre for Policy Studies becomes their stalking-horse.

All this should come as no surprise — after all warnings were given by individuals who were then ridiculed.



IN WRITING my final column of 1991 I tried to find a good and positive message from this year and I honestly can't find anything to rejoice about. Perhaps the ordeal of reorganisation has clouded any such thoughts.

I certainly enjoyed the comradeship of many representatives throughout the FC over the past 12 months and we had very good and very bad times. Job losses particularly at non-mobile level, worry us all.

In my period in this job I have had the odd

severe brush with management; but I have never had so many worried and irate people either phone me or cross my threshold.

Management have, on too many occasions, acted in a high-handed and unsympathetic manner that has provoked normally placid individuals to rage and the CPSA and NUCPS into taking the first direct strike against the FC in its history. Surely to goodness someone up there senses that things are far from all right!

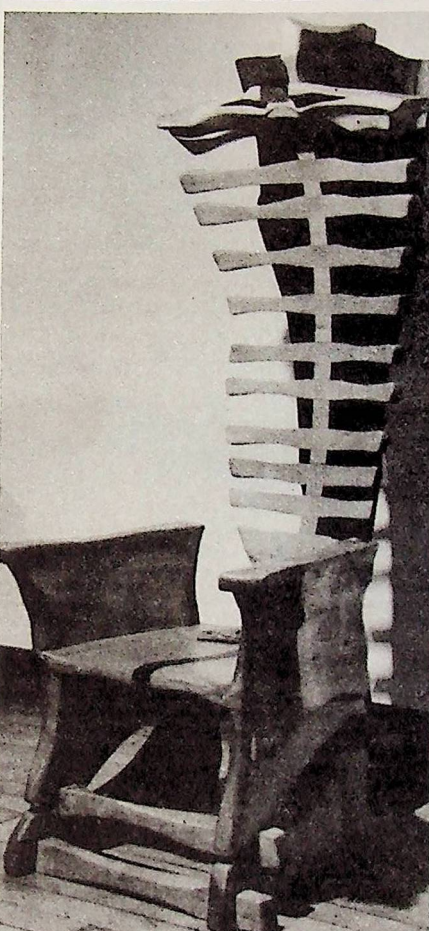
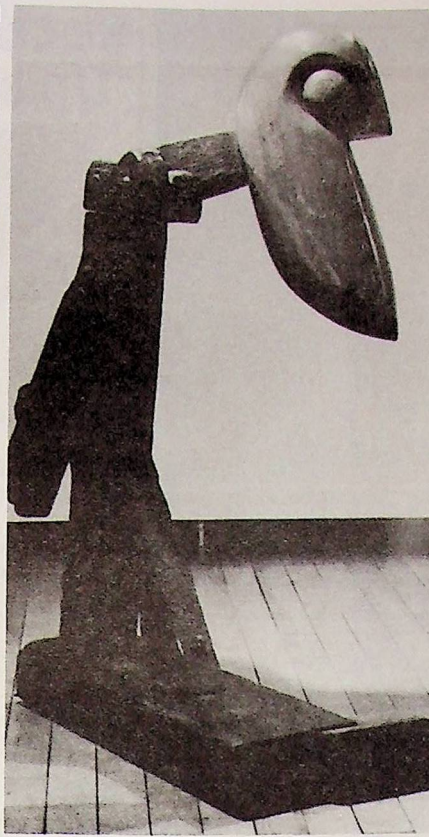
I've had my say about my concerns for the Commission's future. I don't withdraw a syllable but I will add this:—

The Forestry Commission is a marvellous concept. It is unique and should be a jewel in any Government's crown. If you believe in the concept of a Forestry Commission you must positively contribute to its future. Whether the heads are up or down makes no difference to the politicians — they will do with us as they please.

We must make the most of whatever situation our organisation finds itself in and that means participating in the deliberations of Unions and Management on our future. Whether we like it or not, the split is now reality, but that doesn't mean we stay quiet on the shortcomings or otherwise of this new structure.

Whatever happens internally, there is going to be an even better opportunity to express your view within six months. Think about it carefully!

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and yours.



Spirits of the forest

FOR the whole of October, Glasgow Arts Centre hosted the "Spirits of the Forest," aimed at broadening perception of woods and forests and the ways in which they inspire imagination and creation.

On show were many works by Scottish-based sculptors showing imaginative use of wood from the eye-catching figure on left, the skeletal chair (centre), the chain saw carving of a squirrel, and an ornate elm bed.

Live performances of dance, magic, theatre, music and chainsaw carving by Lorne FD craftsman Duncan Gillies were held regularly throughout the show.

As well as the Forest Adventure exhibition, the FC also contributed publications for an education pack sent to more than 1500 schools in Strathclyde.

Here and there

HOW TO TREAT AN OILED BAT...



SOME months ago, a breeding colony of Pipistrelle bats which had lived in a chemical store for some years decided to move into an adjoining oil compound, writes Peter Eccles, Head Ranger in Kielder FD.

Foreman Ernie Swales saw that several bats, some still alive, had dropped into a shallow oil drip tray (possibly young bats which had dropped to the ground were followed by adults).

Ranger Michael Sanderson (pictured here) and Clerkess K. Wilson from Bellingham office carefully cleaned two surviving bats with a mild cleansing gel. After 24 hours the bats were put into "intensive care" by Hugh Watson of the Northumbrian Bat Group, and one of them was nursed back to health and eventually released. If any reader has had other experience of this kind Kielder would be interested to know.

NOTE: There should be no similar incidents. A wire mesh now prevents the bats from entering the store.

Collared!

STAFF at York Conservancy were witnesses to a fierce aerial battle as a bird of prey swooped on a collared dove. The bird, identified by Geoff Haw as a young female sparrow hawk, grabbed the dove and forced it down on to the lawn after a brave fight by the doomed bird.

Thanks Jack!

JACK MITCHELL, Warden at Spiers House Campsite in Cropton Forest, North York Moors, often comes across property mislaid by visitors. Recently a letter from a young boy's mother asked if a jumper had been found. Jack searched the lost property, found the jumper and posted it. He received this reply: *Dear Mr Spiers, Thankyou for finding my jumper. My Mum was getting angry with me for losing it. I had a lovely time at your camp site. — From Peter.*

Just one example from the many letters received by Jack each year.

Paws for thought

Ae Forest District recently organised a family fun day, named "Four by Paws," which attracted amateur and professional teams to a four-wheel-drive challenge in aid of the National Canine Defence League. Val Shipp, Nithsdale FDM, explained, "The Forest of Ae is big enough to accommodate something of this order. Challenges along the route included driving through undergrowth which required some skill."

Intrepid duo continue their diary

Pints at the high point of our trek



A welcome pint and cheerful greetings awaited Keith and Ken when they arrived at the Tan Hill Inn, reputedly the highest pub in England. Could it be that our duo were on a high too???

DAY 6 — Horton to Hawes (14 miles): Start: 9.15. Finish: 14.15. Another sunny day. On with the shorts for the relatively easy and short walk to Hawes. Breakfast at The Crown is excellent and we both go for the double fried egg option. No tea-rooms, pubs or habitation at all on this part of the walk but we know that it's all there waiting for us in Hawes so we decide to get over there fairly quickly. We soon pass the "gang of three" exchanging banter as we go but no sign of Rod and Alan who we suspect are having a lie in back in Horton. The Pennine Way leads past the White Hart on entering Hawes so we sit outside and down our first of the day. Suitably refreshed we embark on a shopping expedition, sun-cream, film and for Ken a new blue sun hat. We sit outside the Board Hotel (closed by this time) and watch the world go by. An instant love affair with Hawes develops. This is what it's all about! It's probably just as well that we do not spot that the pub next door is open all day.

We note that there is a fish-and-chip shop and make a careful note of opening times. The Hawes hostel has been recently refurbished and is really smart but by 17.59 we are at the front of the queue at the Chippy. Later in the evening we get chatting to Jerry, a Londoner, who travels to the area every three weeks or so. He tells us he is leading a relay team doing a sponsored run of the Pennine Way from the Tan Hill Inn south to Edale starting tomorrow. He looks a bit overweight to us but we should cross paths tomorrow and are intrigued to see what state he will be in. Back to the hostel by 22.45 and sleep soundly. Another fairly easy day in prospect tomorrow.

closed two years ago. We are sharing a dormitory tonight with the two male members of the "gang of three", Colin and Archie. We discover that they are very experienced long-distance walkers. They walked the Pennine Way from the north two years ago. We feel they must be masochists but it is also reassuring to have them around to tell us what's ahead.

DAY 8 — Keld to Baldersdale (15 miles): Start: 9.30. Finish: 16.30. I wake up and immediately remember that today we pass the front door of the Tan Hill Inn, reputedly the highest pub in England. I hope it is open when we arrive. We walk for about 5 miles through some desolate moorland and suddenly there it is in the middle of nowhere. It is only 10.45 and a bit early for drinking but it is cold and damp and we don't feel we can let this opportunity pass. We go in to a warm fire. Ken is feeling reckless and orders a pint of Old Peculiar so I follow suit. We are soon joined by Rod and Alan and Colin, Archie and Christine who wisely take coffee. I decide on another pint of Old Peculiar but Ken has realised the danger and only has a half. By this time he is well into his stride interviewing the bar staff. We discover that the landlord doubles as a shepherd and is out tending his sheep! Just before we move off again we embark on a photo session which develops into high farce. It goes something like this:—

Alan snaps Ken and me with his camera.

I snap Rod and Alan with my camera.

Archie snaps Ken and me with Ken's camera.

Ken snaps Colin and Christine with his camera.

Rod snaps Ken and me with his camera.

Ken snaps Christine, Colin and Archie with Colin's (or was it Archie's) camera?

Finally, the barman takes a picture of all of us with someone's camera. I don't know whose.

I persuade the barman to provide a carry-out as we will be nowhere near a pub tonight but the wisdom of carrying the extra weight and of drinking two pints of Old Peculiar is severely questioned as we flog on across Sleightholme Moor with underfoot conditions the worst we have encountered since Featherbed Moss. We catch up with Rod and Alan as we approach the A66 and say our goodbyes as this is their last day on the walk. At Baldersdale hostel we discover we are sharing the place with a large party of Scouts from Leicester — so much for our quiet night — but in truth they are out most of the night being taken for a fish and chip supper at the nearest shop which is over 10 miles away. We decide to do some hand-washing of our walking socks and other bits and pieces and this keeps us out of mischief for an hour or so. The knowledge that we are now at the halfway mark sends us to bed in cheerful mood.

IT MADE A GOOD STORY AT THE TIME . . .

DAY 9 — Baldersdale to Langdon Beck (15 miles): Start: 9.30. Finish: 16.30. Baldersdale hostel does not provide cooked meals but hostelling is not as austere as it used to be and here they boast a posh microwave oven and a selection of microwave ready meals. We go down to cook our microwave breakfasts bought the

previous evening but enter the kitchen to the sight of a Scouts' breakfast in full swing. A Scoutmaster insists that there is plenty and we are to help ourselves to anything we fancy. We mutter half-heartedly about microwaveable eggs and bacon but really it would have been ungracious to refuse the offer. By the time we have waded through a first helping of bacon, eggs, beans, sausages and fried bread most of the Scouts have finished and we are urged to finish off what was left to avoid waste. We bash on valiantly but even Ken is struggling with third helpings. This is followed by tea and toast, with the Scouts insisting they will do all the washing-up. What a start to the day.

Just after we set off we pass the farm that used to belong to Hannah Hawkswell, an elderly woman who worked her farm alone and who was featured in a TV programme a year or so ago. It turns out not to be quite as isolated as the programme would have had us believe, only 200 yards from the hostel in fact, but it made a good story at the time. An easy walk takes us to the Tees at Middleton where we detour for a cup of tea and a bun. We are left a plate of cakes from which to make our choice but walking certainly gives you an appetite and we decide to remove the difficulty of deciding which to eat and which to leave by devouring all eight.

I am desperate to know whether Aberdeen won the Premier League the previous day so Ken buys Sunday papers. Big disappointment. Rangers won 2-0. The walk along the Tees to our destination is shared with Sunday afternoon strollers and we feel out of place. Ken decides to try to give his sore Achilles tendon some relief by bathing his feet above High Force waterfall but the water is so cold it is all he can do to keep his leg in for a few seconds. I make his agony worse by taking my time lining up the photograph. Well, you have got to get these things right! The "gang of three" are staying with us at the Langdon Beck hotel and as the evening wears on we discover more about our fellow travellers over a drink in the tiny hotel bar.

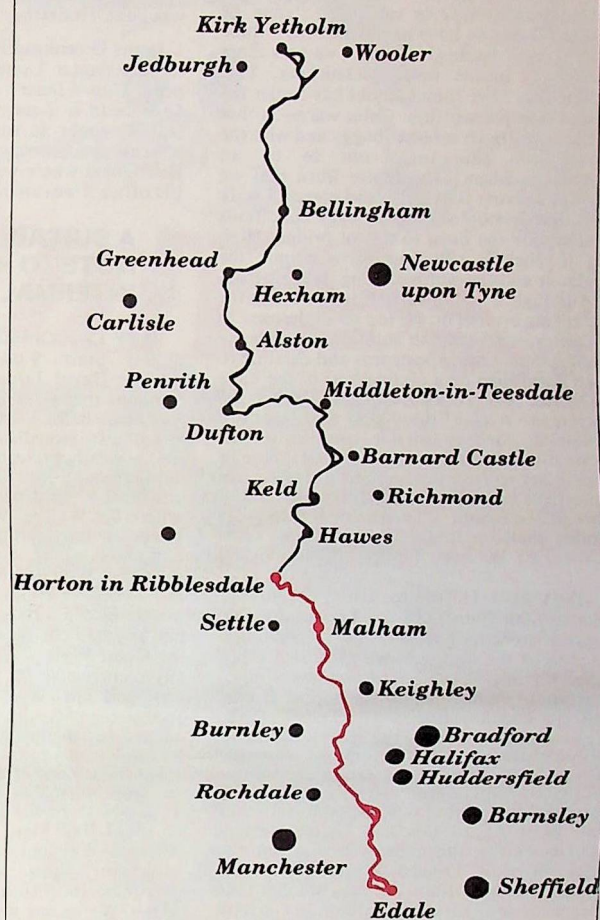
THE THREE LITTLE PIGS . . . FOREVER PICNICKING

DAY 10 — Langdon Beck to Dufton (13 miles): Start: 9.15. Finish: 15.15. Today should have been an easy 13 miles but turned out to be anything but. The Pennine Way here turns almost due west and actually comes off the Pennines to finish in the Vale of Eden. The weather is not good, a strong westerly wind and heavy drizzle, and waterproofs are on from the start. At Falcon Clints, a craggy area alongside the Tees, we clamber over a long stretch of wet slippery rocks. I let Ken lead as this sort of terrain will really test his leg problems. Progress is slow and painful to watch but better safe than sorry. Once over the worst Ken's book reveals that this is Ring Ouzel country and we are on the alert. My first foray into the open moor is a false alarm; it's only a red grouse but we are sure we can hear the distinctive call described in the book. I finally see the dratted bird in a tree clinging to the side of the crag. I take a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Our stirring account of the sponsored walk undertaken by Keith Gliddon and Ken Milson of headquarters staff resumes (and concludes) in this issue. Sometimes bewitched, bothered and bewildered, the hardy pair also discovered some boon companions, the occasional tempting bar, and a few comfortable (and not so) beds on the 265-mile long trek of the Pennine Way. Anyone out there feel like following in their noble footsteps? If so, read on . . . you may get a few tips to ease your path.

The Pennine Way



The line in red indicates the route already covered in September's issue . . . the final days are recalled here.

My dream life — by Peter Beale BEM



PROUDLY sporting his new British Empire Medal is Peter Beale, Leading Ranger for Conservation and Recreation in West Downs FD.

With him are his wife, Nellie, and the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Sir James Scott, who made the presentation at Alice Holt.

More than 50 colleagues and friends were welcomed by Richard Smith, Conservator E(E), then the citation was read by Ron Melville, FDM, West Downs, before the actual presentation.

Peter's job totally absorbs him. "It's more like a way of life," he says.

In the early days he used to be almost afraid of waking up and finding it was a dream —

marvelling at his luck in having been able to turn his boyhood love of nature and the countryside into a career.

Peter now looks after between 120 and 130 conservation areas in the district, but in his early years with the FC he was once suspended for practising conservation. "I was told to spray an area which was full of wildflowers but I refused point blank to do it," he recalls. "I was told I was there to grow trees, not to look after plants, flowers and butterflies!"

Conservation, to him, is about bequeathing an intact Earth to future generations. "Looking for some wise principle of co-existence between man and nature — that is the aim I feel we should be trying to achieve."

At last, the finishing line is in sight . . .

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

picture. It's probably too far away to tell if it's really a Ring Ouzel or whether it's just a blackbird but we know!

Shortly after the fine waterfall of Cauldron Snout we catch the "gang of three" who we have nicknamed the "three little pigs" because whenever we pass them they are sitting down picknicking. This time they have found an old hay trailer for shelter while scoffing. Colin warns us that the next stretch is rather boggy and with the rain too this turns out to be an understatement. The Maize Burn that we want to cross is in spate and means a walk in driving rain over very boggy conditions alongside the burn to a foot-bridge. High Cup Nick is still impressive despite the gloom and the sun is shining over Dufton. Although it is still early it is not a day for hanging around on the top so we descend to Dufton, find the pub is shut and spend the afternoon writing postcards and chatting to an Australian on a cycling tour of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales. During the evening Archie discovers that we are walking for sponsorship and insists on donating £1 to the cause. I record it here in my diary to ensure that I remember to pay it in IF I get back. Our last thoughts today are of the weather. Tomorrow is a long 20 miles back on to the Pennines and over Cross Fell. We hope it is drier than today.

DAY 11 — Dufton to Alston (20 miles): Start: 9.00. Finish: 17.00. Today sees the start of some tougher days than the middle section of the walk and we get a real fillip when the day dawns bright and less windy. It is about eight miles to the top of Cross Fell via Knock Fell and Dun Fells but we are in the mood and are at the summit cairn within three hours. We catch up with the Three Little Pigs at the mountain rescue bothy of Greg's Hut. They are eating as usual! After paying our respects to the hut we press on to Garrigill. After steeling ourselves for the climb up we find the descent really dragged. We look for some small pieces of fluorspar that we can take home as souvenirs. No tearoom in Garrigill but we are still in time for a drink at the green Dragon where we are joined inevitably by our ubiquitous walking companions. We arrive at Alston Youth Hostel just as it is opening. Because Alston is a fair-sized place by Pennine Way standards we have not booked an evening meal in the hostel . . . our planning had not unearthed the fact that today is half-day closing. It's a struggle to find somewhere to eat! All the pubs in Alston have beer mats with religious symbols. We had already detected a strong Wesleyan tradition around here so we assume that this is just another indicator but we are puzzled all the same. Ken is feeling well-satisfied having reached over 180 miles and decides to send a card off to his physiotherapist at the hospital in Edinburgh. All in all a bit of a flat day and we are already starting to look ahead to the final stages from the Roman Wall.

WE EAT LUNCH STANDING UP . . . TOO WET TO SIT DOWN

DAY 12 — Alston to Greenhead (18 miles): Start: 9.45. Finish: 17.15. We start today with a shopping trip to Alston. We decide to post home some of our maps and books — every little counts — and more importantly Ken has to restock with painkillers. He's a real junkie by now. Today's section is by common consent the least memorable on the Pennine Way, being effectively a link section between the high fells and the Roman Wall. We, or rather, Ken, had hoped to find a tearoom at Slaggyford but all that is on offer is 10 minutes (if we hurry) of a Christian Aid coffee morning. Frankly this is not my cup of tea (or coffee). I refuse point blank to go but offer to occupy the bench of the village green while Ken goes. Ken hides his disappointment at my lack of enthusiasm and trudges slowly to the bench where we spend an unexciting 15 minutes. The weather turns bad on us as lunch approaches. Some of the showers come to nothing and some

are torrential. Predictably we get it wrong in the middle of the open moor and are caught with our leggings off. We eat lunch standing up beside a barn wall because we are too wet to sit down. Navigation proves tricky and we lose the path a few times before making our way into Greenhead via their wonderful new by-pass! Not quite what we planned but the maps and guidebook were written before the by-pass was built. Honest!

In the Greenhead Hotel tonight we listen to Manchester United winning the European Cup-Winners Cup. The hostel at Greenhead is a converted church building and we could do with a bit of divine intervention tomorrow, a 22-mile stretch to Bellingham where we hope to pop into the FD office if we can make it in time.

A SUITABLY CHEEKY NOTE TO HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT . . .

DAY 13 — Greenhead to Bellingham (22 miles): Start: 9.00. Finish: 17.00. Ken phones David Jardine at Kielder FD and explains that we will do our best but may not make it for 17.00. The waterproofs are on almost immediately but after a mile or so the weather relents a bit and once we are on the Wall things did not seem so bad. At the Steel Rigg carpark an old chap asks us where the Wall is. When we point out the fairly obvious escarpment he is very disappointed telling us that it is nothing like the Great Wall of China that he had visited last year. Clearly the man has no imagination and no sense of history! As we had not had the pleasure of walking along the Great Wall we feel it prudent to avoid any controversy by arguing. Off the Wall now and into Wark forest where a processor temporarily blocks the way. We passed by cautiously not wanting to become accident statistics. Heading towards a winged sheepfold for lunch we are approached by a group of men. They turn out to be an advance party of "The Walk of 1000 Men." They are walking the Pennine Way and preaching Christianity at overnight stops. The reason for the beer mats in Alston (see Day 11) became clear. We escape a full sermon but Ken is handed a leaflet and two beer mats from a set of 4 and we move to lunch to a chorus of "God Bless" and the information that a second group is about an hour behind. After lunch Ken sets a cracking pace as we try to reach Bellingham by 17.00. We speed past The Walk of 1000 Men Part 2 and then the Three Little Pigs. Ken even refuses an offer of refreshment from a lady who ambushes us as we walk past her farm garden. We feel quite guilty about this but sure our friends behind will stop for a while.

We reach the FD office just on 17.00 and after photocall go in for a promised and well-earned cup of tea. Ken had sent a card back to Internal Audit from each overnight stop so our progress could be recorded on a wall map but we had got to the stage where we were likely to arrive back in HQ before further cards. Nothing daunted and thanks to the modern miracle of Electronic Messaging we help David Jardine to compose a suitably cheeky note to the Head of Internal Audit. Later that night in the Rose and Crown and courtesy of Archie, Ken completes his full set of beer mats from The Walk of 1000 Men.

DAY 14 — Bellingham to Byrness (16 miles): Start: 10.10. Finish: 16.10. We decide to shop for food to supplement rations for tomorrow on the Cheviots as we think there is no shop at Byrness nowadays. Ken treats himself to new crepe bandages and we round off our trip by buying Pennine Way tea towels, ideal gifts because they are light and not bulky. We plan to stop for lunch at Rookengrate where the path enters a pretty boring stretch through Kielder Forest but before dining we balance my camera on a handy gatepost for a time-delay shot of us both "abandoning hope." Lunch provided by our digs in Bellingham includes a strange object which has a hard breadcrumb crust and a filling the consistency of tuna. Ken remarks that it is either a well-known Northumberland delicacy or a cold fishcake. Whatever, it repeats on me all afternoon!

The next five miles go straight down through the forest and we speculate on how the FC could make this stretch more interesting and win a few more friends from the walking community. We spot a few information boards which seem a good idea and are disappointed that there are not more. On the A68 we hit an unexpected bonus, a garage with a cafe attached, so we have our last cup of tea of the Pennine Way. Waiting at the hostel in the forest village is a cyclist with glasses so thick that you fear for his safety on the roads.

When the friendly and talkative warden arrives she roundly criticises the YHA lessors at Byrness, the FC. We keep quiet and she does not twig even when handing Ken a buff envelope been pushed through her door that afternoon. It is a response from the Head of Internal Audit to David Jardine's message. Well done Kielder FD. An early night is the order of the day but before retiring we spend a while in the Byrness Hotel with Colin, Christine and Archie and the "Blind Cyclist." We are psyching each other up for the big day tomorrow. We had been here last September and had managed only a few miles the following day. This time I feel more confident and wonder if Ken does too.

LEANING ON THE FENCE . . . LOOKING TOTALLY UNTROUBLED

DAY 15 — Byrness to Kirk Yetholm (27 miles): Start: 8.00. Finish: 18.15. Byrness is without doubt the most run-down hostel on the Way and we spend an uncomfortable night. The Three Little Pigs were intending to leave quietly at 6 am but unfortunately the "Blind Cyclist" decided to get up early too and created havoc bumping into things, dropping things and slamming doors. That is the last straw and we get no more rest before setting off at 8.00. The day is bright and we get off to a good start with a brisk walk to the Border fence that will be our constant companion for much of the day. The Roman Encampment at Chew Green is a real disappointment. We cannot conjure up enough imagination to visualise anything from what seems like just a green hill. After a lunch stop at a mountain refuge hut our first encounter with fellow man comes just before Clennell Street when we meet a N to S walker on his first day. He is not complimentary about the terrain further on and we leave him feeling rather deflated. We are, after all, less than half way through our day and beginning to feel the pace.

Cairn Hill proves to be a killer and halfway up we catch Colin and Christine taking an enforced rest. Archie had kept going as was his style. He had told us that at his age — he was 62 — stopping only made it harder to start again. When we finally reached the top there he is leaning on the fence, loving the views and looking totally untroubled. Plenty of erosion around the Cheviot with extensive duckboarding which rather spoils the view but is much needed. At the mountain hut just off the Cheviot we take some precautionary snaps of our friends in case we do not get the chance at Kirk Yetholm. The pull of the finish is now strong as we set off in steady drizzle to tackle the Schil, the last hill on the whole walk. The drizzle gets heavier and we vote for the low-level path into Kirk Yetholm. The weather clears as we approach the village and we square our drooping shoulders for the benefit of locals out for an evening stroll, arriving leg-weary but jubilant at 18.15. After making ourselves presentable we pay our respects at the Border Hotel where we are joined later by Colin, Christine and Archie. We celebrate in style and reminisce like the old friends about our experiences. Sad to think we will not be seeing them tomorrow and we both feel a sense of detachment on the car journey back to "normality."

Postscript: We hope you have enjoyed our account of the journey and for those of you who arrive at Edale with the whole walk in front of you in the years to come, may we wish you as rewarding an experience as we had.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Grant-in-aid

Dear Editor, No doubt your readers will have noted the increased spending on agriculture, announced in the Chancellor's autumn statement on November 6. According to a Daily Telegraph report, planned agriculture spending is to rise to £1040 million or by 4 per cent in 1992/93, compared with 91/92 levels, "mainly to encourage 'greener' farming methods and help those in the hills and less favoured areas."

In addition, an extra £8.2 million in 92/93 and an extra £28.9 million in 93/94 is to be spent to expand the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme, where farmers "are paid to protect the landscape and wildlife."

This appears to the outside observer to result in the farmer being persuaded by cash incentive to leave any remaining "semi-natural" unimproved land in its current state, whereas previously he would no doubt have received a cash incentive to improve it.

The newspaper report also mentions that (unspecified) extra money will "be made available for a Farm Woodland

Premium Scheme."

With all this largesse being handed out to our farming friends; despite ever-increasing agricultural production going into very costly intervention; and the availability of "cheap" agricultural products from the Eastern bloc, I am sure that your readers will be interested to learn what percentage of grant in aid is to be allocated to the Forestry Commission — both Enterprise (Forest Service) and (National) Forest Authority in 92/93 in order that we can obtain an increase in the Nation's coniferous and broadleaf forest area in order to begin to counteract a predicted drop in timber production after 2025.

In addition, of course, will we not require an increase in order to deliver all the non-market benefits of recreation opportunities and good environmental practice that our Paymasters demand?

Perhaps the Director General could enlighten us through the Slasher or via the next Team Briefing. — Yours, D. M. B. Yorke, Forest District Manager, Dolgellau, Gwynedd.

HILARIOUS

Dear Editor, your article on Keith and Ken's journey through the Pennine Way was just hilarious. I couldn't put it down until I had read it all. I understand there's more to come. Please don't edit the diaries too much — I don't want to miss out on their great adventure. Silvana Hewitt (and the girls in the Pool).

● We didn't want to disappoint you, Silvana — so as you've probably already noticed, you've got TWO pages of their fascinating account this time. — Editor.

IT'S ALL IN A NAME

Those of you who have been told not to be so personal by (particularly younger) colleagues when asking them if they have had a Slasher, may like to show them this instruction issued by an ex-Conservator to this staff. Although how they were expected to hack their way through forests with a copy of the FC newspaper I cannot see, however sharp and cutting some of the articles may have been!

To: S.F.O., District Officers and Foresters . . . Cons. File 17/0 Foresters' File 16, dated Jan. 20, 1951: I have noticed on recent visits that neither District Officers nor Foresters usually carry slashers. These tools are, in my mind, indispensable to any one whose job it is to see the inside of plantations — apart from it not being polite to allow a senior officer to cut his own way into a thicket. It should also be remembered that some senior officers like a little unusual physical exercise and if no slasher is available the inspection may be less successful from the District Officer's and Foresters' point of view.

I should like, therefore, both Foresters and District Officers to revert to the old and established custom of carrying slashers whenever possible and always on inspections remembering that a blunt slasher reflects no credit upon its owner. — A. H. POPERT, Conservator SW(E).

Yours etc. — Carol Gill, Slasher, Correspondent W(E).

THAT FLAGPOLE AGAIN

In the April Slasher and again in September, memories of Jack Low ex-CME of North Wales and a flagpole were recalled. This pole came in to the old Chirk depot by the railway station.

When it came to the station bridge they had to turn sharp right and it hit a tree, splitting the pole about 10 ft. from the top. The mobile fitter, Jim Jones and M. Morris, the manager, were the escorts.

When the pole finally arrived at the depot, Cris Davies (joiner), Dai Roberts (labourer), repaired the split by drilling it for pegs. Tom Hugh (blacksmith) made a collar to support it, then it had five undercoats of paint and two final coats before being taken by horse-and-dolly trailer, driven by George Jones to the show site at Builthwells. — Yours etc., Bryan Evison, Chirk, North Wales.

KEEPING DOCTOR AWAY

Dear Editor, I was interested in reading Mr Nimmo's letter in a recent edition of "Slasher." I met Maurice during my forester training in the Dean in 1930/32, also Jack Nicholson who was one of my assistant's when I was forester at Fineshade, Northants in 1957/64.

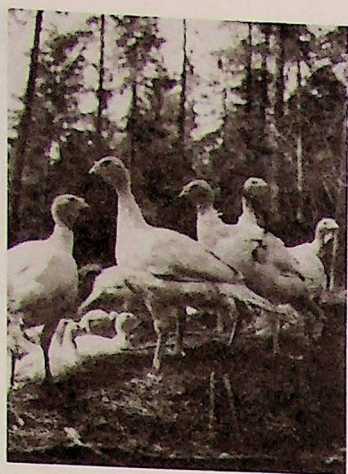
After 44 years with the FC they compulsory retired me at

60. I found other employment and worked until I reached the age of 67. I was told then that if I walked a mile a day, smoked only 20 cigarettes a day and took a drop of Scotch before I retired at night, I could live to 94.

After receiving my pension for over 22 years I still have a long way to go. — Yours etc., Jim Clark, Holbeach, Spalding, Lincs PE12 7BH.

ACCOLADE

Dear Editor, We here always enjoy the bright informal tone of "Slasher" and especially like reading about individuals and their achievements. — Jeffrey Livingston, Chapelhall Workshop, Airdrie, Lanarkshire.

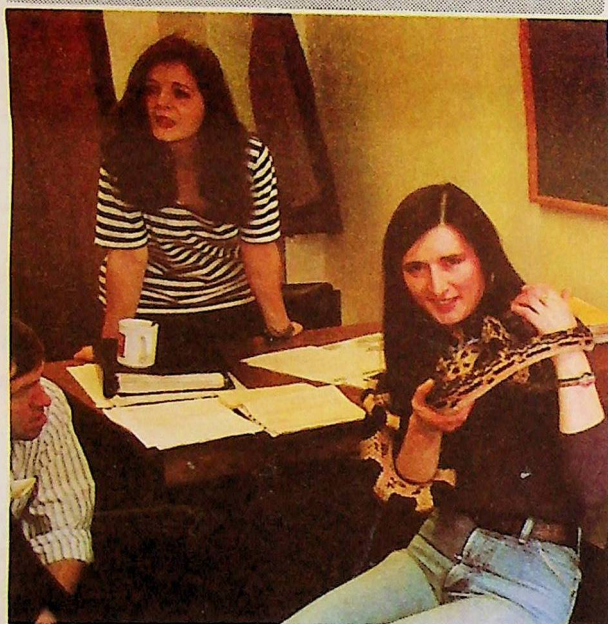


Original idea pays off Now you're talking turkey . . .



NOT only is it an early Christmas in Yorkshire with its turkeys . . . but here's another pre-festive seasonal scene of cheer as a young lad at the Sick Children's Hospital in Glasgow finds a lovely surprise package among a bumper bundle of goods brought along by FC staff (full story in Page One).

Snakes alive!



Hugh Clayden, PF&EO, M(S), caused a stir when he brought a male Northern pine snake into the Glasgow office. It immediately formed a strong attachment to Catherine Houston!

Continued from Page One
are also suspended by variously coloured ribbons from the branches.

"The tree is supported at the root by piles of sweets of a larger kind, and toys and dolls of all descriptions, suited the ages of Royalty for whose gratification they are displayed."

Soon, all of Britain followed Prince Albert's example and now the tree in all shapes, sizes and colours is an established part of Christmas.

Forest Districts around the country have been getting into the festive spirit by cutting and carrying trees to various places.

Perthshire FD provided four 30-45 ft. trees to grace town centres in Scotland including one for George Square in Glasgow.

Trees

Also in Glasgow, the Sick Children's Hospital received a tree donated by Aberfoyle FD. Staff at the District, helped by local residents, raised money to provide gifts to some of the children.

Staffordshire foresters have put the brakes on Santa's huskies this year.

Last year the dog team which hauled the sled at the sales centre almost lost Santa for good when they flexed their muscles and tried to head off into the trees.

Forester Harold Gillen said, "We've taken the sled's wheels off this time. The Siberian huskies are incredibly strong —

CHRISTMAS came early to FC woodlands in the Hambleton Hills of Yorkshire.

Amid the conifer plantations, flocks of turkeys are being reared as part of a unique arrangement between the FC and a Northallerton-based poultry firm, Farmers' Glory.

The agreement has allowed the company to expand its free-range turkey rearing operation by renting space from the Commission in some of its most remote larch woods in the North York Moors Forest District.

The idea is a first for both the FD and the firm.

Forester Phil Morton says: "We're keen to encourage new uses for woodlands and rearing turkeys certainly falls into this category."

"We already supply large numbers of Christmas trees during the festive season, so getting involved in turkey rearing has a nice logic to it!"

"The larch plantations are particularly well suited to rearing turkeys."

"The tree is a deciduous conifer with well-spread branches allowing more light to fall on the forest floor, giving better grazing."

Space in the woodland is allocated at 1000 birds per hectare — twice the EC recommended area for free-range production.

Flocks are free to roam and forage and are cared for and fed by fully-equipped travelling managers.

Weather and night shelter is provided by straw bale houses and portable fox-proof fencing rings the ranging areas.

Managing director of Farmers' Glory, Les Brown, said: "We are committed to producing genuinely free-range turkeys and this co-operation with the FC will enable us to keep pace with demand."

The company already has five farms in the Vale of York producing free-range turkeys and expects to sell 100,000 birds this year.

If the experiment in the Hambleton Hills proves successful, the arrangement could be made permanent.

they'll go quite fast enough without them."

Nottinghamshire foresters have called into two fantasyland superstars to launch their sales centre. Sixty four-year-olds will be first in line when Santa and Robin Hood team up to start the selling.

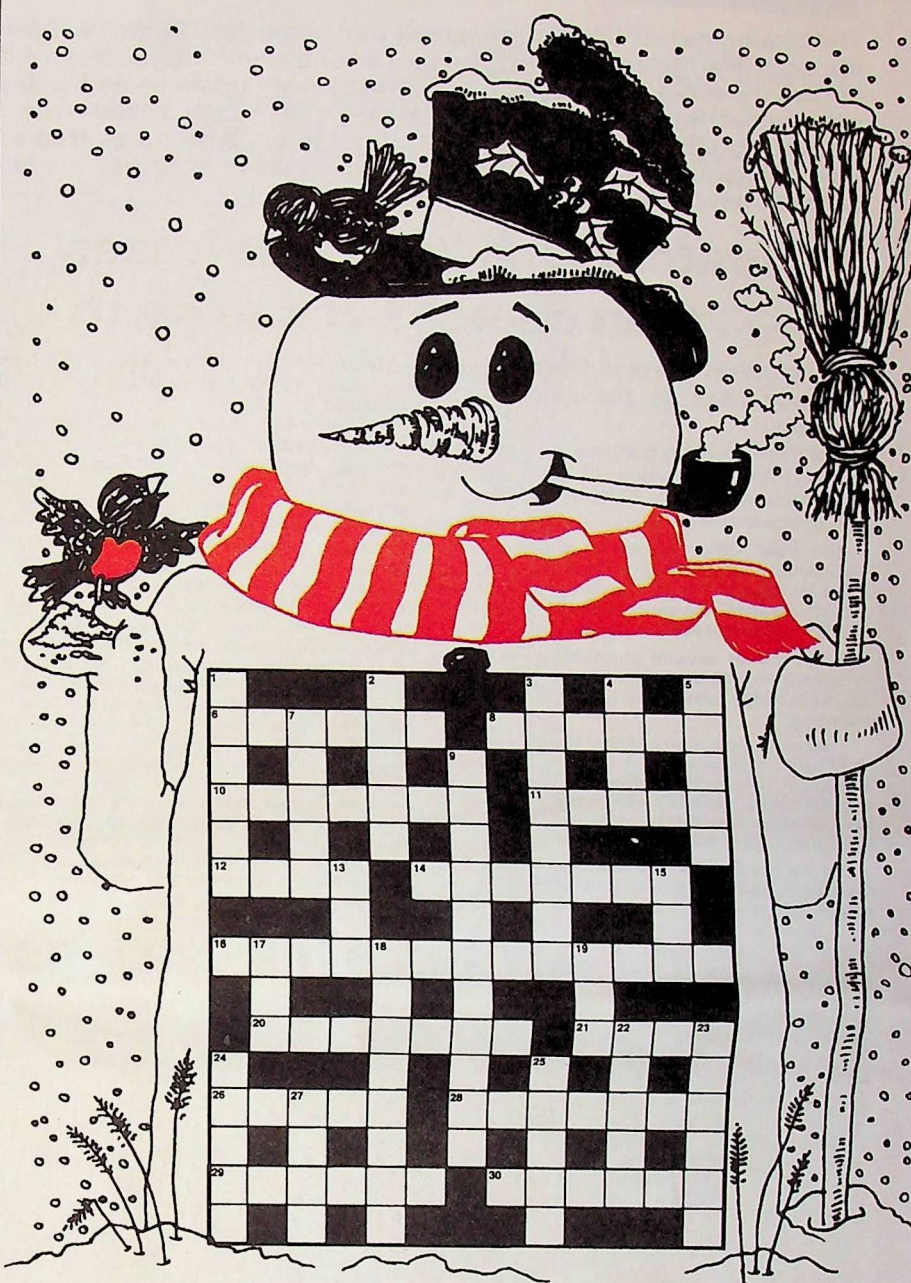
Forester Terry Birch said "This year's sale looks to be our best yet — we aim to beat the record of 8000 trees reached last year."

Around 25,000 Christmas trees will be harvested in the North York Moors FD — mainly Norway spruce. "We are expecting many thousands of families to visit the sales points," said David Cross.

So wherever you are — for a forest-fresh tree head for your local FC sales centre!

Challenge

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



Christmas Crossword

Name
Home address
Give office address or state if pensioner.
.....
.....

THREE PRIZES of £5 tokens are offered for the first three correctly completed crosswords to arrive in this office by January 15, 1992. Send to Christmas Crossword, Slasher, FC Headquarters, Corstorphine, Edinburgh.

ACROSS

6. Units of rainfall (6).
8. In Germany, this decoration is made from pine branches (6).
10. "Seven _____," the film which led to "The Magnificent Seven" (7).
11. Scrooge's companion in "A Christmas Carol" (5).
12. Stringed instrument, resembling a halved pear (4).
14. Back-to-back winner of United States Golf Championship (7).
16. And 23 down. "Glory to the new-born King" is its second line (4, 3, 6, 6).
20. Time of celebration after Christmas (3, 4).
21. Her Christmas hit was "It's Gonna Be A Cold, Cold Christmas" (4).
26. Intuitive feeling (5).
28. Florence Nightingale's profession (7).
29. "The Great _____," a film often shown at Christmas (6).
30. Pilgrims visit this country at Christmas (6).

DOWN

1. Glittering decoration (6).
2. Much-married monarch who ate turkey on Christmas Day (5).
3. His Christmas hit was "I Believe in Father Christmas" (4, 4).
4. Defence organisation (4).
5. We rarely have this kind of Christmas (5).
7. One of Father Christmas' eight reindeer (5).
9. And 27 down. The Beach Boys' Christmas song (6, 5, 4).
13. Large deer (3).
15. Snake-like fish (3).
17. Packer, a Tokyo Olympic gold medallist (3).
18. These do a roaring trade at Christmas (3, 5).
19. Colour of Father Christmas' robes (3).
22. Dobson, a former star of "EastEnders" (5).
23. See 16 across.
24. Number of French hens in "The Twelve Days of Christmas" (5).
25. Likely weather feature at Christmas (5).
27. See 9 down.

Challenge!

The challenges of life are always at our fingertips. Some we ignore for whatever reason (timidity, aware of one's limitations, lack of the necessary verve, to name but a few); others are taken up with a devil-me-care attitude. As the mountaineer said when asked why he wanted to climb Everest, "because it's there!" And that's true of a few colleagues who on land, sea and air have ventured forth to conquer new fields, as we illustrate below . . .

Curator Hugh 'bends ze knees' ... then comes back to earth

Westonbirt curator Hugh Angus recently took to the skies — by balloon.

His flight was organised as part of a Royal Mail celebration of new stamps commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Ordnance Survey.

The Post Office asked to use Westonbirt Arboretum (West England Conservancy) for their launch: as the FC has been a major user of OS services for more than 70 years, staff were more than happy to oblige.

Hugh joined several journalists and photographers in a 10-person balloon which set off through early morning mist into a calm autumn morning.

"Take-off was as smooth as I had imagined," said Hugh. "However, it was much hotter than expected, particularly when the burners were on. Although visibility was poor, the beauty looking down on the tree crowns has to be a sight that will remain with me forever.

"As we headed south-west from Westonbirt, the peace and quiet was broken only by the sound of the burners and the pop of a

champagne cork. Things were really looking up — or was this a boost to our morale before landing?

"The moment of truth was too soon upon us. With instructions to 'bend ze knees' and face forward we prepared to land. Our pilot showed his real skill as we landed somewhat like a kangaroo running out of steam!

"Once on the ground I had time to ask — had it been a success and as enjoyable as expected? On both points a big YES. I recommend it to anyone."

W(E) PF&EO Rod Leslie is quick to dispel any idea of a free ride. "This was a first shot in our major recession-beating publicity campaign for Westonbirt this autumn," he said. "Hugh did really well — all the journalists he flew with have agreed to do articles about the Arboretum and several are planning return trips for the autumn colours."

With its £2 adult entrance fee and a booming Forest Shop, Westonbirt generates a substantial amount of forest recreation money with nearly half its money coming from the key autumn colour month of October.

In a year when low ticket prices mean every penny counts, Westonbirt staff went all out to climax a record year in October.

... and Tony tests his sea legs



This picture was taken by Tony Summers's one-man crew near the end of their return from Wicklow to Aberystwyth after 27 hours' continuous watch at sea. The yacht, which often sails in front of Wales Conservancy office, is a 22-footer which the pair found a bit small for heavy weather on the

outward journey. Tony is shortly to take the last of his RYA yachting exams.

Since his first experience of a boat of this kind was at age 64, for those about to retire he says it is never too late! "Retirement is meant to be from work — NOT life," he advised.

... while Kielder team pass stiff test



This team of six from Kielder FD are waiting apprehensively in the cold grey light of dawn on the shore of Kielder Water for the first instructions of the day.

Ahead, in parts of the forest never visited for years, are eight tasks of mind-bending complexity, requiring the brain of an Einstein and the physical agility of a monkey for their completion in the fifth Inter-Company Challenge.

Our team, reports Mike Sanderson, failed miserably at some locations, came tantalisingly close to solving problems at others. At dusk a bivouac had to be prepared; the root plate of a windblown Sitka provided a sub-

stantial gable end, and the stem a ridge for a shelter designed to repel the impending storms.

Any sleep was interrupted by bouts of snoring, not to mention repellant personal habits exacerbated by the consumption of dehydrated chicken supreme (or was it the beans and sausage?).

Next day local knowledge proved to be an advantage. With the helmsmanship of James Ogilvie and the computer brain of Mike Strachan along with the navigational skills and the running ability of John Tewson, Bill Burton, Mike Toland and Mike Sanderson, the team salvaged some respectability to emerge a creditable fifth.



Up, up and away . . . this splendid shot shows Hugh reaching for the heights.

High and handsome

This 30-foot "Wildlife Totem" was the central attraction in the FC display area at the New Forest and Hampshire Show.

Berry Stone (Lyndhurst) designed the totem to represent the diversity and special value of forest wildlife, and a massive windblown Douglas fir was carved "in the round" by Forest Craftsman Roy Cox, his most ambitious project so far.

Carving the 2.5 ton sculpture on the ground presented its own technical problems; the pole then had to be raised to its full glory for the finishing touches.

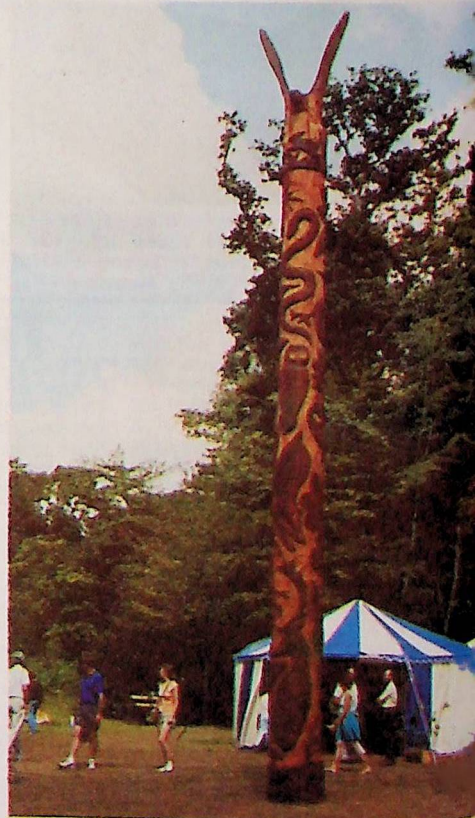
The top of the pole is a 6 foot-high buzzard with wings outstretched.

The results enthralled visitors and staff alike: what impressed most people is the fact that the totem was carved entirely by chainsaw, an impressive reminder of a Forest Craftsman's skills and enthusiasm.

This year's FC display attracted 30,000 visitors over three days.

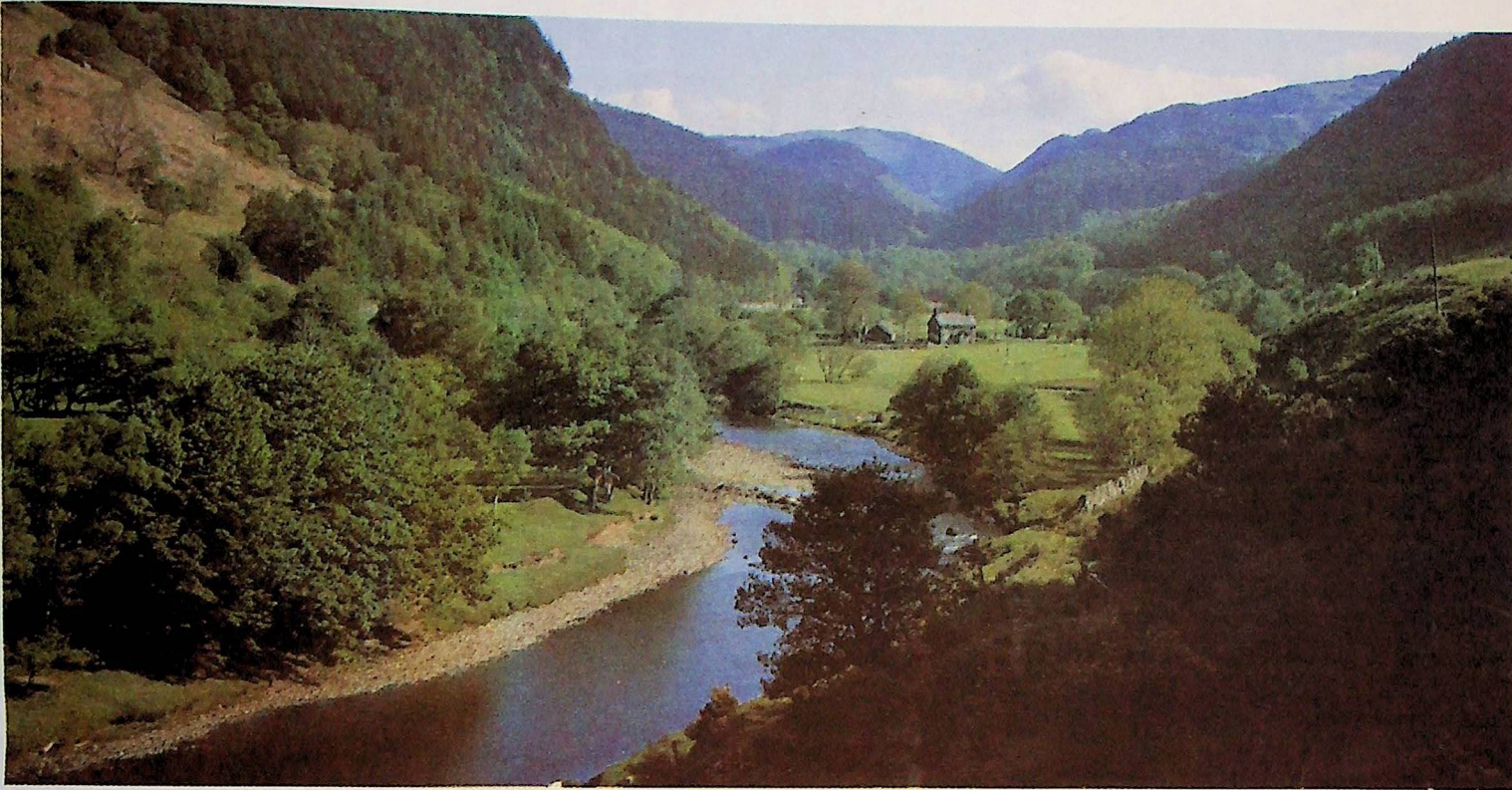
"Efforts to get the Commission's image more clearly on the map and the production of a lasting show symbol have paid off handsomely," said David Perr, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest.

Baroness Trumpington, a special guest on the second day, complimented David on receiving the show's Silver Cup for the best trade stand — appropriate recognition of the work of New Forest staff down the years.



Challenge!

Why don't YOU follow Brina Evans' example below . . . put pen to paper and shout out the beauty of YOUR area? These magnificent studies of Coed-y-Brenin Forest Park are enough to draw the tens of thousands to the park . . . YOU could do your bit by boasting of your own particular area. Let's hear from you . . . with pictures too of course. Can YOU do better? There's the challenge . . .



Pictures by staff photographer ISOBEL CAMERON.

Magnificence — it's the only word for it

INSPIRED by the compliments paid by visitors to Coed-y-Brenin, Forest Park, BRINA EVANS, Slasher Correspondent in Wales, decided to leave the confines of the office and find out for herself the delights of the scenery.

She writes: The previous day had been beautiful, bright and even warm when I set out to visit the Forest Park it was rather overcast and rain clouds were gathering. Still I had come to see Coed-y-Brenin — rain or not!

It must have been 20 years since I last stood on the hillside overlooking Aberllefenni and, although the mature forest had been felled since then, the view had not diminished in its magnificence — the different shades of green blending with the red bracken and the ever-watchful buzzard hovering overhead.

Back in the valley the sky was darker still as I picked my way around the hummocks of Molinia, taking care not to step into the water-filled crevices. I paused to smell the bog myrtle, then on to the banks of the narrow stream which ran unrippling, deep and silent. The wind was far above in the hill tops and here below was stillness, disturbed only by a group of crossbills twittering as they passed overhead and in the distance two pairs of mallards took off and disappeared behind a small wood.

The rain was falling now, soft but very cold. A group of walkers, packs on backs, struggled up the forest track as I made my way towards the deer hide.

Heavy cloud hung low overhead making the sheer rocky outcrops seem like a giant's staircase into the clouds. The deer hide smelled of creosote, but there were no deer to be seen — who could blame them in weather like this?

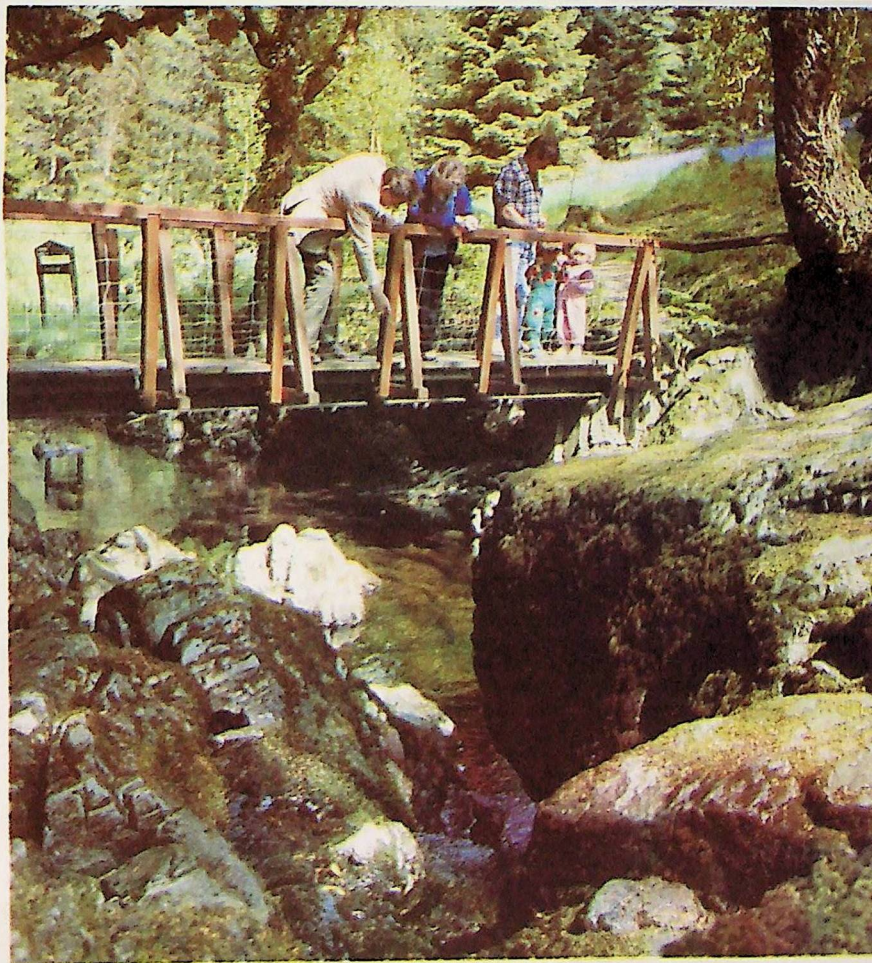
At the Visitor Centre I had a quick look at the interesting interpretative display and then out again to look around the newly-opened Adventure Playground — a great success with children of all ages (I wonder if they have a parents' day?) There is a mountain bike trail and bikes for hire and competitions will be held, I am told. Of course competitions are not new to Coed-y-Brenin — if you haven't heard of their annual yomp you haven't been reading your "Slasher."

But this seems to be out of my reach — I can't imagine running 10-15 miles anyway, even without a weighted pack on my back.

Being less fitness-orientated I decided I'd had enough exercise for the day and welcomed the chance to watch the craftsmen in the sign-making unit. Here they can make any sign to a customer's specification, ranging from house signs to a many lettered information board, using both locally grown softwood and native hardwoods. The craftsmen carve out the lettering and painstakingly fill in the paintwork by hand before the completed article is finished with coats of yacht varnish to make it waterproof. (They will be pleased to discuss your requirements and make you a quotation on application — contact Dolgellau FD).

There is so much to see and do in Coed-y-Brenin a day is not long enough. I will be back . . . maybe the weather will be kinder and, who knows, perhaps I'll see those elusive fallow deer!

● Come on now . . . send us your contributions. Addressed to: Editor, Slasher, Forestry Commission HQ, Corstorphine, Edinburgh. All place names in clear capitals, please.



No better tribute than this

Dear Editor, my husband and I have just come home from our annual holiday in North Wales. We were within only about eight miles of the new Visitor Centre for the Coed-y-Brenin Forest, and, consequently close to the starting point for most of the Forest Trails set out in the brochure.

We were so impressed with the beautiful way in which this area had been managed and presented in an imaginative and attractive way for the public, that I felt I must write to congratulate you. The Visitor Centre itself is most informatively set out with all its interesting displays and exhibitions, and the facilities there really are very nice indeed. We much appreciated the way in which you have marked the recommended routes around the forest with posts and direction finders which do the job without being obtrusively un-

sightly, and the picnic tables and barbecue points in some of your cleared areas are a lovely touch which came as a nice surprise. We were also delighted to see so many bird boxes on the trees where you have had to keep the lower branches cut back.

All-in-all, we found this Forest to be one of the loveliest we have visited, set as it is in such magnificent countryside, and I would again say thank you for the good work that you are doing in the Forestry Commission in maintaining such places for the good of the environment and the pleasure of people, as well as the all-important business of timber and forestry.

Rev. Mrs Arderne Gillies,
of The Manse, Pinchbeck
Spalding, Lincs.

Ode to Loch Awe ...

Loch Awe have just started a four-year renovation programme of their holiday cabins.

To help to gauge reaction they distribute a questionnaire to holidaymakers asking for their views. One recent visitor decided to reply in verse:

*Loch Awe, Loch Awe, What a beautiful place,
Loch Awe, Loch Awe, Your plumbing's a disgrace.
A bowl with no taps I look at in awe,
Trying to shave is no fun at all.*

*My Bic won't perform with this instant hot water,
and one can't brush one's teeth as good as one ought-er!
A step in the shower should be a delight —
Not at Loch Awe it's quite a fright!*

*You stand under the spray after flushing the loo,
Oh my God what a to do!
The shower dies with lack of pressure
A nightmare definitely not to treasure.*

*This is a tale you have to be told,
I came here quite well, but left with a cold.*

*This little ditty is only in fun,
But could just inspire you to get the jobs done
So that when we return in Spring '92,
I'll be able to shower in the comfort I'm due.*

Well Mr Robinson of Bolton, you'll be glad to hear that Dougie Boyd of Loch Awe has told "Slasher" that all shower-and-toilet facilities will be altered and improved by next spring.

Good guys — and one not so good!

By M(S) Correspondent

THE sun was shining in Argyll and suddenly the whole of Britain wanted to be there to record it.

ITV commandeered the Rest and Be Thankful picnic spot for a new series of "The Good Guys" starring Nigel Havers and Jenny Agutter with a cast of one hundred kilted extras.

Not to be outdone, the BBC were 500 metres around the corner, recording a new series of Rab C. Nesbitt, the obnoxious, string-vested Glaswegian.

Not only did Rab C. turn down the M(S) offer of the post of Conservator West Scotland Authority Office, he also refused to pose for photographs by our own Dougie Green.

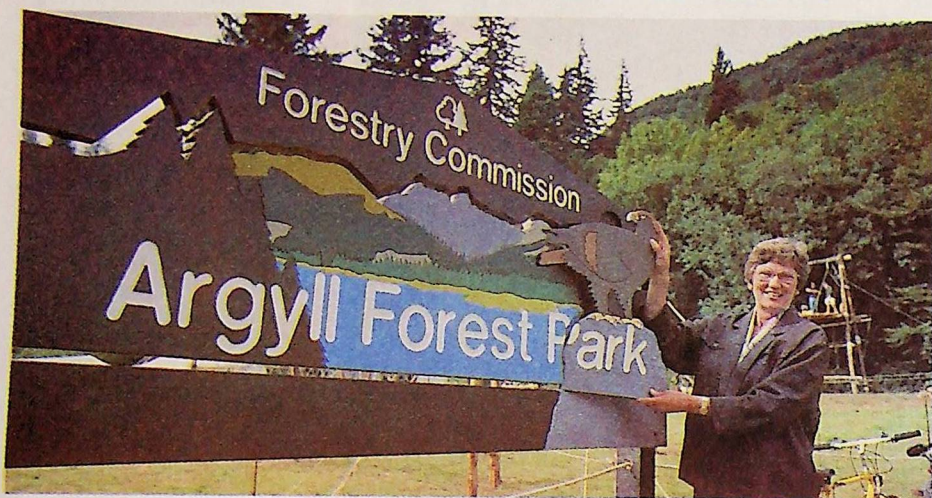
I'm not sure whether it was the sight of Dougie's illuminous pink shorts or his hairy legs which caused offence, but whatever the ensuing outburst of Rab — alias Gregor Fisher — was considered quite unnecessary and totally devoid of humour, as it was.

All was not lost, however, for both companies allowed us to film them filming. Nigel Havers, ever the professional, shared a bacon sarnie with Tony Rees, and Jenny Agutter, smiled generously to pose for a photo by the new signpost.

Both productions will be shown early next year. In the meantime Cowal FD can rest and be thankful that their 24 hours of "fame" is well and truly over.

PICTURE POWER IN COLOUR . . . FROM WALES TO SCOTLAND

The eagle has landed!



We've recently heard about the newest Forest Park, the biggest and the smallest, but only one can ever be the oldest — the title claimed by Argyll Forest Park, which was established in 1935.

And it celebrated old age with a spanking fresh new look when it was officially reopened by Rae Michie MP (above) at Cowal FD's Forest Festival Day.

The golden eagle which regularly nests in the Park features as the emblem on a new Guide Map and signboards.

Rae Michie praised the FC's initiative, and "particularly local forestry workers and managers who understand the need for integrating tree planting into the life of the community."

All staff and all machines "came out of the woodwork" on a circuit around Glenbranter forest including woodcutters, harvesters, winches and fire-fighting in the capable hands of Ian "Red Adair" Adams.

But modern technology was up-staged by Buster, a six-year-old Clydesdale gelding, handled by Heinrich Juna, a forestry contractor in Moffat. A forwarder driven by Martin MacFarlane tried in vain to win attention, but was just not cuddly enough.

A cross-cut saw competition attracted some unlikely competitors including FDM Angus Murray and PF&EO Hugh Clayden (against Aberfoyle FD's Bill Stewart and Mike Stewart); and Isobel Cameron, Senior Photographer, and Julie Russell (who narrowly lost to Tony Rees FOIII and his contractor son Andy). Eventual winners were Jim Lyon FOII and Pete Bowsher of Dornoch FD, against the Aberfoyle Warblers.

The amazing show maze



The Royal Welsh Show once again set attendance records over its four days with the forestry section playing host to a lion's share of the 220,000 visitors.

The Commission's permanent log cabin housed a newly designed, cheerfully staffed and well-attended book shop, inquiries desk and "Management Grant Scheme" exhibit.

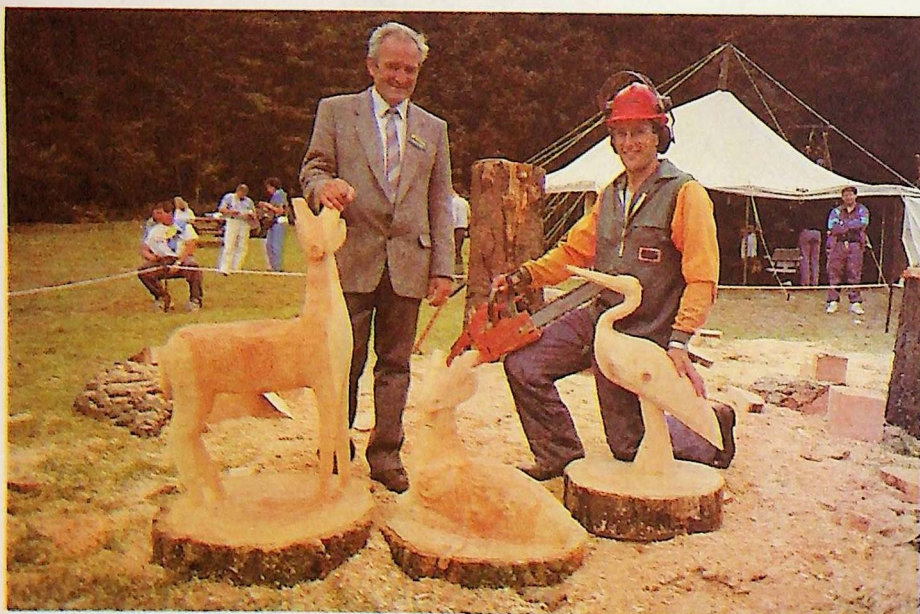
Each year the FC takes a selection of the coveted show awards and this year was no exception: the Young Foresters' Quiz took a "highly commended," while a silver went to Training Branch for the best outdoor non-machinery stand.

Of particular interest was the "Amazing Woods" exhibit designed by Wales' Recreation Planning Officer, Bryan Pulford.

The Maze, which housed conservation displays, was 1.6 metres high and 16.5 metres in diameter and constructed from half round timbers and immensely strong wood-based cardboard panels donated by Tri-Wall Europe of Monmouth.

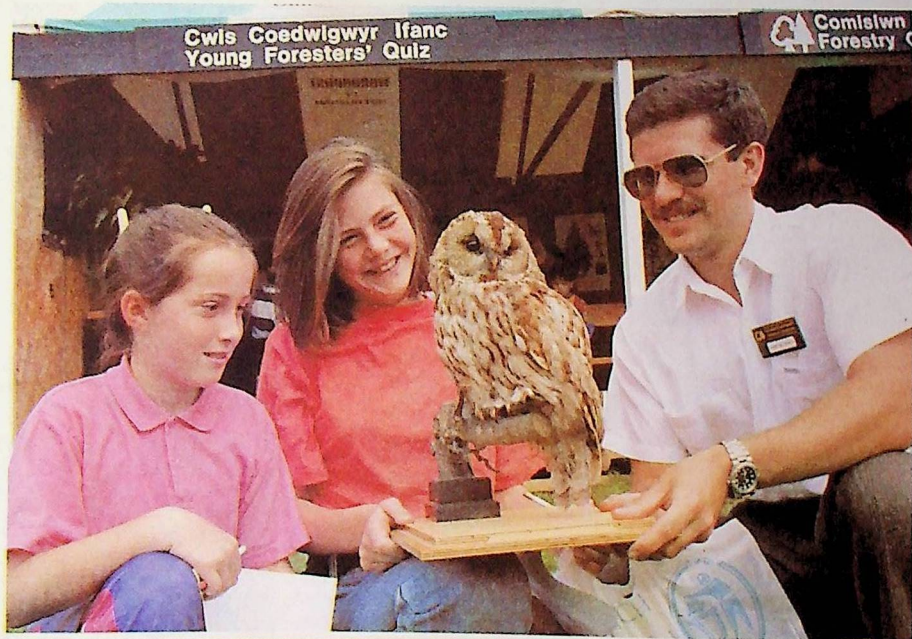
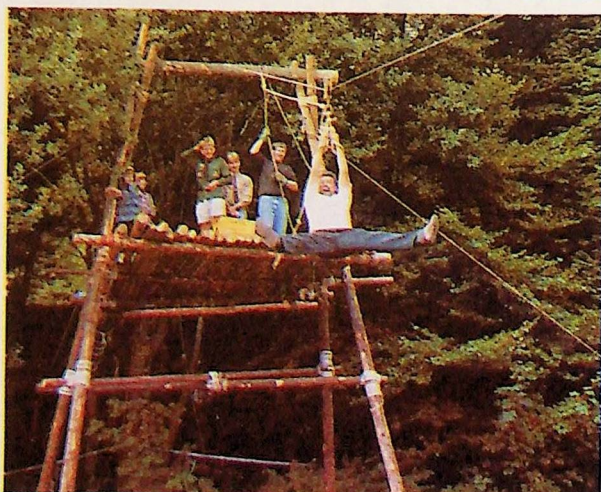
It stood up splendidly to the rigours of wind, torrential rain, searing heat and in excess of 7000 inquisitive visitors intent on getting lost in this unusual woodland.

"Thanks go to all who took part and helped to maintain the high standards which the show committee and public have come to expect from us in Wales," said Bryan.



These chainsaw carvings were a crowd-puller. Fashioned by PETE BOWSHER, Dornoch FD, they were auctioned for Tree Aid.

Not only children took advantage of mountain bikes, bouncy castle and an assault course, set up by members of the 24th Argyll Scout Group. Some foresters never grow up and the face of Murray Fletcher, the Scout Leader, says it all as he watches Tony Rees try out the death slide.



Top picture shows the entrance to the unique "Amazing Woods" exhibit, while Duncan Sykes (above) helps Young Foresters with a little help from a friend . . .

Liz Cookson and Mary Brego welcome customers to the new Forest Bookshop at the Royal Welsh Show site.

Ten years of progress heralded by Minister Deliver the goods says Lang

IAN LANG, Secretary of State for Scotland, visited HQ recently to launch a new publication setting out the Government's forestry policy.

"Financial support for forestry now requires that clear benefits should be delivered to the community at large," he said. An increased emphasis was being placed on the social and environmental, as well as the economic, benefits of forestry throughout Great Britain.

Mr Lang added: "Our forestry policy seeks to achieve a more balanced development of forestry than in the past. The Government is committed to support British forestry."

"The past ten years have been a period of progress and achievement. Greater attention has been given to conserving and enhancing our existing forests and woodlands, and the emphasis has widened from a concentration on timber production to the provision of other social and environmental benefits."

"Our policy has two main aims. First, to manage our existing woods and forests in a sustainable way. Second, to expand the tree cover in Britain steadily, to enhance the beauty of our landscape, to provide a greater diversity of wildlife habitats to provide more opportunities for public recreation and, of course, to provide a source of timber."

Mr Lang also stressed the stricter environmental controls on forestry development.

"Environmental considerations have become an increasingly vital component of our forestry policy. In giving grants, we have set the highest standards of environmental conservation and enhancement."

"The days of insensitive monoculture are over. Also, through our tighter felling controls, introduced in 1985, the erosion of semi-natural woodland has now largely been halted."

Mr Lang also endorsed the FC's plans for an internal reorganisation to sharpen the delivery of its service and the effectiveness of its forestry management.

"I am confident that our policy sets the right framework for future development of forestry in Britain and that the reorganised Commission will be well placed to deliver it."

"But of course our policy is not a static one. We will ensure that it remains relevant to the needs of the country and evolves to meet changing demands and aspirations."

• Copies of the free publication "Forestry Policy for Great Britain" are available from Information Division, HQ.

Ian Lang and the Director General, Robin Cutler, study the new booklet at its launching at HQ.



BEAUS AND BELLES



WALES Conservancy office staff "performing" Robin Hood at the Aberystwyth Carnival.

From left to right are: Eiri Jones, Claire Owen, Gary Hopkins, Mike Over, Kerry Rattray, Jeff Evans, Cerys Phillips, Jane Evans, Sioned Davies, Karen Williams and Susi Knight.

3000 TESTED BY ARROCHAR ALPS

MORE than 3000 competitors raced in the Karrimor International Mountain Marathon over two days.

The event requires skills in navigation and route planning as well as testing competitors' endurance and the ability to carry a minimum of safety and overnight camping equipment.

The FC Ardgartan campsite was the control centre and car park, and at the end of the first day, instant villages of 500 tents or more had sprung up on the two more designated sites. After dark, runners were still coming in off the hill chasing their torch beams, guided by the colonies of tents, glowing worm-like. A fair proportion of runners retired after the first day beaten by the steep, bracken covered terrain.

The next day routes were shorter than the previous day so, by mid-day onwards, finishers came bounding down through the forest both elated by the achievement and trembling with fatigue. Brightly coloured skin-tight leggings, once competing for style, were by now a uniform mottled shade of peat.

Our thanks to Karrimor organisers and competitors for making the event run smoothly and limiting the impact of hordes of running feet.

RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

A visit to jail!

Christmas get-togethers are now in the offing for various Retirement Association branches.

They will round off a year which has seen a wide variety of events and outings... such as a visit to jail(!).

BRECKFIELD: An enjoyable day at the beautiful home of Lord and Lady Salisbury, at Hatfield House in Herts.

A tour of the estate was led by the Head Forester, Mr Mark Hudson, who must have spent hours on the preparation, reports secretary D. E. E. Field, "Everybody thoroughly enjoyed it."

After a pub lunch, the party had a conducted tour of the glorious house and gardens.

• New members welcomed... contact the secretary at "Que Sera Sera," Queen's Road, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0JN.

EDINBURGH HQ: Their programme included a visit to the People's Palace in Glasgow; Dawyck Botanic Gardens in October; and a visit to Surgeons' Hall was planned for November.

Christmas lunch is on December 16, contact N. B. Mackenzie at 031-339 2367.

ALICE HOLT GROUP: Programme included a talk by Mr Paul Buck about the Basingstoke Canal, followed a month later by a large party (including CS members from Alton) taking a trip on horse-drawn barge on the River Wey from Godalming.

In September, 31 members heard an illustrated talk on "Birds and Trees" by Alan

Mitchell, the retired FC expert on the subject. Other events planned included an all-day visit to the National Trust property at Stourhead; a talk on the work of the St John's Ambulance Service; and the Christmas buffet party on December 16.

MID-SCOTLAND: Visits included the Younger Botanic Garden, Benmore; Inveraray Gaol and Inveraray Wildlife Park; New Lanark Heritage Centre; the Burrell Collection; and Glengoyne Distillery.

All visits were well supported except for Burrell where only seven mustered, but members appreciated the opportunity to renew old acquaintances. Healthy funds meant that the branch could subsidise all visits plus general meetings at the McLaren Halls, St Fillans and David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle.

Outings pencilled in for 1992 include Stirling Castle and Bannockburn Heritage Centre; Ballantyne's Bottling Plant, Dumbarton (lunch at Duck Bay Marina); Foster Yeoman Granite Quarry (with sail on Loch Linnhe), and Bell's Garden, Perth. Full details will be published early in 1992.

Meantime, watch out for information about the social event of the year — Mid Argyll Group are planning a dinner and social evening in the Argyll Hotel, Ardrishaig, in February or March.

Secretary Andy Gallacher, 24 Dunlop Tower, East Kilbride, G75 0BS (Tel. 03552 41024) is your contact.

APPOINTMENTS

Three top posts announced

Three Chief Conservators for the Forest Authority have been appointed for England, Scotland and Wales under reorganisation as from next April.

They are respectively R. O. Smith, Conservator E(E); J. Atterson, Conservator N(S); and D. M. Hughes, Assistant Conservator Operations in Wales.

Other appointments announced include:

REGIONAL DIRECTORS (FOREST ENTERPRISE)

S. A. Neustein, Conservator N(E), will become Regional Director N&E(E), then on retirement next May he will be succeeded by G. R. HATFIELD, Assistant Conservator Operations in E(E), on promotion to Grade 5.

R. J. N. Busby, Conservator W(E), will become Regional Director S&W(E).

G. J. Hamilton, currently Conservator M(S), will become Regional Director N(S).

G. M. Cowie, currently Conservator S(S), will become Regional Director S(S).

J. F. Morgan, currently Conservator Wales, will become Regional Director Wales.

HEADS OF HQ DIVISIONS

Policy and Services

P. J. Clarke will continue as Secretary to the Forestry Commissioners and head of Secretariat Division.

C. W. Simmonds, who retires in February, will be succeeded as Director Personnel by J. McGough, A&FO in N(E), on promotion to Grade 5.

E. K. Arthurs continues as Director Business Systems Division.

Dr S. Harding, Director Development, will head the new Policy Studies Division.

W. G. Prest, Budgets Officer and head of Finance Branch A, will head the new Parliamentary Accounting Division.

J. F. Lindsay will continue as head of Public Information Division.

J. F. McSorley will continue as head of Internal Audit Division.

FORESTRY AUTHORITY

A. H. A. Scott, director Environment, will head the new Advisory & Extension Division.

D. A. Burdekin will continue as Director Research.

R. C. Herbert, currently A&FO in E(E), will become head of Grants & Licences Division on promotion to Grade 6.

FOREST ENTERPRISE

R. P. Illingworth will continue as Director Estate Management until retirement in mid-1992 and will be succeeded by P. C. Ranken, currently Conservancy Land Agent in E(E), on promotion to Grade 5.

S. E. Quigley, Director H&M, will head the new Business Enterprise Division.

C. T. Spillane, Controller of Finance, will head the new Enterprise Finance Division.

R. M. Hay will continue as Director Engineering.

J. Dewar, head of Silviculture, will head the new Forest Management Division.

Further appointments:—

B. P. Easton, SEO, PW Branch, will become Personnel & Administration Officer England, Cambridge.

A. W. Stevenson, OSO, N(S), will become Forest Management & Environment Officer, Inverness.

T. R. Sawyer, FOI, FDM Marches, will become Operations Manager, W(E), Bristol.

C. M. A. Taylor, FOI, FDM Perthshire will become FDM, Tayside, Dundeld.

T. A. G. James, FOI, Morgannwg will become FDM Morgannwg.

Mrs S. M. Nelson, SEO, Personnel Division will become Personnel & Administration Officer, N&E(E), York.

N. H. Clayden, PF&EO M(S) will become FDM, Aberfoyle.

J. Simpson (promotion from Grade 7 to grade 6) will become Regional Land Agent N(S) Inverness.

GOOD IDEA BRIGADE

A recent meeting of the Central Staff Suggestion Committee agreed these awards:

£52 — to an FOI in Wales who suggested temporary waterproof signs on FC vehicles to advertise the sale of Christmas trees.

£65 — to a mechanic in Wales who modified sump guards on Maestro vans to enable mechanics to carry out engine servicing without removing the guard.

£50 interim — to a mechanic in S(S) who designed guards for the Akerman harvester to prevent damage to the machine. The suggestion is being investigated further.

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



Tom and his wife with Conservator Roger Busby.

Bodmin's 'bye to FDM Tom

More than 50 friends and colleagues met at Cardinham Woods near Bodmin, Cornwall (famous for its Teddy Bears' Picnics), to say farewell to **TOM FITZGERALD**, FDM of Cornwall and N. Devon FD for three years.

The Callywith Cottage Cafe in the heart of the woods provided a particularly pertinent setting for his farewell — since he was largely instrumental in persuading the powers-that-be to invest a large sum in the property for use as cafe, interpretive centre and local office.

The conservator of W(E), Roger Busby, recalled Tom's past career and his many attributes.

He was presented with a fire horn (genuine FC, not in stock!) as a reminder of past times and so that he can blow raspberries at the rest of us left behind.

Tom also received a plump cheque with instructions to buy his own photographic

equipment, now that the official camera has been taken back in stock!

One of Tom's last acts as FDM was to wish **GORDON RICHARDS** best wishes on his retirement.

Tom presented Gordon with his service certificate recording 39 years of sterling work.

Before joining the FC Gordon had worked for British Rail and thus changed from an organisation which ran the steam trains through the plantations at Halwill and started many fires to an organisation which spent all its time putting them out!

He worked for several years as a tractor driver with the harvesting teams but latterly acted as a storeman about the central depot.

Living in the small community of forest houses on the opposite side of the road he was always on call and he is looking forward to having more time to spend on his house and garden.

He was presented with a pair of binoculars to help his birdwatching hobby; his wife received a bouquet.



Gordon Richards passes the post — 39 years' service in the deep south.

Charlie goes . . . at 65 years young!



Charlie with acting FDM James Ogilvie of Kielder.

After nearly 42 years in several forests that are now part of Kielder FD, **CHARLIE WALKER** retired at 65 years young.

Charlie has records of nearly every tonne of pulp he has cut and every tree planted. (In total he planted over 1.5 million trees — about one per cent of the FD, and is one of the few people to plant a bare hill and then 40 years later restock the same ground.)

Charlie is retiring to his garden in the North Tyne Valley. His colleagues gave him a new spade in case he wants to return as a planting contractor!

DAVID ELLIOT and his wife Vera

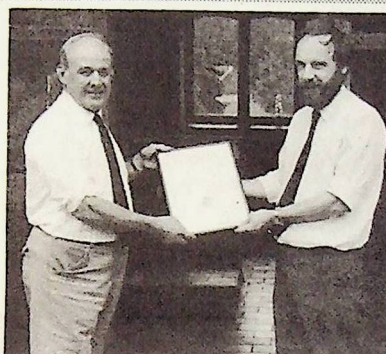


The two Davids — Elliot and Jardine, Harvesting Officer.

moved to Byreness village in Redesdale in the Fifties: they were the last FC employees who can claim to have been in the village since it started. They took a keen interest in the area and can still name all the children who were taught at the Primary School.

Latterly he was a ganger on H&M, supervising the all felling of the 500ha Stewartshields block before it transferred to the Otterburn training area.

David, who retired on medical grounds, after 37 years, was presented by colleagues with a glass engraved with a roe deer and



Jimmy Fryer with FDM Brian Mahony of South Lakes FD.

tokens for his garden at a small ceremony held at his house.

In South Lakes FD **JIMMY FRYER** retired also after 37 years. He joined the Commission in 1953 and during his time could, and did, do almost everything. Most of his time however was spent on skidders.

Jimmy was presented with a shooting stick and a bottle of whisky, and regaled his friends with dubious stories of his earlier years.

Jimmy has retired to his home in Coniston to keep an eye on his business interests and the football and cricket teams.

Lions veteran scores again



FORMER British Lions and Scots rugby international **Ernie Michie**, Castle Douglas for eight years, has retired after 34 years' service.

The event signalled the end of Ernie's 20-year search for out-of-print volumes of a History of Scottish Forestry, when Katrina Crocket located a set in darkest Cumbria.

The volumes, a local print and a painting by the famous Galloway artist Donald Watson, were presented by Conservator S(S) Gordon Cowie in Castle Douglas.

Ernie, a proud Scot if ever there was, recalled his dismay at his first posting to Nottingham. He edged further north to Carlisle where he managed Border forests before clawing his way back into Scotland up to Fort Augustus.

A spell in acquisitions followed at Inverness. His long legs enabled him to cover the ground thoroughly and his old-fashioned charm and a modicum of Highland guile lead to deals being struck for many thousands of hectares over the years. The down side was being forced to take large drams to seal the bargains — but then no job is perfect!

Excellent team

Up to Dornoch next: a massive district with the sea on three sides and a ferry crossing over the treacherous Pentland Firth when PW inspections were due on Orkney. Ernie said the trick was to drop an anti-sea sickness pill over the side of the ferry and the waves died away to mere ripples.

Promotion to Grade 7 brought a move to Castle Douglas at the time of the 1984 reorganisation. A great believer in teamwork from his days when he was capped 15 times for Scotland and toured South Africa Rhodesia and Kenya with the Lions, he set about and succeeded in creating a team "par excellence" (modest too!) at Castle Douglas.

Ernie and his wife Sybil retained their home at Dornoch and they have returned there to renew links with the Royal Dornoch Golf Club.

Mr Radio signs off after 23 years

DAVID BLANDFORD, head of Radio and Electronics Branch, who was instrumental in the creation of a section of Engineering Division solely responsible for providing the Commission with its radio communications needs and established four operational workshops, retired in September after 23 years' service.

David joined us in March 1968 after 11 years with the Ministry of Supply and Defence.

Originally located at Bristol, David was instrumental in the establishment of the four workshops around the country, and one of them — Dunkeld — became his well-known "second home." It was in July 1974 that David and his family made the trek north to re-locate in Aylth, Tayside, their current residence.

At a small informal bar lunch for David and his wife Eileen, crystal wine glasses and a teak wine rack were presented by Mr R. Hay, Director of Engineering, and friends and colleagues presented an air experience flying lesson.

Dornoch FD saw two valued members of staff retire — **JOHN RENWICK** in June after 28 years in the Shin area, and **ROB ANDERSON** (Naver section) after 34 years.



Two Scots retire . . . Rob Anderson of Dornoch (above) and Everard Martin (Inverness), seen here with FM Alasdair MacLeod.

At an informal gathering at Lairg John was presented with an inscribed tankard and radio cassette player from friends and colleagues.

Rob's retirement was marked by a gathering in Bettyhill and the presentation of a pair of binoculars. Rob was once rated by work study as one of the fastest fencers in the Commission. His skills covered a full range of duties.

At Heathhall Repair Depot, three colleagues said farewell after 66 years between them.

ALEX WILLIAMSON, Inspector at Heathhall Workshop, was with the FC for 26 years. He intends to make good use of the new electronic



keyboard presented to him. Mrs Williamson received a bouquet.

WALTER NICHOL, a mechanic, sadly owing to ill health retired after 17 years. He was presented with a wallet and money and other gifts from CME Craig Heaney.

Last, but not least — **SAM WRIGHT** (with East Roads Dept., s/s for 23 years) was given a nest of tables and a cash sum by ACE Don Holmes.

In Inverness FD, **EVERARD MARTIN** retired after 31 years. He joined the FC after working on a farm. His first forest was Queens then to Strathdearn and finally to old Culloden Forest.

He was presented with his service certificate and gifts by Alasdair MacLeod, District Forester FM.

Down at Chapelhall, Lanarkshire, **TOMMY McLAUGHLIN**, turner at the workshop, retired for health reasons after 18 years. Tommy (61) is well known in mechanical engineering circles for his traditional skills on lathes and other machine tools and for his impatience to "get on with the job." He was presented with a watch from colleagues at his house in September.

FRED MENZIES, forest ganger, of Strathyre, whose retirement was recorded in the previous issue, served 43 years with the FC.

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

Man of figures — Rex bows out

REX HOWELL, head of Statistics and Computing Branch at Alice Holt for more than 22 years, retired in August after a total of 41 years with the FC.

At a traditional Alice Holt retirement ceremony he was presented with a cheque, a potted "Sexy Rexy" rose and the promise of a copy of Oliver Rackham's book "Trees and Woodlands in the British Landscape" which was still in the post. A bouquet was presented to his wife Pat.

After National Service, Rex started his forestry career as a forest worker trainee at Lindford Hall Forester Training School from 1951-53, then was appointed as Ex-school Ganger, then as Assistant Forester, at Farnham Regional Office. During this period he studied for and passed all the examinations of the Institute of Statistics, becoming an Associate of the Institute in 1957.

The next year he was posted to the Edinburgh Regional Office as Statistician and regraded to Scientific Officer. In 1963 he was promoted to SSO.

When John Jeffers left the FC to become Director of Merlwood Research Station in 1967, Rex was posted back to Alice Holt as head of Statistics and Computing Branch.

Rex has seen many changes in his long career, not least in the field of statistical computing and software development. A statistical purist, he never failed to respond vigorously to bad statistical thinking or a sloppy logic.

● In our photograph above are David Burdekin, Director Research (holding a picture of Rex computing under an umbrella!), Rex and Pat, and David Mobbs, Principal Statistician (with a card based on the rose theme).



The bearded Rex with wife Pat and mementoes of their farewell.

Tribute to Leslie Troup



LESLIE TROUP
Infectious zest

The death has occurred of **LESLIE TROUP, OBE**, Conservator, South-west England, for 10 years until his retirement in 1983.

He announced at that time he was NOT retiring but starting life anew; true to his words he continued to champion conservation matters, and in 1987 became the first honorary director of Tree Aid.

He leaves a wife Anne and son Geoffrey.

George Holmes, former Director-General writes: It was my pleasure and good luck to have been a close friend and professional colleague of Leslie and his family for more than 40 years, since he joined the Commission (from the Army and University) as a District Officer in South-east England.

Leslie lived life to the full, and tackled everything with infectious zest and enthusiasm, and with great professionalism.

His achievements were fine

and many, both in innovative forestry and in enriching the lives of others by his warm and generous personality.

This created much goodwill and happiness as well as lasting friendships.

His courage and good humour helped him to bear the setbacks of recurrent illness and the untimely death of his wife Muriel, and their handicapped daughter Lynn, after heroic efforts to give her a chance in life.

He became a founding member and Chairman of the Home Farm Trust, which now has a countrywide network of highly successful homes for handicapped children.

He was staunchly supported by his second wife Anne, and his son Geoffrey, who brought him great happiness, and to whom we extend our deep sympathy.

Stimulating

There was never a dull moment in Leslie's company. His cheerful energy and quick wit were highly stimulating, and he was very agile in debate, in which he took great pleasure — especially in philosophical exchanges on environmental and countryside issues.

He would have made a great advocate.

He was an outstanding forester throughout the exciting times of the 50s, 60s, and 70s — as a District Officer at Farnham, Bristol; for eight years as Chief Work Study Officer; and finally as Conservator SW England for 10 years until retirement in 1983.

Leslie was appointed to the England committee of the Nature Conservancy Council, where his passionate and well-informed championing of the conservation benefits of sustained woodland management were a strong influence. In 1987, he became the first Honorary Director of Tree Aid.

Leslie hated pomposity and humbug, which he loved to debunk. He received the OBE in 1982. He was regarded with great esteem and affection by everyone who knew him.

It was always enormous fun to be with him, and I think that is a fine way to be remembered.

● Donations in memory of Leslie can be sent to St Peter's Hospice, Knowle, c/o Mr Thomas Davis, Southville Lodge, Southville.

Three die within week

OBITUARIES

A sad period for Perthshire FD staff who lost three old stalwarts in just one week.

On Monday, September 30 **JOCK GUNN** died, aged 67. He had started work with the FC in 1947 in Keillour Forest before moving to Craigvinean following amalgamation.

He became Senior Ganger and was well liked and respected by all staff. A lifelong supporter of St Johnstone, his other great interest was golf. He leaves his wife Margaret and sons John and Neil.

NEIL DRUMMOND died peacefully the previous day, also aged 67.

Neil started his career as a Senior Ranger on Christmas Day 1959 at Strathord Forest before expanding his duties to cover Craigvinean. He was a great lover of Scottish dance music and all country activities, particularly fishing. Neil is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter Valerie and son Alan.

On Saturday, October 5, **DONALD GAIRNS** died after seven years of retirement.

Born in 1921, Donald started at Keillour in 1956 and spent his career there as a Forest Craftsman. He retired in 1984 to devote more time to his great interest in gardening. He leaves three brothers and a sister.

JIMMY BAIN, who retired seven years ago, died on November 7 after a short illness. He was 65.

Jim hailed from the island of Papa Westray. He worked as a Bevan Boy at the Lindsey coal pit in Fife before joining us in 1947.

Trained as a Forester at Benmore, his career took him to many of the old forests in East Scotland — Ledmore, Rannoch, Inglismaldie, Fetteresso, Tentsmuir, Hallyburton and finally Durris — names which conjure up memories of days long gone.

Jim retired to Crathes, near Banchory where, working as a consultant / contractor, he was able to pass on his wealth of practical experience to those in the private sector.

He was by nature a quiet man, much respected by all who knew him, and he'll be sadly missed. Our sympathies go out to Margaret and the family.

CHARLIE HART, well loved head forester in Scotland West Conservancy, died on September in Moffat, Dumfries-shire. He and his wife, Joan, had retired there in 1982 after serving at Loch Ard Forest, Aberfoyle, for several years.

On leaving Ben More Forestry School in 1950, Charlie's first posting was to Carron Valley and this was followed by forests at Eredine, Glen Duror and Glencoe before Loch Ard. He will be remembered for his special talents in music and art.

In addition to his wife, he leaves a daughter, son and four grandchildren.

JOHN EDWARD HIGGINS, ex Forest Craftsman at Llanwrst FD, died on September 11. He medically retired in May aged 58.

NORMAN TERRY died in August 1991, aged 79. He joined the FC in 1948 and worked at Plashetts Forest, North York Moors then continued working in the surrounding area before becoming Head Forester in charge of Don Forest.

He retired in May 1972 but kept in close contact with Don Young, the ex-leading ganger at Don Forest and his wife.

ERIC MARCH died in September. He was in his eighties. He joined the FC after the war and worked in Northumberland before moving to Selby Forest where he spent the majority of his working life then to the Stang as Forester-in-Charge.

H. W. GULLIVER, who retired from Woking office in 1970, died in September. He joined the FC in 1926 and was Chief Clerk at Lyndhurst until 1947 when he transferred to Woking.

He spent 21 years of retirement in Hartley Wintney, Hampshire and is survived by his wife, daughter and grandson.

Wilde o' Wales says farewell



Conservator John Morgan with Charles and over-sized cheque.

CHARLES (C. G.) WILDE retired in September after 38 years with the FC — all in Wales. After completing training at the old Gwydyr School, his initial posting as an assistant forester was to Rheola Forest. Since then Charles has spent his service at Slebech and Glasfynydd Forests then at Ebbw, before being moved to Preselli as Head Forester in charge.

In 1983, when Preselli became part of Brechfa, he joined the Private Woodlands section and then in 1989 when Brechfa and Llandovery FD amalgamated, he remained as Private Woodlands officer for the new Llandovery FD.

During his long service — in particular during his service as the Private Woodlands officer for the whole of West Wales — Charles earned the respect not only of his colleagues but also of all those involved in forestry in the private sector.

To mark his retirement, a farewell evening was held in Brechfa when conservator John F. Morgan presented him with a cheque on behalf of friends and colleagues in both the private sector and the Commission.

Also in Llandovery FD, **WILLIAM ARTHUR DAVEY** retired after 30 years' service. He started in the old Llanddowror Forest which in 1973 became part of Slebech Forest.

All of his service has been on Forest Management activities including agency work for the Welsh Office, and he has been actively involved in helping with the landscaping of most of the large by-passes in West Wales and in the establishment of seed orchards at Slebech. In 1984, all of this unit became part of Brechfa and more recently part of Llandovery FD.



A little bit o' fun on their last day from Ron and Sally Maiden whose familiar figures will be missed around Headquarters now that they have retired.

MORE PICTURE POWER

Handyman
Mike
wins top
photograph
honour

MIKE Young, caretaker and handyman at Alice Holt, recently achieved a notable success as a photographer by being awarded the Licentiate (LRPS) of the Royal Photographic Society.

The society, founded in 1853, is the most prestigious photographic society in the world and its promotion and maintenance of high photographic standards has long been recognised.

The awarding of distinctions is the society's main way of upholding standards of excellence and, because membership is open to

photographers of every kind, professional and amateur, those distinctions are universally respected. To gain a RPS distinction, photographers have to submit examples of their work to prove to a panel of expert judges that they have achieved the required standard.

Douglas Green, FC Principal Photographer, praised Mike's work. "He obviously has an eye for the beauty of the natural world. The clarity of the dew on the spider's web is so clear and sharp you almost know how a fly must feel!"



Close-up of a spider's web shows an eye for beauty.

Trees for Life wins top award

THE Findhorn Foundation's Trees for Life project to regenerate the Caledonian Forest has won the Natural Environment category of the UK Ford Conservation Awards 1991.

The project is working in close co-operation with the Forestry Commission and the first phase was completed in September 1990 when David Bellamy formally closed the last gate in a major fencing project to exclude deer from a 50-hectares area of Caledonian forest at Glen Affric.

Glen Affric contains one of the largest surviving remnants of the ancient Caledonian pine forest in Scotland.

Within these woods there has been a continuous history of tree cover for more than 10,000 years but without management this irreplaceable part of the Scottish heritage would be lost for ever.

Before the fencing work started an area of pinewood known as Coille Ruigh na Cuileige, or 'the wooded slope of the midgets,' was surveyed and more than 100,000 heavily grazed Scots pine seedlings were found.

As the parent trees are all more than 150 years old, without immediate help the forest would eventually die.

"We are the last generation that can save the forest," said Alan Watson of the Findhorn Foundation.

"Most of the surviving areas of forest consist of old trees nearing the end of their life span, so unless we act now, many of the native pinewoods will disappear forever. Fencing the forest remnants to exclude the deer enables the seedling trees to grow



David Bellamy with a cheerful group of workers in this flashback to 1990... and the man himself in his own inimitable style poses in front of the last gate.

successfully to maturity."

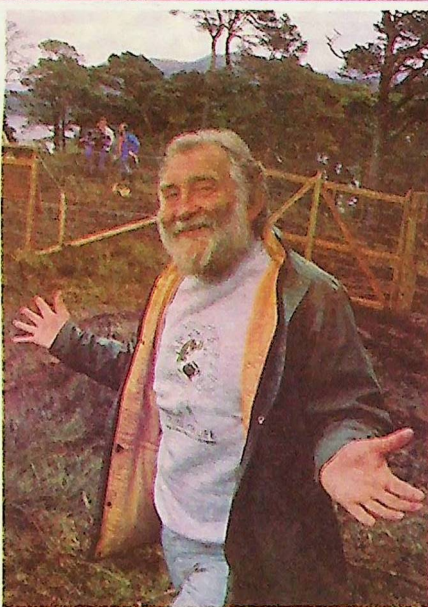
The FC started a management plan for the pinewoods which ran from 1978 to 1990, covering an area of 1,746 hectares.

A new management plan, prepared in consultation with the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland, will include measures to extend the area of pinewoods over a long time period.

"Most of the woods are within the Glen Affric Site of Special Scientific Interest which extends to 2,229 hectares," said Richard Davies, Fort Augustus FDM.

The progress of the regeneration in this area will aid in the future evaluation and rating of other areas of pinewood for similar work."

Much of the work of the project is being done by volunteers. If you are interested in finding out more contact Alan Watson, Trees for Life Project, Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Forres IV36 0TZ.



Fungi in the woods... yet another splendid example of Mike's work.



And in black and white, a detail from an excellent study of the wildlife of our forests.



Capped for Scotland

The Scottish shinty team received a boost recently with the appointment of Glenbranter workshop storeman Alasdair Paterson (fourth right, back row) to captain their Under-21s. From the same area, Cowal FD Forest Craftsman Fraser MacDonald (third left front) is also a key player in the team. The decision to appoint Ali as captain paid off... they obtained their best result yet against Ireland on Irish soil at Limerick (5-5) in the fourth match in a new series of under-21 internationals between the two countries. Picture by Coll MacDougall.

SLASHER



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... 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 our correspondents.

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

● Deadline for material for the next issue for January 31, 1992.