

SLASHER

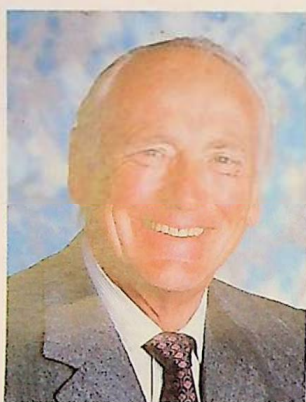
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SHARING THE HIGHEST HONOURS

CONGRATULATIONS to three Forestry Commission staff who appeared in the New Year's Honours List.

In addition to Chairman Raymond Johnstone's knighthood, Chief Research Officer Calvin Booth received an OBE for his significant contribution to forestry research in Britain and overseas. During 40 years of service in the Commission he has been involved in forestry at all levels. He admits most of his free time is devoted to the many forestry organisations he supports and says his wife would confirm this! 'This is a considerable honour,' he told *Slasher*, 'and I am delighted to accept it, particularly on behalf of NRS.'

In Aberfoyle FD the award of John Brommage's British Empire Medal coincides with his retirement as Recreational Ranger, and is



Above left, Raymond Johnstone; right, Calvin Booth; and below, John Brommage with interested youngsters at QEFP

a fitting tribute to 38 years of service and his contribution to Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. 'I am thrilled at the prospect of receiving an award,' said John. 'I believe it recognises everyone's good work in the Park.'

We also send our congratulations to John Sunley, from the private sector, whose valuable work on the structural uses of timber gained him an OBE.



REDUCED TO ASHES

THIS is the scene that greeted Research Scientist Brian Greig at Alice Holt on the morning after the fire. Notebooks and files representing more than 30 years of work were lost in the blaze, but staff are thankful that the damage wasn't worse.

All the offices affected are now back in use. For more pictures and a full report of the fire, turn to page 3.

Jobs cut as planting levels fall

MORE than 50 forest workers are to lose their jobs, it was announced in January.

The cuts are to come in Scotland and in Wales and are the result of a reduction in planting levels, although there is inevitable speculation that the news is linked with rumours of privatisation plans.

Voluntary basis

Redundancies have been

offered on a voluntary basis and are due to take place in August. Individual financial settlements are to be offered. In Dolgellau, Forest District Manager Trefor Owen stressed that the same arrangements would apply if compulsory redundancies were required.

'We greatly regret the need to declare redundancies, particularly in the current economic climate,' said Graham Hamilton, Regional Director for North

Scotland. 'Sadly, new planting will continue to decline in the next few years and there is no longer sufficient work available to sustain present levels of employment.'

Need for timber

Robert MacLennan, Liberal Democrat MP for Cairness and Sutherland, declared that the Government were ignoring the need to have a domestic timber industry, and expressed his distress at the news.

New register lets public comment on forestry schemes

FOR the first time members of the public are able to find out the tree planting plans for their area thanks to a new list published by the Forestry Authority from November.

Each Conservancy office now holds a list of all applications to create new woodland which meet the criteria already established under the Commission's grant scheme guidelines. Once the application details are placed on the Register members of the public will have three weeks to com-

ment or to request further information about any of the proposed schemes.

The list will hold not only details of the proposed planting site but also any special circumstances which apply, for example if it is in an Environmentally Sensitive Area or a National Park. Information on the long-term objectives and priorities, plus an indication of the main species choice, will also be supplied.

A second list will be published giving details of the schemes finally approved.

INSIDE

Welcome to your new-look *Slasher*!

We've changed things around a little to make it easier for you to find the news from your area. We've also introduced some of the ideas put forward in our recent survey to try and make the paper what you're telling us you want.

Keep the news coming in - and let us know what you think!

What's been happening around the Regions? News from up and down the country..... **2, 3**

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Here in my car - Chris Young, who built his own racemobile..... **8**

For a full list of correspondents and the next *Slasher* deadline, turn to page 8

NEWS IN BRIEF

In the December *Slasher* we stated that Glentworth Forest District supplied the Euro Summit Christmas Tree. This should of course have read Lothian & Tweed Forest District. Our apologies to them.

TV TIME

Former Cannock adviser Gerald Springthorpe's career in conservation is to come under the spotlight in a series to be transmitted on BBC2 in April. Phil Drabble will compare his work with that of John Oliver, based at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire.

ICF HONOURS DG

Director General Robin Cutler was awarded Honorary Fellowship of the Institute of Chartered Foresters at the ICF Council meeting in December.

SAFETY WORKSHOPS

The Forestry Authority workshops end in March, having played a great role in increasing awareness and understanding of Safety Standards up and down the country.

PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE

NATIONAL Tree Week (26 November - 6 December) and the 40th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne provided the perfect opportunity for tree-planting ceremonies throughout Britain.

In Northamptonshire the Old Dry Hills failed to live up to their name as 40 trees were planted on a major new Forest Enterprise planting site in torrential rain. Northants Forest District staff were joined by representatives from a range of interested organisations plus children and staff from Brigstock Latham Charity Primary School. The planting also commemorated the start of the Rockingham Forest Project, a combined initiative to promote tourism, rural development and woodland in the ancient Royal Forest of Rockingham.

Buchan Forest District



Forty enthusiastic schoolchildren help plant trees at Thetford

reunited Beatrice Sutherland, Jean Charles, Margaret Angus and Gladys Courts for their planting ceremony, which also celebrated the founding of the

Women's Timber Corps 50 years ago. As part of the Land Army which released men for the war, Mrs Sutherland and Mrs Courts felled trees and worked in local sawmills. Mrs Angus drove a lorry around Strathdon and Huntly, while Miss Charles was based in forestry offices.

Down in Thetford Lynford Arboretum was planting for the future with the help of 40 enthusiastic schoolchildren from Mundford VC Primary School. With a kind donation from Baxter Healthcare Ltd, Thetford's new pines will begin a regional collection.

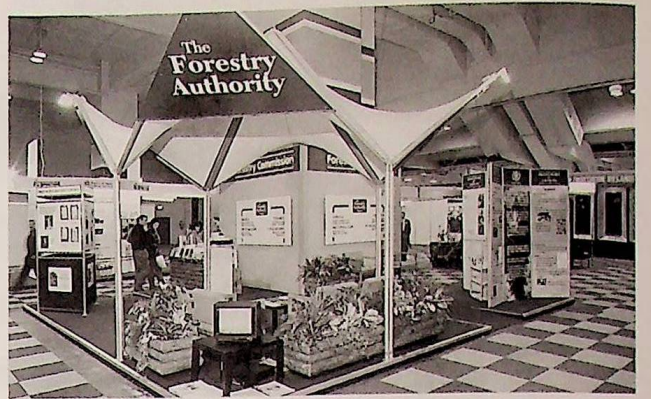
New FASTCo secretary

FASTCo, the Forestry and Arboricultural Safety and Training Council, has a new Technical Secretary - Ted Radford, formerly District Forester at Aberfoyle.

Ted will organise FASTCo's activities and ensure that information produced is consistent with national initiatives in the fields of safety and training.

FASTCo was formed last year following the merger of the existing Safety and Training Councils.

Forestry takes a stand



WITH diversification firmly on the farming agenda, the Forestry Authority had a strong presence at the Royal Smithfield Show at the beginning of December. A successful farm forum was run each day, with Gary Kerr, Silviculturist South and Ron Melville, Thames and Chilterns Conservator, covering grants and forest establishment. More than 450 Grant Scheme packs were issued to interested farmers.

Heritage partnership launched in Wales Chinese foresters visit Alice Holt



Left to right, Director Wales John Morgan; Forestry Commissioner Charles Woosnam; Welsh Historic Gardens Trust Chairman William Wilkins; and Commission Chairman Raymond Johnstone at Hafod

FOREST Enterprise Wales joined with the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust in October to launch a Heritage Partnership at Hafod, near Pontrhydygroes.

The landscaping at Hafod dates back to the late 18th century and was created by Thomas Johnes, the pioneer of large-scale

broadleaf and conifer tree planting in Wales. The Trust will work with Forest Enterprise to ensure planting proposals have the approval of the Hafod Advisory Committee, which specialises in garden and landscape conservation. Approved projects will be financed by the trust.

DELEGATES from the Chinese Ministry of Forestry visited Alice Holt at the end of November as part of a two-week tour to gather information on the role of forestry in reclaiming mining sites. Andy Moffat of Site Studies Branch spoke to the group on the Forestry Authority's current research programme to establish trees on derelict land before guided visits to put the Authority's work in context.

Pointing out the benefits



Alan Dowell (left) makes a point to Cynog Dafis MP during his visit to FA Wales

BRITAIN'S first Green MP took great interest in the Forestry Authority's work when he visited the Wales National Office in January.

Woodland Officer Alan Dowell had invited Cynog Dafis, Plaid Cymru/Green Party alliance Member for Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire, to see for himself how the Authority encourages the creation of new woodlands and manages existing ones.

Welcomed to the Aberystwyth office by Chief Conservator David Hughes, Mr Dafis met administra-

tive staff before visiting several local venues which demonstrated the range of the Authority's involvements. These included a recently planted broadleaved Farm Woodland Scheme illustrating the multiple demands on woodland; an area of land approved for planting under the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme on improved grassland; an unmanaged Ancient Semi-natural Woodland; and the clearfelling of a coniferous plantation in a landscape-sensitive area of mid-Wales.

New Forest reptiliary on TV

HOLIDAYS Hill Reptiliary played host to the educational TV series *Stop Look Listen* for a programme to be broadcast in March on Channel 4.

Leading Keeper Derek Thomson shows local children the reptiles and discusses habitats, breeding cycles and conservation measures.

Valleys launch Trim Trail

SOON Hafodyrnys may have the fittest people in South East Wales - thanks to the Trim Trail, a Valleys Forest Initiative Project launched at the end of November.

Developed by Newbridge Rugby Club and SE Wales Recreation Ranger Rita Whitecomb, the Trail comprises eight sets of apparatus spread over a gruelling 850km uphill climb. With hurdles, sit-ups, step-ups, chin bars and a ladder walk, it isn't for the faint-hearted!

Rugby Club Chairman Mike Croad unveiled the project board in the presence of Director Wales John Morgan, Newbridge Mayor Tom Hanis, Valleys Forest Initiative Project Director David Evans, and other Forest Enterprise and Islwyn Borough Council members.

Conservancy helps school to national prize



Photograph by courtesy of Yorkshire Evening Press

GREATER Yorkshire Conservancy helped schoolchildren to a national prize - and here Selby Woodland Officer Harry Scheider helps five-year-old Jason Punshon to plant one of the trees their prize money bought.

Eserick Primary School impressed the judges of a Tree Council contest with a plan to create a nature trail in the school grounds, using trees to screen the buildings from the A19 York-Selby road. The prize money bought forty saplings - one for each year of the Queen's reign. The plan was designed with the Conservancy's help.

Top award for NRS researcher

ALAN Fletcher of NRS has become the first Forestry Commission employee to receive the prestigious Distinguished Service Award from the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations.

'The nomination came from my international peers,' said Dr Fletcher, 'so I'm particularly honoured to be chosen.'

'Twenty years' work on temperate coniferous genetic resources in the USA and Canada, plus 16 years as Chairman on a IUFRO working party, have made his knowledge and contribution invaluable. 'Alan already has a tremendous international reputation and the Award confirms this,' commented Calvin Booth, Chief Research Officer at NRS. 'As our communications with Europe increase, so does the importance of this Award.'

Sherwood Chairman appointed

THE Commission has appointed Sir Andrew Buchanan, farmer and Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, as the first Chairman of the Sherwood Initiative Steering Group. The Group will meet regularly to co-ordinate action and policies for regenerating Sherwood Forest.

WHEN THE FIRE TOOK HOLD

by JOHN PARKER

AN explosion in the laboratory block at Alice Holt Research Station just before 5.30 am on Monday 14 December awoke staff living nearby. Caretaker Mike Young grabbed his keys and investigated while Pathology Forester David Rose and Mike's brother Chris, a Mechanical Engineer, phoned the emergency services.

Well alight

From outside it was evident that Brian Greig's office on the first floor was well alight, with flames leaping out of the shattered windows. Entering the building

Mike Young immediately recognised an arson attack - papers had been strewn over the floors and fire doors had been propped open deliberately. Fire was taking hold along the Pathology Branch and Seed Testing laboratory corridor.

Mike and Chris used the nearest accessible fire hoses and, lying on the floor to avoid the choking smoke, had put out the corridor fire when the Fire Brigade arrived and called them out.

Unexploded devices

Five fire appliances, plus police and ambulance, attended the incident. The blaze in Brian Greig's office was soon under control, but then unexploded incendiary devices were discovered and all personnel were called out of the building while



◆ Above: Papers were torn from desks and files and sprinkled with petrol to help the blaze spread

◆ Right: Mike and Chris Young fought the corridor fire until the emergency services arrived, lying on the floor to avoid the choking smoke

Photographs: Mike Young

the Chief Fire Officer investigated them.

The attack had been a determined one, with offices ransacked and petrol sprinkled on papers to aid the spread of fire. Thankfully only one device exploded and through the prompt

action of local staff and emergency services, damage was contained and a potentially disastrous event avoided. Thanks are due not only to Mike and Chris Young, but also to David Rose and his family, and cook Nellie Beale, who opened up the canteen for refreshments and manned the telephone switchboard until other staff arrived for work.

The Research Station was closed for the day, with essential staff assisting operations. Salvage procedures and renovation work was soon in progress and we are



very grateful for the help and advice of Area Land Agent Joan Clark. With the exception of Brian Greig, most Pathology Branch staff have been able to reoccupy their rooms. While some of Brian's experiment files and field notebooks from over 30 years of research were destroyed, other material was salvaged and information has painstakingly been preserved so that loss of data has been minimised.

Thorough investigation

The police have undertaken a very thorough investigation. No one officially claimed responsibility, but animal rights activists are suspected as they have been linked with similar attacks elsewhere.

Be on your guard! This time we were lucky - but public buildings are at risk from extremist attacks and the consequences could be catastrophic.

Authority double first

THE Forest Enterprise received its first Centre of Excellence Award from the Forestry Authority in November for the Bagot's Wood Conservation area, officially launched last summer.

And Phil Drabble's Goats Lodge Educational Nature Reserve next door made it a double, as Awards were made to adjoining areas of woodland for the first time.

Midlands Forest District Manager Chris Robinson joined Mr Drabble to receive the Awards from Becky and Giles Smart, aged 6 and 8, pupils of Richard Clarke First School in Abbots Bromley, which chiefly benefits from the facilities at Goats Lodge.

The Centre of Excellence Awards were introduced last May for forests showing the highest standards of multi-purpose management incorporating at least one of the following: improving the quality of the landscape, creating benefits for wildlife, providing public access and growing timber in environmentally sound ways.

Community relations in practice

NATIONAL Tree Week brought two firsts for Community Woodlands.

Just outside Edinburgh Queensferry and District became the first Scottish Community Council to receive the Forestry Authority's Community Woodland Supplement, while Kent's first Community Woodland was marked by a planting ceremony near Maidstone.

The Scottish Council's planting of native community woodland by local residents, schoolchildren and Scottish Wildlife Trust volunteers is a perfect example of the Forestry Authority and the local community working together to benefit local people and wildlife.

The Kent scheme at Stede Court, Harriersham will provide about nine hectares of native broadleaves. The site is on the scarp slope of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and borders the historic Pilgrims' Way.

The communities have been actively involved in planning in both areas, and the result should be facilities which truly reflect local need.

Piping at the Brandenburg Gate



NELSON Innes's bagpipes have skirled worldwide to spread the good news - Britain has a lot to offer its overseas visitors!

In October Nelson, from NRS at Roslin, joined a team of entertainers on a British Tourist Authority goodwill trip to take the best of British to Berliners. But it was only the latest in a long line of visits which has taken him to France, Austria, Sweden, Italy and Mexico.

'Many of the visits have been organised through the Board of Trade to promote products such as woollens and whisky,' he says. 'But I also play regularly in Edinburgh - sometimes six nights a week.' As a Pipe Major with an Equity card, there is no shortage of demand for Nelson's services and he's well-known on the music circuit - in fact there is even a jig named after him!

TUS DIARY

It's been like getting blood from a stone! The latest reply from the Prime Minister's office on privatisation says 'no current plans' so we're no more enlightened than before.

Apart from our own disappointment at what seems a dishonourable volte-face, what about the misleading of the House of Commons? On 11 May last year Sir Hector Monro said 'We have made it clear on a number of occasions that we have no intention of privatising the Forestry Commission' and added 'We have given a firm commitment not to privatise the Forestry Commission.'

Nothing equivocal about that. So why has Sir Hector pulled in his horns of late? Our parliamentary representatives should be told why he has changed his line since last May to the 'no current plans' stance.

Management and the Non Industrial TUS have just concluded departmental discussions on a guideline document on market testing. The areas to be examined were listed in the Director General's letter of 31 July 1992 and it is our intention to prove that the quality and cost efficiency of in-house services can beat the private sector.

I would urge every member of staff to read the document carefully and to get in

touch with a representative or yours truly if you have any query.

The House of Commons Environment Select Committee will probably publish its findings shortly.

We can only hope that MAFF and DoE stop fighting over who should take control of FA affairs in England. Surely the organisation will be allowed to settle down and prove itself and not be separated totally from the Commission!

Perhaps the DoE have resurrected their 1987 concept of privatising the FE if a split took place in the FC! After all, it's only five years since a report advocating such a move was 'shelved but not necessarily abandoned'. Let's hope they leave well alone and let those who work in the FC give the public a service they need and deserve.

What happened to the settling down period following reorganisation?

In Wales it is proposed that Clwyd and Llanrwst amalgamate and in S&W England both Wilts & Avon and South Downs FD offices are to disappear.

Industrials are facing an incredible round of redundancies. What's the point in an outfit trying to grab 'centre stage', as we were told, if the cast is being fired? The Commission's commitment to rural communities has been criticised for some time now and the organisation really needs to think again about these moves.

The Unions were told staff cuts would not be used to achieve the FE 1995 break even target. If this is evidence of keeping their word, I'd hate to see the consequences of management admitting using staff cuts towards break even.

EC LIFE FOR THE NEW EUROPEANS

AS EC trade barriers fall and goods begin to move freely around the Community, the immediate effects of the open market are being felt by Plant Health Division. Slasher investigates the implications for timber movement.

Surprisingly it is impossible to say exactly how many ports Britain has. The number depends on the definition you use, but it's usually far higher than most people guess - around 200 points of entry for people and goods. The scale of Customs and checking operations is huge.



Felixstowe dock, with newly-arrived timber piled high

As we all know, this changed for EC member states from 1 January, when barriers came down and Customs checks at internal frontiers were abolished. The new freedoms of movement and trade apply as much to timber as to any other product, and in theory you should be able to transport wood from Cologne to Caithness without any checks on the way. But as Plant Health Branch will tell you, this is simply impractical.

More complex tasks

'In the past any imports - even between EC member states - had to carry a phytosanitary certificate to confirm they met plant health standards,' says Roddie Burgess, Plant Health Officer in Grants & Licences Division. 'Spot checks were carried out on material from EC countries, and all non-EC material was checked at the point of entry. Customs officers would monitor imports for material carrying a particular risk, and notify our inspectors when it arrived. If everything was OK we could give the go-ahead and the wood entered the country immediately. The change in Customs procedures will make the task more complicated.'

Legislation to cover the new procedures was meant to

be in place by January, but because of the complexity of the area Brussels was forced to put back the implementation date to 1 June for plant health. Until then, inspectors will carry out the same checks as previously, but at the consignment's destination rather than at the ports.

After 1 June wood imports from EC states will be monitored more on a self-policing basis, with the producers carrying the responsibility of ensuring their consignments meet the standards and consignees inspecting their own material and notifying the authorities if anything is amiss - particularly when controlled woods are involved. Most consignments will carry a 'plant passport' confirming that the wood is up to standard, and a fresh 'passport' will be issued each time a consignment is separated or mixed with another load.

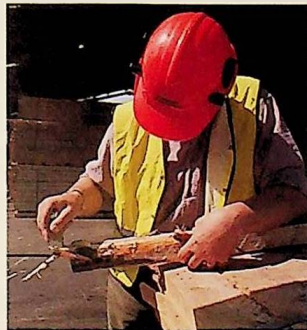
Encouraging extra vigilance

Does this mean Plant Health's role is set to wind down? 'Far from it!' says Roddie Burgess. 'In fact we will be taking on extra inspectors to cope with the new demands. We're encouraging traders to be vigilant, while letting them know what they need to be looking out for. We will operate in partnership with them to monitor timber movements and make sure standards are upheld.'

Producers and wholesalers who trade in controlled material have been required to register with the Forestry Commission in order to be given the authority to issue plant passports. 'Once the application to register has been received, an inspector may have to examine the location to confirm that it is currently clear of pests and diseases which might cause damage,' explains Roddie. 'The registration lists and details will be held by the Commission on a central database. Without that registration they won't be able to trade in the Single Market. It's as simple as that.'

Material entering Britain from outside the EC will continue to be inspected at Customs as previously, and spot checks will still be carried out on loads in transit.

'It means a very different way of working for ourselves and timber dealers,' says Roddie. 'But until now our practices have kept Britain as a whole free from many pests and diseases which cause severe problems on the continent. These measures are the price we pay to enable us to go on protecting our forests.'



Checking beneath the bark



An Inspector calls

WITH around 90 per cent of Britain's timber and wood products now being imported, timber consignments arrive daily in our ports. Currently Plant Health employs a network of more than 100 inspectors to examine wood consignments and check they are up to scratch. The major timber ports, Liverpool, Tilbury and Felixstowe, receive so many loads that the inspectors are full-time, but elsewhere they combine the post with other roles.

'Inspectors look out for a number of things,' says Roddie Burgess. 'Of course the documentation must relate to the consignment correctly. But the most important thing is to be on the lookout for signs of infestation or disease in the wood being imported. If these are found, it's the inspector's responsibility to take action.'

Interestingly, the timber itself may not be the highest risk area. The inspectors often surprise people by being much more interested in dunnage - the packaging that arrives with imports - than the imports themselves.

Timber shipments may comply with regulations, but spare bits of loose wood used to stabilise the load may not. The wood used for pallets may also be unsound. There is even more of a risk when packaging comes in with non-timber products, for example machinery.

Because most pests live or breed beneath the bark, all timber entering the country should have been completely stripped of its bark before consignment. If very small areas are left it is an easy job for the inspector to strip it by hand and check the condition of the wood underneath, but if larger areas carry bark the whole consignment may be shipped back to the supplier.

'The action we take depends on the nature of the problem and its extent,' explains Roddie. 'In very severe cases of infestation, or if the pest is considered particularly harmful, we could burn the whole cargo. In less serious cases we'll try to fumigate it so it is still usable. But if that isn't possible we can insist it is returned to the supplier.'



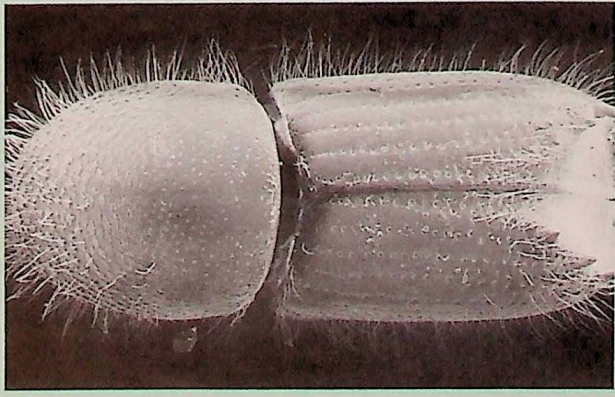
Packaging can often be the main problem and has to be checked just as thoroughly as timber consignments

Mini-Beasts that could cause a mighty problem

HERE are two of the insects British foresters most fear - *Dendroctonus micans* (left), the Great Spruce Bark Beetle, and *Ips typographus* (right), the Eight-toothed Spruce Bark Beetle.

D. micans is already present in Wales, and domestic controls on spruce wood movements are in place to guard against the spread to other parts of Britain. *Ips typographus* is still unknown here, although it has often been spotted on imports. Both beetles can cause immense economic damage, as foresters in France, Belgium and Germany have already found.

Britain has been declared a European Protected Zone regarding *Ips typographus*, meaning extra stringent plant health measures have been adopted to ensure we stay free of these pests. Parts of the UK not already affected by *D. micans* will also have a higher plant health status to help stop its spread.



ART SHOWS THE BEAUTY OF WOOD

THE intricate and diverse forms of our woods and forests make them the ideal place for the artist to formulate ideas and demonstrate his skills. A number of our forests now have sculptures, the latest being at Hamsterley in County Durham. Head Ranger BRIAN WALKER reports.

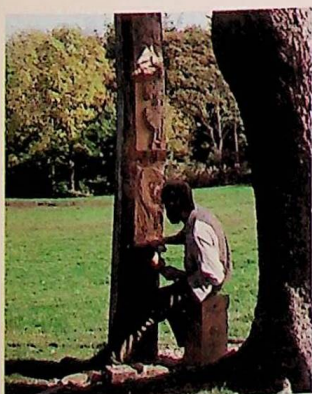
In 1990 we were approached by a local arts development agency to see if we were prepared to support the idea of a forest sculpture to stimulate interest in the arts among the local community. We immediately agreed and after a tour of the forest a wind-blown, 150-year-old beech was selected as the most likely candidate. We were all set to go and then ... nothing!

In 1992 we were again approached, this time by Teesdale District Council's Arts Development Office, and the project was finally underway. The beech had its crown removed and the root plate cleaned. A local training agency then quartered the trunk and root plate, and the whole was transported to Hamsterley Forest's Oak Tree Picnic Place. Chris Sell, the artist, put new life into the old beech by standing it on its head (with the help of an equally ancient oak and a timber wagon!).

Six foot fly

Throughout the summer work proceeded apace and the developing carving was much admired and investigated by many visitors. Fifty people braved a wet Sunday afternoon to create their own works of art from brash, firewood, and slab-wood from a local mill. Under Chris's guidance a 6' high fly, a 5' wide spider and several deer and other animals were produced.

As the sculpture took shape a competition was launched to find a name for it. For a modest fee, mini-



Taking shape: artist Chris Sell at work



Unveiling the name: Mervyn Taylor (left) with David Bellamy

mum 20p, visitors were invited to put their suggestions on paper with the proceeds going to Tree Aid. There were around 200 entries from places as far apart as Newcastle and Oman! The suggestions were equally diverse - 'Life Support Machine' and 'Hall of the Elven King' being two!



Woodhenge

On a fine day early in December the 12 finalists, organisers and sponsors gathered at the sculpture to see Dr David Bellamy present prizes of books to the runners up. He then announced the winning name, which he selected, and presented winner Mervyn Taylor with a copy of Alan Mitchell's *Field Guide to Trees* and a small woodcarving by the artist. Mr Taylor then unveiled an oak sign bearing the name 'Woodhenge'. Local school-children were among the runners up with the name 'Octopus Tree'. The competition raised £50 for Tree Aid.

A special role in the city

PLANS are afoot to turn a former industrial site in Edinburgh into a much-needed playpark for city kids - and it's just one current project for FOI Derek Nelson.

Derek, from NRS in Roslin, is on a two-year secondment as Assistant Director for Environmental Affairs for Edinburgh-based organisation Scottish Business in the Community. The aim of SBC is to encourage industry and commerce to become more involved in meeting the various needs of local communities, and Derek's task is to promote environmental awareness among new and smaller businesses. He will also be initiating and furthering a variety of community projects, putting his previous experience on community woodlands into practice.

The Pepper Play Park, which has relied heavily on the involvement of local residents, will be completed this summer. Most of the work

has been carried out by volunteers and the children themselves planned the park's content and logo. An environmental audit, which the children also carried out with the advice of Scottish Wildlife, indicates that the finished site will be a local haven for animal and insect life.

The Forestry Commission's involvement goes beyond Derek's advice. A lorryload of donated pulp wood will build a wooden stockade around the play area, and



Anne Baxter of Design & Interpretation Branch has been involved in creating signage and poster material for the site.

Above, the logo the kids designed. Below, Derek Nelson (left) and Project Leader John Arthur at the Pepper Play Park site in Edinburgh



Major measuring challenge in the Forest of Ae

TWO sets of research data have been gathered for the price of one in the Forest of Ae, where a thinning experiment of 28 years standing was felled last autumn.

Quality and quantity

Once analysis of the felled timber is complete the results will show the effects of thinning techniques not only on the volume of wood produced, but also on its quality, says Survey Forester Ken Thomson of Surveys Branch, Dumfries. Staff from Surveys and Ae Forest District began



Micro palm computer measuring

the clearing operation in September under the guidance of Mensuration Branch, Alice Holt, who carried out the experiment.



Gorillas in the mist? Left to right, Kenny Davidson; Sam McVie; Davey Edgar; Chris Skelton; Kit Rodger; Ken Thomson; Tony Furlong

'Surveys Branch sorted out the logistics of the operation so data could be gathered in line with the felling and extraction methods being used by the District,' says Ken. 'Normally a final measure would require us to measure and record only the volume of the tree felled, but we had a number of other operations to carry out.'

Coding and grading

The first of these was to measure the produce from each treatment by product type, collecting data on produce assortment and conversion loss. Each piece of produce cut was colour-coded and graded by District staff before Surveys Branch measured it for length and mid-diameter. 'Some of the larger

trees were almost 30m tall and gave four or five sawlogs plus pulp,' says Ken. 'From 943 trees we obtained 2200 sawlogs and 2814 pieces of pulp.' This equates to 638 m³ standing volume and 615m³ of produce - and a major challenge for the measurers!

In addition a 3" slice had to be removed from the bottom of 200 trees, drawn from each plot in the experiment, to be dried for growth ring analysis at Alice Holt. Twenty trees have been selected to be monitored



Colour-coded produce waits to be measured

throughout the sawmilling process to assess the strength characteristics and knot distribution of the final product.

Smooth operators

Felling was completed in December and the data are currently being processed. 'The whole operation went remarkably smoothly,' concludes Ken, 'despite some of the worst November weather I've seen. All credit must go to the co-operation of the sections involved. Final measures don't happen often, and I think everyone found it challenging and satisfying.'

Staff involved were: from Alice Holt, Head of Mensuration Janet Methley, Sample Plots Officer John Proudfoot and Joan Webber from Forest Products Branch; from Surveys Branch, Survey Forester Ken Thomson and Survey Assistants Mark Thurston, Chris Skelton and Tony Furlong; and from Ae Forest District, District Forester Bill Meadows, Foreman Hugh Mackay, Chainsawyers Davey Edgar, Kit Rodger and Sam McVie, and Forwarder Driver Kenny Davidson.



LETTERS

Slasher welcomes letters on any subject so long as a contact name and address is supplied. Letters published may be edited for reasons of space. Send your letters through your local correspondent or direct to the Slasher Editor, Public Information Division, Forestry Commission Headquarters, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT.

RECORD BREAKERS

A suggestion - inclusion of a 'Record Breaker's' slot in *Slasher*!

The idea was prompted by recent FC interest in the aspen - one of our most neglected native species. As I logged my discoveries I naturally became curious about the largest specimens. Field Book 10, *Champion Trees in the British Isles*, was obligatory.

Imagine my surprise when the two girth measurements recorded in 1985 were exceeded time and time again as I discovered and recorded new 'finds'. Who would believe the furthest north county of mainland Britain could challenge an entry in Field Book 10? Bemedale, Caithness can put forward a 52 cm girth contender in the 'stoutest tree' contest. But Sutherland goes for the jugular with a Mama Cass specimen near the River Carron, Ardgay measuring 89 cm 'around the waist'. This has a modest height of 20m and is in very good health.

The tallest aspen? Field Book 10 says 25m. I wonder?! All the large trees of the north fall into the 20 - 25 m category, but confirmation would be required as broad-crowned hardwoods are notoriously difficult to measure. A job for the FC dendrologist?

There are record breakers waiting to be discovered, but remember to ask permission for access (not all landowners crave publicity). Approach your forester for a proper girthing tape, otherwise multiply each inch of girth by 0.8085 to obtain cms diameter. Hazel is due to be included in the next issue of Field Book 10. Let's start with this species!

Joe Boluski
Research Office
Lairg

Let's hear it for the AOs

On reading *Slasher* one is always impressed with special events. Rarely if ever do the ordinary hard working members of our organisation get mentioned, especially the admin officers, without whom we would all be lost. Just recently AO Josie Wragg was helping with timber measuring during a suspected illegal felling investigation near Kidderminster. Fortunately it was a false alarm but none the less she was there, happily helping despite dealing single-handedly with all the admin work in the busiest FA county in Britain, Hereford and Worcester.

Since the first 'extended' WGS was received here she has dealt with nearly 360 more. An average of over 19 schemes a month covering a total area of nearly 5000 hectares, 450 of which is new planting. Yet she is still smiling, courteous and considerate to all who come into contact with her. A shining example of the quality of our 'extraordinary' staff throughout the Commission. Bless 'em all. We

can't do without them and don't we know it

Mike Houghton
Wye & Avon



(Hear hear! Here's Josie, dressed for the Kidderminster rain!)

Sauce for the goose

With the Commissioners debating such taxing problems as whether partners should be invited along to their meetings, will the staff side be putting forward a case for staff to be allowed to take their partners on tour in order to provide essential support services?

'Hank E. Panky'
Alice Holt

What's cooking?

What about a '*Slasher* kitchen'? Here's a simple recipe for bara brith to start you off.

Take 1 cup cold tea, 1 cup dark brown sugar, 3/4 cup mixed fruit, 2 cups self-raising flour, 1 egg, 1/2 tsp mixed spice and a few chopped walnuts. Soak the sugar and fruit in the tea overnight. Add the flour, egg, mixed spice and walnuts. Bake in a small greased tin for 1 1/2 hours at 300F.

Doreen Holland
Mid Glamorgan

(Is there anyone else out there who would welcome a *Slasher* kitchen? Let's hear your views - should we or shouldn't we?)

Signs o' the Times

I read with amusement and disappointment the 'Signs o' the Times' article in the December *Slasher* which mused over the fact that a Scottish sign had been supplied to Hampshire and West Downs Conservancy.

Just in case anyone was wondering - the Sign Unit did not supply this sign. In fact the Sign Unit was not asked to quote for any of the FA signs: was this the FA showing it is indeed separate from the FE?

Please note for the future, if you need the right signs for the right price, ask the Sign Unit for a quote first!

Sinclair Coghill
Sign Unit Manager
Moray Forest District

Is this the highest sitka in Britain?



Not in size maybe, but this sitka spruce was found between the 800m and 850m contour mark - not far short of a Munro in fact!

Steve Lee of Tree Improvement Branch, NRS said that based on its inter-nodes the tree was 12 years old, though only half a metre tall. Grouped round the tree in Glen Shiel are, left to right, Anna Tyler, Chris Nixon and Janet Dutch.

Is this the highest elevation sitka in Britain? We assume so - unless, of course, you know better!

Cracking the Christmas Crossword

Well, the cracker crossword wasn't too hard - but it still turned up trumps for Mary Shipway, Telephonist/Receptionist at the South & West England Regional Office in Bristol. Congratulations Mary - a bottle of bubbly is on its way to you right now.

Hope you enjoyed doing the crossword and thanks to all of you who sent in your entries. Look out for more prize puzzles soon!

For anyone who still needs it, here is the solution.

UP: 4.Rum; 6.Elders; 7.Brazils; 10.Robin; 11.Xmas; 13.Blaze; 14.Cake; 17.Mummy; 18.Babes; 21.Camel; 22.Tide; 25.Forth; 27.Steam; 28.Gingerbread; 30.Gold; 33.Tower; 34.Corps; 35.Dates; 38.Blue; 39.Fudge; 41.Ever; 44.Green; 46.Circus; 47.Service; 48.Fur.
DOWN: 1.Puzzle; 2.Aladdin; 3.Dry; 5.Frost; 8.Ooze; 9.Smoke; 12.Play; 14.Cream; 15.Ember; 16.Paper; 19.Afar; 20.Winter's Tale; 23.Organ; 24.Bough; 26.Wise; 29.Egypt; 31.Route; 32.Score; 35.Digs; 36.Fleet; 37.Yule; 40.Peace; 42.Cracker; 43.Savour; 45.Aim.

DIARY

Overheard in a Conservancy Office during the Forward Job Planning period - 'Agents excel at self-abuse rather than forestry!' Can anyone substantiate this?

keeps critical watch on the propriety of others'. Personally, I'd sue - particularly if I had 'grumpy' and 'grunt' either side of me! (Thanks to Kenny Murray for that one!)

The *Slasher* Diary is looking for humorous contributions - quotes, misquotes and anecdotes. Send them to the Editor or via your correspondent!

Below, a letter received in Headquarters (Edinburgh, of course). Best Forestry Commission in England? Praise indeed!

Pity Austin Brady, formerly Forest District Manager at Sherwood & Lincs. On his first day as Sherwood Forest Initiative Project Director he arrived to find colleagues had got in first and his new office had been stripped of furniture. Only the phone was left. On day number two he found someone had realised their mistake - and returned to nick the phone!

According to the Collins Paperback English Dictionary a GRUNDY (noun) - is 'a narrow minded person who

Dear
forestry
Commission

Could I have some information about trees or birds I have already had some information I wrote a letter to my headmaster about you helping with my project by giving me information I did not want to tell him because he was busy he said to me it was very kind of you but ~~could I~~ if you can please send it to me some information if you can please send it to

52 Ullswater Avenue
primrose
Sawrow
NE32 4EY

thank you for your help you are the best
forestry commission in England
from Stuart Orr



PEOPLE NEWS

Information for the People News section is gathered from the Personnel Department and from friends and relatives of those mentioned. Any information for inclusion in the People News column should be sent to your local correspondent or direct to the *Slasher* Editor.

ARRIVALS

Russell Collins, FOIV, Thetford Forest District.
Maureen O'Donnell, HEO, International Relations Division, Headquarters.
Neil Riddle, FOIV, Midlands Forest District.
Gregory Vickers, FOIV, Ae Forest District.

MOVES AND PROMOTIONS

Jeremy Charles, FOI, from Forest Management Division, Headquarters to N & E England Regional Office.
Richard Deboys, FOIV, from Ayrshire & Arran Forest District to Technical Development Branch, Cannock.
Peter Ford, FOII, from Forest Management Division, Headquarters to Aberfoyle Forest District.
Jackie Gates, EO, Research Division at Alice Holt to FE S & W England.
Trevor Davies, HCE at FE Wales on promotion to SCE, FE Wales.
Harold Gillen, FOIII, from Midlands Forest District to Dorset Forest District.
Libby Jones, EO, from Parliamentary & Policy Division, Headquarters to Personnel Division, Headquarters.
Barry Martin, FOIII, from Thetford Forest District to East Anglia Conservancy.
Alexander Morris, FOI, from Surveys Branch, Headquarters to Lothian & Borders Conservancy.
Judith Rogers, EO, from N & E England Regional Office to Finance Division, Headquarters on promotion to HEO.
James Simpson, FOII, from Lothian & Borders Conservancy to Research Division at NRS on promotion to FOI.
Derek Stocker, HR, from S & W England Regional Office to Cornwall & North Devon Forest District.
Douglas Wright, FOIV, from Aberfoyle Forest District to Surveys Branch, Headquarters on promotion to FOII.

RETIRALS



SCOTLAND

Donald Beaton, FOII in Dornoch Forest District, after 42 years (17.12.92).
Rae Brown, FAO (Standing Sales) from Aberfoyle, after 36 years (26.2.93).
Geordie Gray from Perth road squad, Tay Forest, Dunkeld after 41 years.
Allan Irving from Castle O'er forest, now part of Ae Forest District, after 33 years (10.12.92).
Donald McCabe from Aberfoyle Forest District, after 31 years (July 92).
George Macdonald from Lybster, Dornoch Forest District, after 18 years (September 92).
Neil MacLean, Senior Ranger I, Lochaber Forest District, after 40 years (25.9.92).
Jimmy Nicolson from Ardross, Dornoch Forest District, after 32 years (November 92).
Archie Smith, FOII from Aberfoyle Forest District after 38 years (31.12.92).
Muriel Williams, Typing Supervisor in Personnel Division, Headquarters, after 25 years (27.1.93).



ENGLAND

Cyril Foreman from Suffolk Forest District, after 41 years.
Mike Kew, Forest Officer, Thetford Forest District, after 38 years (29.9.92).
John Oxlade, Forest Craftsman, Chilterns Forest District, after 33 years (12.12.92).
Colin Phillips, FE Administrative Officer in the Forestry Authority's England Office in Cambridge, after 8 years (16.12.92).
Jo Plant, Telephonist at Alice Holt, after 22 years (22.1.93).
Cedric Prew, from Suffolk Forest District, after 45 years.
Alan Ray, Assistant Operations Manager, South and West England, after 34 years (26.11.92).

Vicky Rooney, AO, Chilterns Forest District, after 28 years (19.11.92).
Keith Shaw, FOIV, Thames & Chilterns Conservancy, after 43 years (11.12.92).
Gordon Simpson, FOIII, N & E England Regional Office, after 39 years (13.1.93).
Margaret Stone, Typing Manager at the South & West England Regional Office in Bristol, after 27 years (30.9.92).
Derek Wood, FOIII in Marches Forest District, after 41 years (16.2.93).



WALES

Gwyn Davies, Harvesting Craftsman, Crychan Forest, after 41 years (16.10.92).
John Richard Ellis, Ganger at Ceredigion Forest District, after 46 years.
Jim Hughes, from Newtown Forest District, after 37 years.
Dai Jenkins, Forest Management and Recreation in Llandovery Forest District, after 34 years (30.10.92).
Joe Jones, from Newtown Forest District, after 32 years.
Ken Jones, Forest Craftsman at Clwyd Forest District, after 36 years.
Nye Nicholas, Forest District Manager for Newtown Forest District, after 37 years (7.10.92).
Cledwyn Parry, Forest Ranger from Clwyd Forest District, after 22 years.
Ifor Peters, Industrial Foreman at Clwyd Forest District, after 44 years.
Gerry Philpot, FOIII, Dolgellau Forest District, after 38 years (11.12.92).
John Glyn Roberts, from Llanrwst Forest District, after 30 years.
G Wyn Williams, Ganger in Llanrwst Forest District, after 26 years.
Alec Young, Tractor Driver at South East Wales Forest District, after 30 years.

OBITUARIES

Our sympathies are with the families and friends of the following, who died recently.

Fred Belshaw, aged 74. **John Goodwin**, retired Chief Education & Training Officer, in hospital in Edinburgh following a heart attack on 7 October 1992.
Bill Heaves, retired Forest Craftsman on the Ashley Hill beat, at home in Haresfield on 5 October 1992, aged 84. Bill was featured on BBC1's *Everyman* programme on the Sunday before Christmas.
Graham Hobbs, retired Head Forester from Thetford, in January 1993.
Hugh Johnston of Monymusk, on 10 November 1992, aged 91.
Colin MacPhee, retired Forester from Kielder, in hospital in Argyll on 23 November 1992.
Harry Meyrick, formerly Forestry Worker in Wareham Forest, aged 84.
Bill Stoddart, retired Head Forester, in a road accident near Fraserburgh on 19 November 1992, aged 87.
Roy White, retired Ganger from Fleet Nursery, South Scotland, on 11 January 1993, aged 69.
Bob Wood, formerly Chief Research Officer, Research Division, Alice Holt Lodge and Principal Silviculturist, at Oban on 19 January 1993.

RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION NEWS

Regional Round-up

The Edinburgh & South Scotland Branch has now been established formally. Excursions will be subsidised, and the Branch would welcome all new members. See details below.

Both the Peninsula (Devon & Cornwall plus West Somerset) and Forest of Dean groups meet regularly and their programmes this year included barbecues, boat-trips and treasure hunts! Wessex group (Avon, East Somerset, Wiltshire and West Dorset) meets about four times per year and has enjoyed days at Stowhead and Bamington Court. Two new members were welcomed in 1992. The three groups met for their annual get-together in the Forest of Dean.

The Mid-Wales group enjoyed a day out at the Centre for Alternative Technology near Machynlleth, followed by a visit to the Craft Centre at Comis. The group would welcome new members - contact Denis Fisher, 16 Maesceinion, Aberystwyth for details or call 0970 624848.

Mid Scotland Branch

Secretary: Andy Gallacher, 24 Dunlop Tower, E. Kilbride, G75 0BS
 27 April Annual General Meeting
 18 May Visit to Blair Atholl
 15/16 June Visit to Lorne District with overnight stay at Taynuilt
 24 August To be decided
 14 September Visit to New Lanark Heritage Centre
 19 October Visit to People's Palace, Glasgow

Alice Holt Group

New members always welcome.
 16 February Visit to Bass Brewery, Alton
 1 March Social meeting with speaker
 5 April Annual General Meeting
 13 May Visit to Compton Acre Gardens
 7 June Illustrated talk on Alice Holt Forest by Peter Beale
 July Visits to Romsey and Mottisfont Abbey (date to be decided)
 6 September Social meeting with talk by local doctor
 14 October Visit to Hilliers Arboretum
 November Theatre visit (date to be decided)
 December Christmas lunch

Edinburgh & South Scotland

Queries to G M L Locke, 4a Morningside Place, Edinburgh EH10 5ER. Telephone 031 447 1674.
 The agenda is provisional.
 15 April Visit to Bell's Distillery and Annual General Meeting
 4 May Dean Village Walk and coffee at 17 Lynedoch Place
 12 May Dawyck Botanic Gardens
 10 June Manderston House, Duns
 15/16 June Visit to Lorne with Mid Scotland
 13 July Dalmeny House, South Queensferry
 4 August Loch Leven, Mossman and Culross
 9 September Blair Castle and Bruar Falls
 30 September Two-day forest visit, Dumfries
 19 October Linburn war blinded
 18 November Police Headquarters, Fettes Avenue
 Mid December Christmas lunch at the Zoo
 1994
 Mid January Theatre visit
 16 February Millars Confectionery, Broxburn
 15 March Stenhouse, National Trust
 21 April Annual General Meeting

CLASSIFIEDS

ENGAGEMENTS

Colette Colthart, AO and **Ed Sanders**, Wildlife Ranger, both at SE Wales Forest District, have announced their engagement, and hope to marry sometime in 1993.

HOLIDAYS

Caravanners The Mid Scotland Retirement Branch is hoping to organise a caravan rally in South Scotland or North England in September. If you are interested, contact Andy Gallacher, 24 Dunlop Tower, East Kilbride, G75 0BS (03552 41024) for further details.

PUBLICATIONS

Don MacCaskill, who retired from the Forestry

Commission 10 years ago, and his wife **Bridget** have produced a book based on more than a dozen years of otter-watching in the Scottish Highlands. With text by Bridget and full-colour photographs by Don, *On the Swirl of the Tide* is published by Jonathan Cape and priced at £14.99.

John Davies, former Conservator for South Scotland, has written a short popular book on Scottish forestry, and in particular the first 60 years of the Forestry Commission. The book is 70 pages long with illustrations and photographs. Send a large SAE (9" x 5", 34p stamp) to Forest Authority, MTC, Ae Village, Parkgate, Dumfries, DG1 1QB. Copies free while stocks last.

Do you have anything you'd like to buy, offer for sale or advertise? The *Slasher* classified column is free to everyone within the Commission. Send your ads to the Editor or your local correspondent.

All ads are accepted by the Editor in good faith. It is the advertiser's responsibility to ensure that copy supplied is not misleading.

IT'S HAPPENING IN HQ ON 26th - 28th April

IN THE DRIVING SEAT

IT may not be Brand's Hatch, but for Mechanic Chris Young grass track racing has all the thrill of Formula 1. And when the tyres hit the track he's firmly in the driving seat.

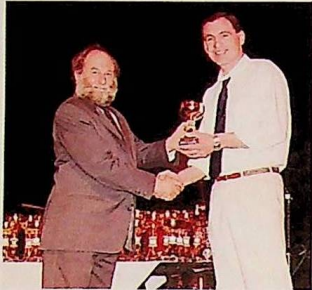
When his first racing season ended in October Chris Young was already a trophy winner, with two individual race awards to his credit. He finished third in the overall Championship and is all set for the new season, beginning in March.

Open to all

'The great thing about grass track racing is that anyone can take part,' says Chris, who works in the Gravel Hill Workshop at Alice Holt. 'Many types of racing are so costly it's impossible.'

In fact Chris's car - a souped-up Mini 1000 - cost him just £40 as an insurance write-off. Stripping, repairing and rebuilding the car to meet racing safety standards took him four months.

'The cars have to conform to right guidelines,' Chris explains. 'All cables



Chris (right) receives his cup for third place last season

and hoses have to be brought inside the body of the car so they aren't damaged when you're driving over potholes



The Mini roadster, converted by Chris and ready to race

or stones. The frame has to be reinforced with a roll cage and the interior must be fire-proof - that means stripping it of all foam, rubber, plastic, anything that will burn.' The fuel tank was replaced by a two gallon tank and moved to the middle of the boot area. A safety harness and a full-face crash helmet is the remaining protection for the driver.

During the season Chris races about once a fortnight at the Tongham Motor Club. Once you start to travel further afield the costs climb, but he has built himself a trailer and may take part in other local meetings. The Mini races in category A - any car up to 1000 cc with front-wheel drive - and reaches top speeds of around 70 mph. Not bad on loose ground!

'It's obviously intended as a non-contact sport,' says Chris, 'but I have had a few knocks! I do my own repair and maintenance work. The main thing about grass track racing is that it's enjoyable, and within almost everyone's reach.'

Gold medal win for Dave

THE year got off to the best of starts for Dave Beagley, Admin Officer in Parliamentary Finance at Headquarters, with a gold medal and £600 win at one of athletics' biggest professional race meetings of the year.

Dave won the 800m event at the New Year meeting at Edinburgh's Meadowbank Stadium, having first won his heat to qualify for the final.

Although he has raced at the meeting before this is his first win there.

Lombard rally in Wales

THE Lombard RAC Rally returned to Wales in November with Scotsman Colin McRae winning the Forest Enterprise trophy for the best driver through the Welsh stages.

Regional Director John Morgan presented the trophy to the winning team at the Chester overnight halt. The handsome oak shield was made by the Forest Enterprise craftsmen at the Maesgwm Signs Unit in Coed-y-Brenin.

Who's the gent in red again?



IT'S a little late to be looking at Christmas pictures so we've just picked out a few of those sent to us - but Commission staff certainly got in the spirit up and down the country!

A log cabin isn't the obvious place to look for Santa - but whyever not? The kids at Salcey Forest in Northants (above) didn't take long to find him! Over two days nearly £500 was raised for the NSPCC as a result.

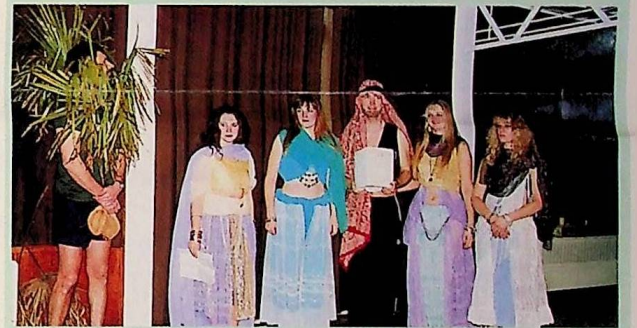
At NRS in Roslin a 'bring-and-buy' sale raised £425 for the Red Cross Somalia Appeal, while in South East Wales Forest District Children in Need benefited by £35 when a Christmas tree was auctioned. The tree was decorated with leaves, cones and teasels by Collette Colthart and Rita Whitcomb.

What a good idea from Wentwood Christmas tree sales centre, also in South East Wales! Recreation Ranger Rita Whitcomb took the kids to one side and supervised bark and leaf rubbing activities, leaving parents free to choose their tree in peace - and a great success it was.

And finally, even fire damage couldn't damp festivities at Alice Holt, where staff enjoyed a day of competitions and activities - plus an all-star pantomime in the canteen. And if that's whetted your appetite there's less than 300 days to go to the next one ...



Above, Tracy Houston and John Williams with a passing camel; below, Palm Tree Andy Hall and Sheikh Sam Abbott with slave girls Diane Whitehead, Emma Collyer, Lisa Flynn and Pam Fawcett



Speed bonnie boat

OR was speed what was needed in the Annual Cowal Boat Race in October?

Crews from Forest Management and Harvesting and Marketing tackled the 1km row across Loch Eck and back for charity.

Victory belonged to the H&M crew this time after FM suffered a few navigational problems - they steered into the pier. The shield was presented in a local hostelry and £30 went to charity.

The winning H&M crew were Jim Lyon, Andy Letch (Cowal Forest District), Moira Baptie (Kintyre Forest District), Kenny Sinclair, Ian Everard (Glenbranter Education and Training), Ally and Laura Lyon, and Alan Walmsey. Runners up for FM were Paddy Harrop, Iain MacEchern, Ian Adams, Billy Tyre (Cowal Forest District), Mhairi MacLennan (Glenbranter Workshop), Rachel Anderson (Loch Awe Forest District), Scott Adams and Bill MacDonald.

Winter wonderland for racing dogs

CHEPSTOW Park Wood in South East Wales provided a winter wonderland setting for stage two of the Labatts Husky Racing Championship at the beginning of January.

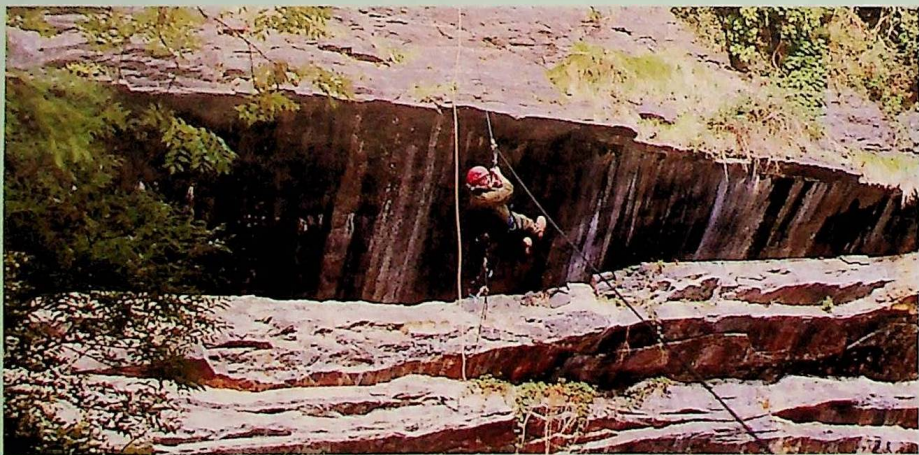
Racers and spectators were greeted with picturesque thick frost for the Championship, which is a major event in the husky racing calendar.

Local racer Simon Luxmoore won the opening 6.4 mile race with his six-

dog sled and next day clinched an overall win by three minutes. He complimented the trail, designed by Labatts and Forest Enterprise, but declared it 'rock hard and quite slippery' thanks to the frost.

A spectacular film of the trail was broadcast by S4C's TV programme *Hel Straeon* - they fixed a camera to the wheeled rigs as they raced round the course.

Sit back and enjoy the ride ...



BUT there wasn't much sitting around for the Forestry Commission staff who took part in an Executive Stretch exercise with the 4th Battalion Devonshire and Dorset Regiment of the Territorial Army in September! Who needs the John Ridgway Outward Bound school of team-building techniques? Here is Cornwall & North Devon Forester Allan Smart taking the quick way down during a weekend which involved a range of endurance and initiative tests. Chilterns Beat Forester John Stafford also took part.

No bumbling for Sandra!

THERE was an un-bee-lievable surprise waiting for Sandra Hanlon of Forest Enterprise, South Scotland, on her 40th birthday. For Sandra, a keen beekeeper, was introduced to a rare type of honey bee - otherwise known as Tony Ward, of Ae Forest District - which recited a poem and presented her with gifts from all at Dumfries. And how was the poem? 'B. awful!' said a colleague.



SLASHER

Slasher is produced by Public Information Division, Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT

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SCOTLAND

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WALES

Forest Enterprise: Brna Evans; The Forestry Authority: Miwren Lewis

ENGLAND

Forest Enterprise: North & East: Sandra Willey (Rothbury, Kielder, Lakes; North York Moors, Sherwood/Lincs; Northants, Thetford, Suffolk); Forest Enterprise: South & West: Carol Gill (Midlands, Marches; Forest of Dean; Chilterns, Wilt & Avon; West Downs; Cornwall & North Devon, Somerset & South Devon; New Forest; South Downs; Weald); The Forestry Authority: Sue Gamsby; MES: Brian Llewellyn

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Northern: Martin Abraham; Southern: John Parker

Material supplied may be edited before publication. Priority will always be given to events occurring since the previous issue's deadline.

Deadline for April issue: 26 March.