

Aug 4. 1947

AIR TIME.

JACK

Geoff

ROE

George

Rogers



Aug 5. 1947



STUART Cummings.

PUTTING THE SHOT.

Aug 7. 1947



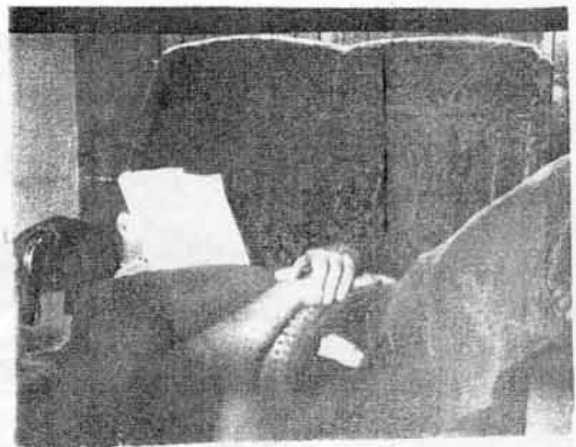
AERIAL ROPEWAY
EXTRACTION. 1968



THE WINDBLOW.
ILENTREST. 1967



BOB M'GEORGE
STUDYING HARD FOR HIS
TICKET.



Glentress Forest School 1947-1949 Tom Johnstone.

The school was housed in a former camp for unemployed men in the 1930's. It was situated about 2 miles south of the town of Peebles. The buildings were the usual long, low wooden huts like an army encampment. Quite comfortable, each student had his own cubicle. Not quite so regimented as an army camp. Toilets and bathroom in a separate hut.. The bus from Newcastle passed the entrance but walking or cycling to Peebles was the norm. The forest of Glentress clothed the hills behind the school. The Beat forester lived nearby and there were the usual small holdings. Most of the forest squad came from the town. The Principal was Tom Robbie with two foresters to assist him. John McKay and Bill Stoddart to supervise the work on the hill and a lecturer Norman Tulloch for the majority of the scholastic work. The school started in 1946. The seniors had done one year. They numbered 21 and our year 36.

The FC had forecast the need for 300 foresters in the years following the 39-45 War with a planned expansion of afforested. The existing schools at Benmore and the Dean were supplemented by Glentress, Gwydr and Lynford. The students had to have spent a year in the Forest Workers Scheme or had worked in the forest before the war.

The first entry into Glentress was rather hurried and some had only done six months work. In other cases they had not done a cross section of the work needed. One chap had spent all his time brashing trees.

I do not wish to sound critical only truthful. The second entry, my year, had a lot more experience in forestry work, several were one time forest workers and it was very evident in their approach to work and the actual work. The students were divided up into squads of 6. They sat at the same table in the dining room but were not in the same hut. I was domiciled with senior students due to joining after the starting date. I was destined for Gwydr but managed to change to Glentress.

The forest work proceeded by the season and what was needed. Things like windblow changed the plans. At times we could have done with a change of job and scenery but no doubt the local DO cracked the whip and pointed out he had a programme to complete. I complained to Tom Robbie several times that we should have more classroom work and he always replied "Tom, your work will be 80% on the hill and that is what I train you to do". He also used to state that he was the only school principal who had actually ran a district.

There was a small research team at Glentress and it was always interesting to spend some time with them on their various jobs. I found an interest in forest mensuration which has lasted to this day. I have left sample plots wherever I was stationed. As Glentress was an established forest we had to travel for planting experience together with draining, plantation and road layout.

We joined the local Forestry Society groups in their visits to each others estates. Most interesting to hear other views and appreciate the private estates problems. I had been trained on a private estate and could get on well with private foresters. As one keen FC man remarked "Their biggest worry is when the Lairds hat stand blows over". An adjoining field was purchased and a forest nursery started.

The classroom work was mainly writing down notes from a dictated set of papers on different subjects. The chap with the best memory got the best exam results. Bill Stoddart did a lot of that work. Norman Tulloch tried to introduce his subjects in a more pedantic fashion

There was a big hut for social occasions. We normally played table tennis but held dances to which the local girls came. A choir was started and performed in the intervals. The Peebles Ladies Hockey team challenged the school. I formed a team and we had several good games. I married one of the girls. It was difficult to restrain the shinty players.

The town had a "Beltane Queen Day" which was greatly enjoyed. Our favourite pub was "The Cleikum". We had a yearly Sports Day and dance at night. John McKay introduced me to "Tossing the Caber".

Several of the students had had what is usually called 'a good war' and for quite a while the local newspapers were keen to conduct interviews and publish small articles. At times the reporter was a bit over the top and the victim received quite a lot of leg pulling from his squad. The students had a good relations with the townspeople and other marriages took place in the following years. The schoolroom work was not as regular as a college. If the weather was foul it was sensible to spend more time under cover. As I mentioned earlier the emphasis was on the practical work but the syllabus was carried out in the course of the year. We had a catering officer (who married a student) and the food was good. We returned to the school for lunch if we were working at Glentress Forest but when on other forests the school van brought the lunch. After the evening meal the time was our own. Study was a bit erratic, especially on fine sunny nights, but the onset of the exams increased the time spent on evening study. One night, during the intensive study, Tam Robbie entered to tell me I had a phone call. 5 minutes later I was pedalling furiously towards Peebles My thoughts of a Gold Medal abandoned. Our medallist was D'Arcy Black.

In the second year I attended Benmore Forestry School for a term. The idea was to widen one's thoughts and see other forests. The school was in a large house, what one might call "Scottish Baronial" a few miles from Dunoon. I had been in the area during the war and had some knowledge of the area. The Principal was Harry Watson (he had written a booklet on mosses) assisted by two foresters Walter Scott and Mr Carmichael. The Benmore students had dispersed to the other forestry schools leaving the juniors who were quite young compared with our year. The intake to Benmore was around 12 students in each year maybe a bit more. I do not recall a squad system. Glentress was run on liberal lines with a student committee who could approach Tam Robbie with suggestions and complaints. Benmore was very autocratic. Harry Watson ruled the roost. We did manage to get a committee to address our feelings to Harry but he made it quite plain that his ideas were the Gospel. The first working morning young Walter Scott addressed us as "boys". I looked at some of our balding and hid a quiet smile. The work at Benmore for our party was mainly planting, draining and turfing in Glen Masson. We cycled to the jobs. A mornings work would consist of getting to the job, climbing the hill to the planting area, planting 300 plants and then returning for lunch. The Kilmun Forest Garden with plots of trees was run by Research and we took turns to help the foreman at the Garden. Quite interesting. I think it suffered in the 1963 gales. There was a large forest nursery nearby at Uig and we worked there, mainly lining out with boards. A Mr Jackson was in charge and lived nearby. I do not recall doing any production work. A lot of felling had been done in the war years. A strip of trees had been left alongside the lochside to mask the felling. It was all hillside work and we had several trips to see extraction of logs by chutes and overhead wires. We saw road making with Ransome diggers and bulldozers. We did not visit any private estates with the

exception of Bryant and May's poplar areas.

Later as a member of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society I visited many private estates in Scotland/

The class work was given by the 2 foresters on the same style as Glentress reading from notes which we copied down. I don't recall any lectures from Harry Watson although he might have held forth on Mosses. One thing about Benmore which I hated was being put in the "stick shed" on a wet day. I would have preferred to go up the hill and get wet. The food was not as good as Glentress. The cateress was Mrs Watson.

Complaints were not welcomed. I have not eaten venison since then. I would not have liked to spend two years at Benmore.

There was a very keen football team and our footballers joined in with enthusiasm. There was a bus service to Dunoon and Saturday was free to go and sample the delights of Dunoon

The school stood in what could be termed a botanical garden with many trees. I recall some fine sequoias. Apart from the girls in the nursery and the foreman at Kilmun we had very little contact with the locals.

I did meet some of the Benmore students in later years

I returned to Glentress after the term at Benmore a married man. My wife worked in the Mills in Peebles.

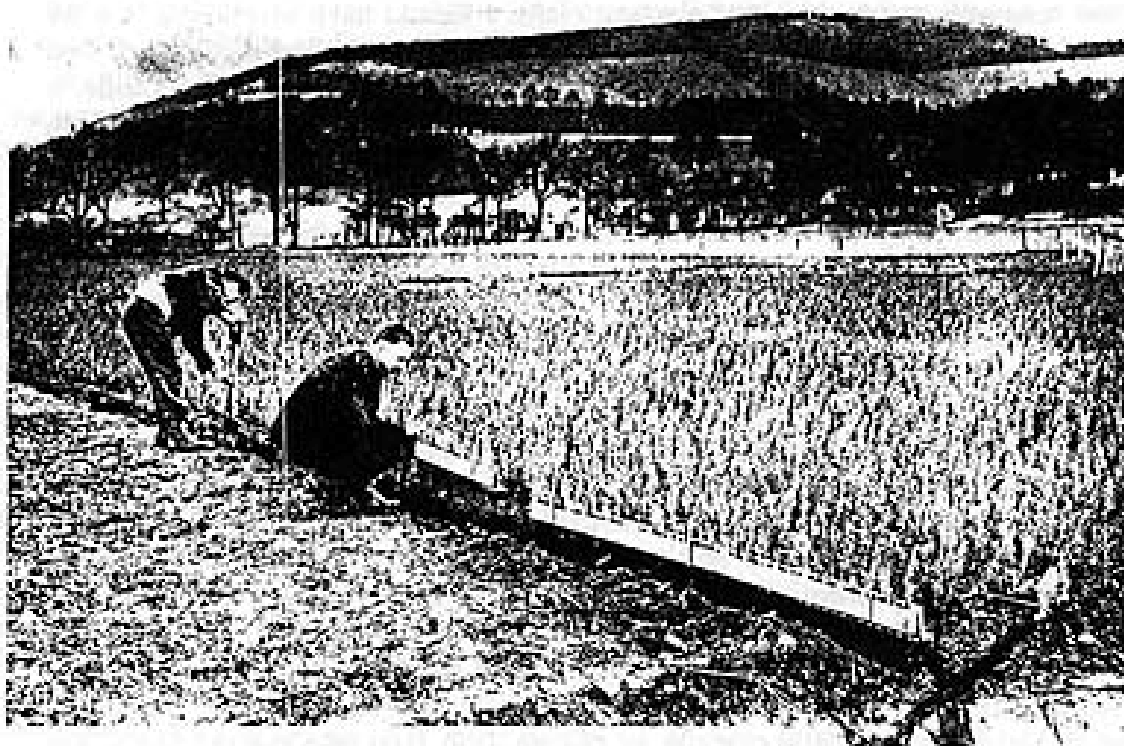
We did much more work on other forests in the second year. Cademuir Hill south of Peebles and Elibank near Innerleithen and possibly Traquair (where the Laird closed the Park Gates and not to be re-opened until the Jacobites came back into power). We went through the gamut of operations as necessary plus more work laying out rides and roadways and making out planting plans. I should have mentioned that we took turns being the squad leader (like a ganger). We did more class room work with planning, preparing stock maps etc. We did more outside visits e.g. Stobo Castle, a well known estate in the area. The Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh and Philiphaugh Estate (where the Coverters were defeated). All with the idea of preparing us for the job of a forester.

After the final exams we were informed where we had to report for work. I was quite keen to go to the north of Scotland but a Highlander advised me to go back where I spoke the language and I took his advice. John Kelly left the FC and went to the Roxburgh Estates near Kelso. I met him several times over the years. A man whom I respected and liked. He, too, married the cateress from Glentress. My working life has been modelled on Tam Robbies 80% on the hill and I have never regretted it. Maybe once, when I had the chance of being Bowaters woodbuyer and backed out.

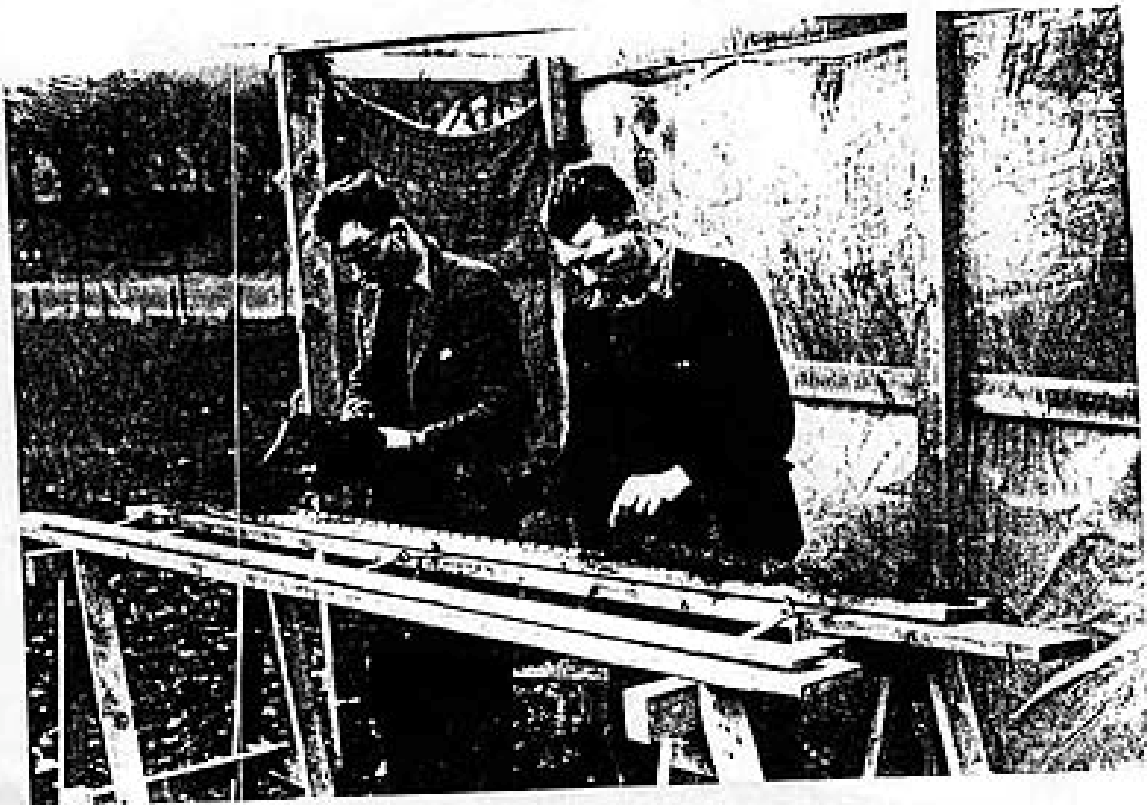
And what of the students. They surely play a big part in the grand scheme to increase the amount of woodland in the UK. I do not think that we felt as if we were holding the Holy Grail. We liked forestry and the open air life. Many of the ex-servicemen did not fancy going back into an office or factory after life in the army. We came from the working class background, some from the middle class but all with the intention of getting stuck in. We got on well together. I cannot recall not liking anyone in the two courses. I remember, particularly, Alec Piper, a very good raconteur. He played the part of Col Blimp in a little charade we put on. Bob Hart who ran the choir. Joe Metcalfe, the man that Tam Robbie could not handle. David Bridges, who branched off to Estate Management and became the Factor for the Monteviot Estates. Don Slater, ex RAF, who had served in the worst station in the Middle East 'Shabab' and was wont to sing the 'Shabab' Blues. Only a small selection.



THE "WEEVIL" FELLING AT GLENTRESS AFTER
THE WINDBLOW



ALISTAIR MORRISON AND BILL MCINTOSH
LINING OUT GLENTRESS



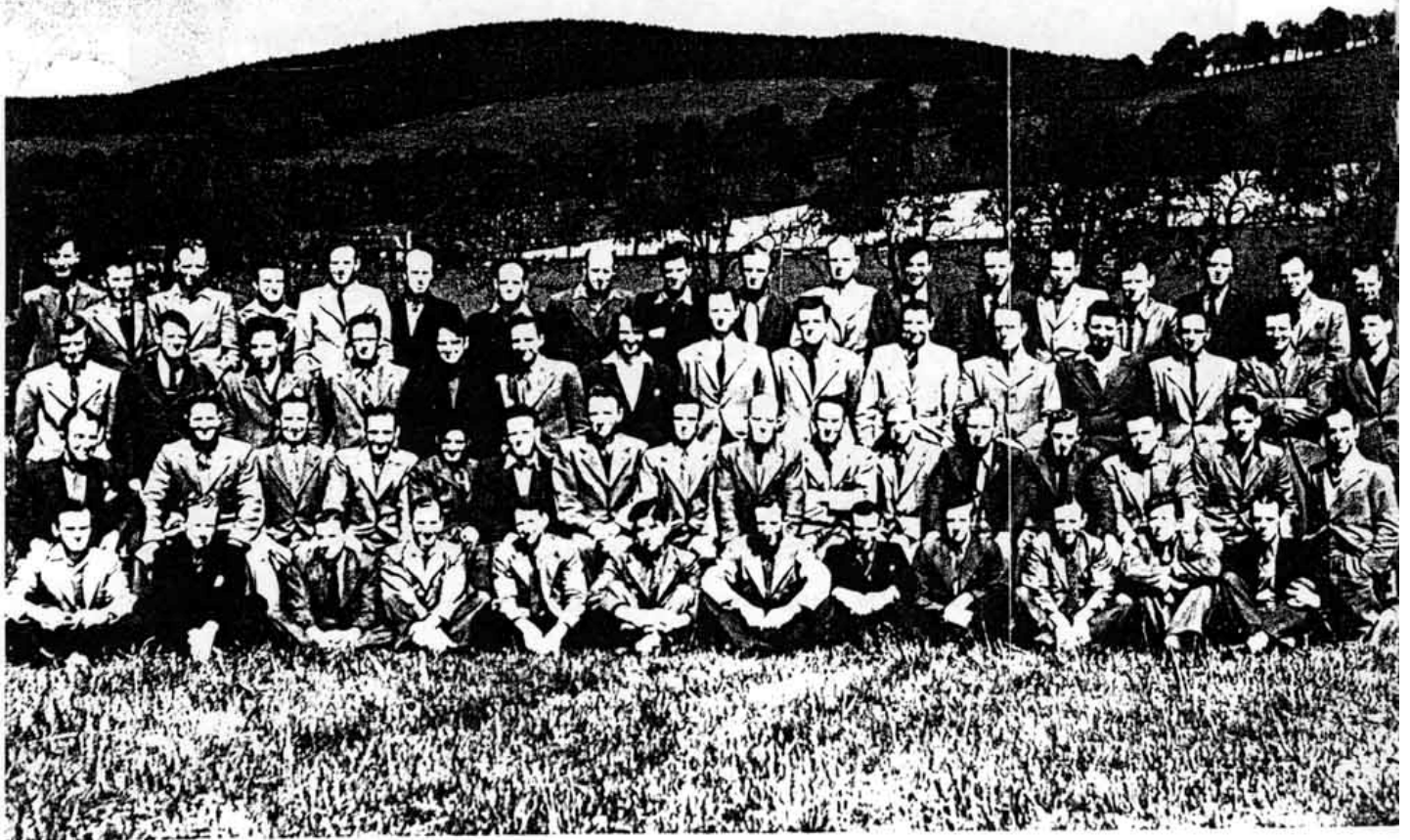
DON MCGREGOR AND BILL MCINTOSH
FILLING LINING OUT BOARDS
GLENTRASS 1948

NOB.
STANDS

(24) 1946-48
(36) 1947-49

Class. 7 Bob Host

GLENTRESS 46/47



TOTAL 61

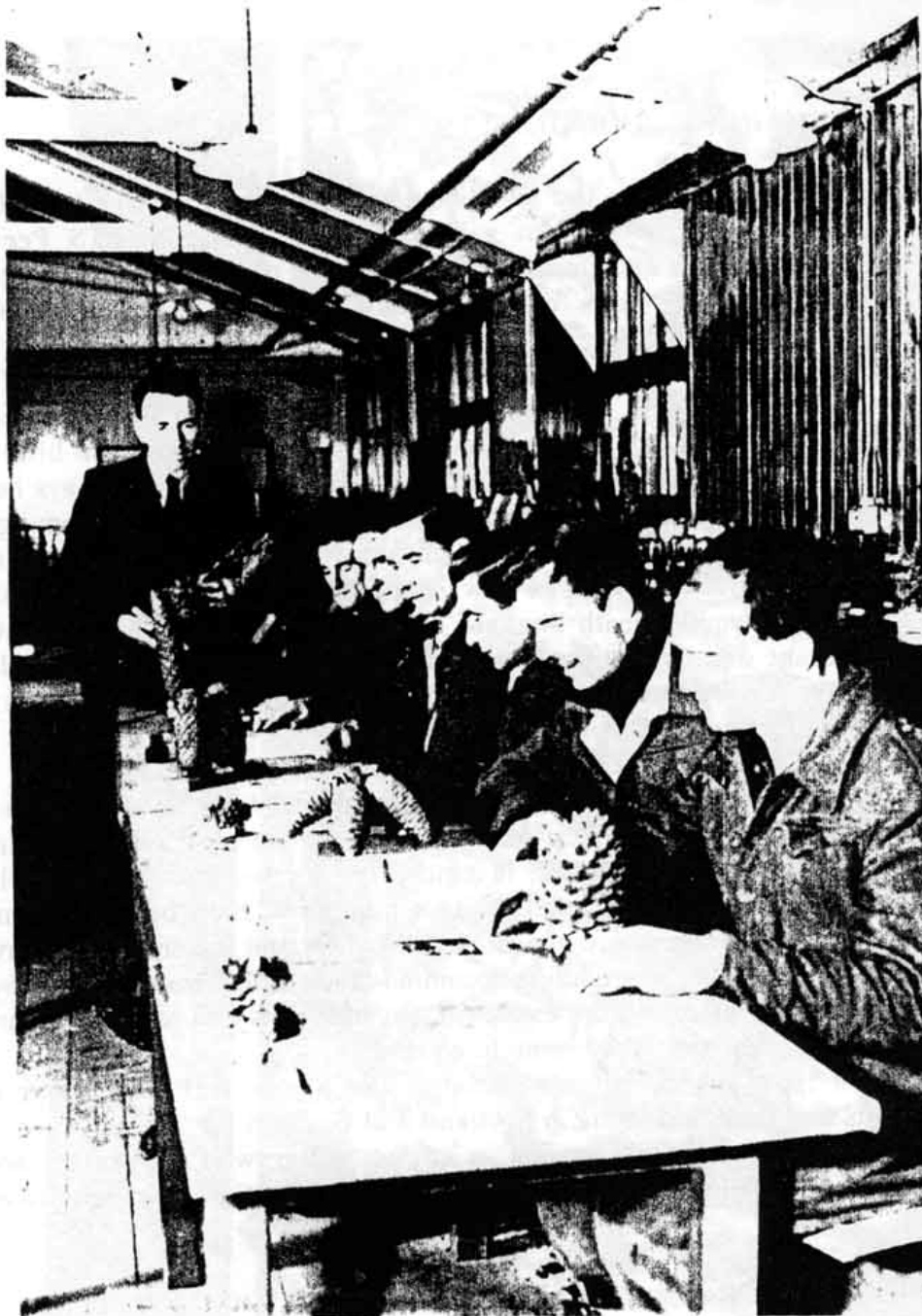


PHOTO GIVEN TO JOHN KEENLYSIDE BY D BLACK
NAMES FROM RIGHT TO LEFT.

J ROE

M SCOTT

J DYCE

W W MORRISON

NOT KNOWN

D BLACK

T A ROBBIE

FORESTRY TRAINING SCHOOLS (FTS)

From training at Cairnbaan in the interesting and beautiful countryside of Knapdale, Argyll, I was successful in 1948 to gain a place at Glentress FTS Peebles with plantations, a tree nursery and small sawbench- a good place for practical forestry and the almost endless taking notes of tree species, soils, flora, fauna and other tree related subjects.

During my second year I opted for an exchange spring course at Parkend FTS in the Forest of Dean which to me, son of a gamekeeper and keen naturalist, proved to be of great interest. An area rich in tree species of different ages and local history.

Our chief instructor at Glentress was Tom Robbie (died 2000), was always helpful. At Dean it was T.O. Edwards, an impressive and expert instructor, e.g. coming into the lecture room whilst taking his coat off he would refer us to some book and page number in mensuration showing us new short cuts. We toured various forests on different themes, sawmills, heath bog, etc. On these journeys by bus he would point out some relevant observation, even the roadside trees indicating the soil at their roots. In the woods he would almost have us taste the soil. (some years later he gained a post in forestry at Oxford).

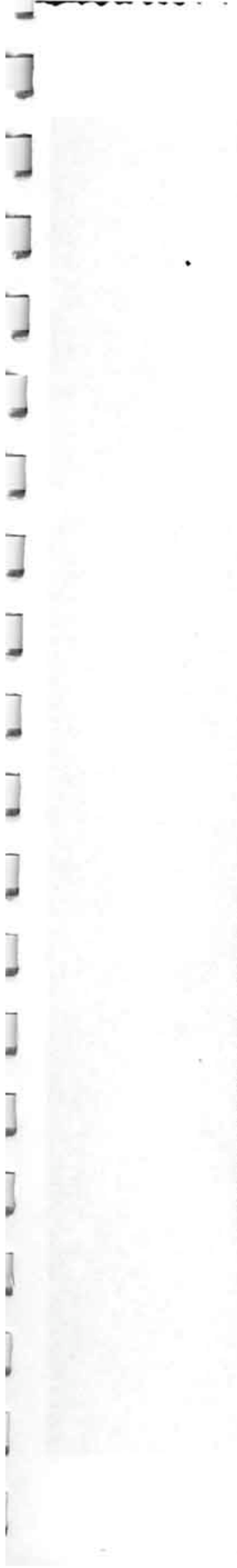
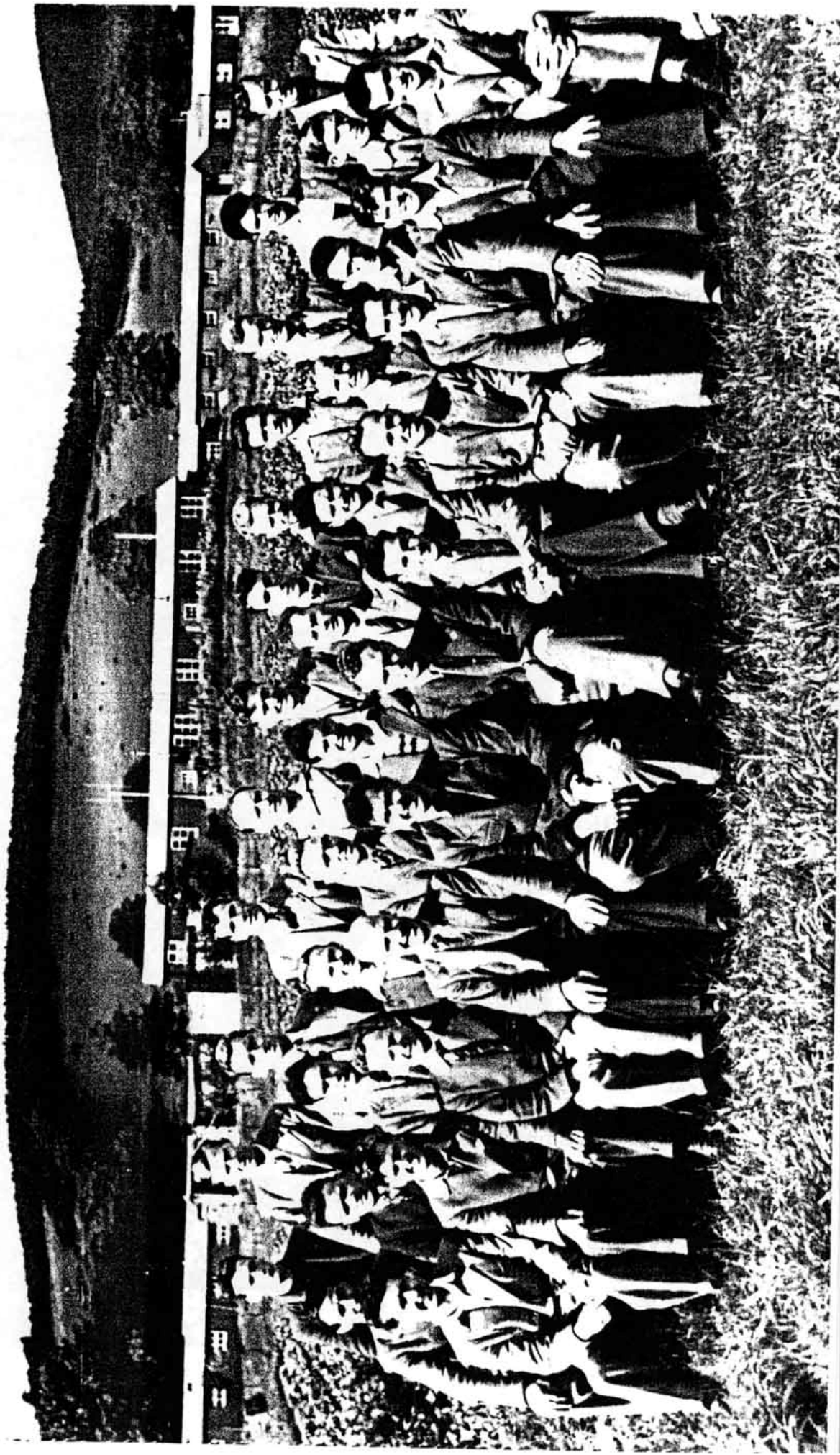
We also worked part time in the woods doing most forestry tasks including draining. In the older oakwoods, whilst felling, roamed small Welsh sheep. When an oak, covered in ivy was felled, the sheep rushed in and ate the ivy leaves and young stems and the contents of any lunch pack, if handy. The ivy was a curse and delayed the snedding -so we got wiser- and felled quite a number of oaks before the end of the day. Next morning the trees were almost cleared of ivy and the sheep still surviving.

The FTS were a great idea, providing accommodation whilst training, employment to many returning war personnel, the establishment of forests and renewed comradeship. It really was a sad day when they came to an end.

I have had a most rewarding time amongst the woods and trees, their different environments and flora and fauna in Scotland and England.

The foresters who qualified became a strong group who supported and made considerable contributions to the well being of the major Forestry Societies and their meetings.

ALEX GROSSERT Retired Head Forester Broadlands Estate Hampshire.



GLENTRESS FORESTER TRAINING SCHOOL CLASS OF 1951-53

Back Row from the left.

F.Cowie
F.Crozier.
Ian Fraser
J.Keenleyside
A.Weir.
M.Hodgson
J.Dobie.
Arkle Fraser.
C.Cambell.
B.Phillips.
D.Paterson.
J.Stark.

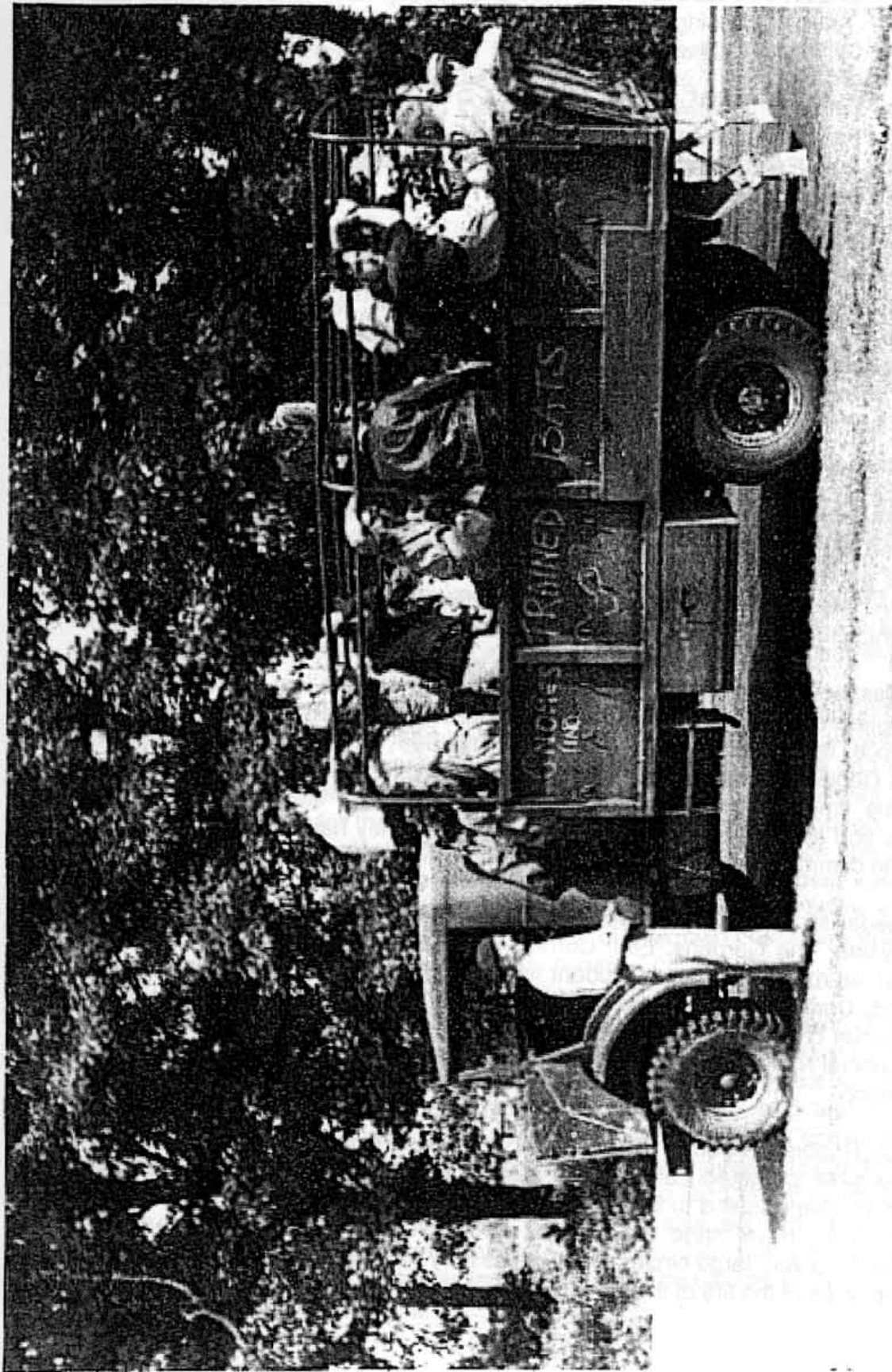
Middle row.

A.Gardiner.
A.Wood.
D.A.Ross.
P.Robinson.
T.A.Robbie (Head of School)
J.Ferguson.
B.Thomson.
J.McGilvray.
R.J.Smith.
C.M.McGilvray.
J.Middleton.

Front row.

A.Allan.
G.Reid.
A.Watson.
W.M.Stoddart. Instructor.
I.Garrioch. *
R.A.F.Kemp. *
W.Bartholmew
G.Mackenzie
J.Graham
D.McDougal

TYPICAL F.T.S. TRANSPORT



GLENTRESS FORESTRY SCHOOL

A Year of Academic Success

Presentation of Medal and Diplomas

Major Stirling's advice to passing-out students A souvenir and a memory of Glentress

On Wednesday forenoon there was a large assembly of students in the neat hall at the Glentress Forestry School, the occasion being the end of the term presentation of a medal, diplomas and certificates to those who had completed their course on forestry. A most successful year it was with one hundred per cent attainment. Major Stirling of the Forestry Commission addressed the students, giving them good advice. He spoke on the bright future which the career they had chosen held out for them.

There was, however, just that twinge of regret that it was the last presentation as the Glentress Forestry School was closing down. When the students in attendance return they will resume their studies at Faskally, Pitlochry. Provost Daniels spoke on behalf of Peebles and expressed regrets and, at the same time, showered congratulations on staff and students on their success and appreciations for the manner in which they had all joined in the life of the community.

The medallist for the concluding year course was John Christopher Keenleyside, The Gardens, Etal, Cornhill-on-Tweed, while the special prize for best all-round first year student was awarded to James Armstrong, Gillsland, Carlisle, both of whom received great ovations and there was a very special cheer when Mr. T. A. Robbie, head of the school, announced that a special National Diploma had been won by a member of the staff, Mr. I. N. Garrioch.

Mr. T. A. Robbie is head of the school and, together with Mr. Ian Robertson, is responsible for the educational side; Mr. W. F. Stoddard, Mr. I. N. Garrioch and Mr. R. Kemp attend to the forestry side. All are well known in town and district. They have made their homes in Peebles and their going will be regretted by a very large circle of friends, as they have taken an active part in many spheres of the life of the community.

forestry but also in other things which were part of such estates and see to it that they had strong, healthy trees and other growths. They had chosen for a career one of great economic importance. In the Highlands, forestry would tend to lead to the re-population of the glens and it was one method which would lead to that end and, under happy circumstances, they could cooperate with agriculture. Some spoke of the isolation under which these men would have to work but, if they could establish forests in these parts, they would have strong, young and happy families, and home, especially a happy home, was never isolation.

A planting programmer had been drawn up but, first of all, it was vital to have it all well thought out beforehand and the land to be surveyed for roads and drains, the selecting of land for their forests. They were falling rather far behind in the securing of land but a start had been made. In the early days the site for tree planting had to be of considerable size, but they had now come to the idea to deal with small pieces of ground; to plant where it was not good enough for grazing. They all knew that ground which grew bracken also grew trees quite well.

They were passing out forty trained men per annum. They had 40,000 acres of country which would provide work for 1600 men. Some of them would be called on to go to isolated places but he would say to them, don't be afraid to go. Provost Daniels and he knew that this country had not grown big because men had kept together but because men had gone out to the small places; men who had made their homes wherever they found themselves.

During the war years, girls had served in all parts of the country, many in highly isolated spots. They had said when they moved in that they wanted to move on again but, after a week, they wanted to stay on. There had also been girls at the western seaboard, far away from any city delights and when the time came for them to depart they had been very sorry indeed. He would say to the students to encourage their wives when they took one, and that was always a certainty, to make their homes with them in their forests. There was a great future for such men and women, as they might become the leaders of their communities and by the force of their own characters and by being human, do very much good in every sphere.

Dealing with co-operation between forestry and agriculture, Major Stirling said no-one at any time ever suggested the taking over of agricultural land for timber. There was a happy medium and, therefore, they must strive to combine with agriculture. In the Commission itself, they had that happy combination. Farmers were on the Commission and there was consultation between forestry and agriculture. They all recognised they could not afford to waste good agricultural land with so many mouths to feed and they required all the agricultural land they could use. The country also required timber; the demand was greater than what they could ever produce but, by improving their forestry technique, there was land which could be utilised which was not in use at all at the present time.

Souvenir and Memory

Mr. T. A. Robbie, at the conclusion of the successful proceedings, stated there was one last farewell where Peebles and Glentress were concerned and that would be the presentation of a Coronation seat to the burgh as a souvenir and a memory of Glentress.

Mr. T. A. Robbie said they had come to the end of a most successful academic year, one which gave much satisfaction to staff and students. The Royal Scottish Society and the Royal English and Welsh Society had instituted a National Diploma of Forestry, ten of which had been awarded that year, and one of these diplomas had been awarded to a member of the staff, Mr. I. N. Garrioch. Seventeen of their students had sat the examination and thirteen had been awarded the Forestry Certificate of the Royal Scottish Society and everyone of the seventeen had been awarded the Senior Certificate of the Forestry School.

They were pleased to have with them Major John Stirling of Fairbairn, Ross-shire who was Chairman of the National Commission of Forestry, who had given of his wooded estate and was now engaged replanting it. He was one who knew as much about forestry as themselves. They were also pleased to again welcome Provost Daniels of Peebles who had done so much for them in many ways. There was also present Sir John Milne Home of Elibank, who was also associated with forestry, and Mr. Paterson, representing Peebleshire County Council; and Colonel Jamieson, Director of Education for Peebleshire.

Presentation of Certificates

Major Stirling was called upon to present the medal and certificates to the successful students, the list being as follows:

John Christopher Keenleyside (medallist), The Gardens, Etal, Cornhill-on-Tweed;

Alfred Hugh Weir, Old Howford, Traquair, Innerleithen;

Alistair Stephen Allan, Schoolhouse, Bothwell, Glasgow;

William George Mackenzie, Mairi House, Alness, Ross-shire (in absentia as he is at present on his way to Northern Rhodesia);

Geoffrey Wight MacIntosh Reid, 1 Maple Drive, Inverness;

Frederick Henry Crozier, Ravenstone, Corbridge, Northumberland;

Andrew William Wood, 17 Ae Village, Parkgate, Dumfries;

John Munro Fraser, Wyvis Cottage, Kildary, Ross-shire;

James Ferguson, Castle Cottages, Blairmore, nr. Dunoon;

George Donaldson McGregor, 84 Crowhill Street, Glasgow N;

Lovat Arkle Fraser, Castle Street, Dornoch, Sutherlandshire;

John Brian Phillips, 205 Thornaby Road, Thornaby-on-Tees, Durham;

Frederick Rankin Cowie, 57 Townhead, Inverbervie, Montrose, Angus;

James Graham, 56 Lynedock Street, Greenock, Renfrewshire;
 John Hilton Noel Middleton, Joiners Arms, Newton Arloch, Kirkbridge,
 Carlisle;
 Douglas Munro Paterson, 11 Lochaber Road, Bearsden, Glasgow;
 James Dobie, 113 Acredyke Road, Glasgow N;
 Andrew Stevenson Gardiner, Bowden, Queensferry Road, Barton, Edinburgh;
 Michael Hodgson, Market Place, Helmsley, York;
 William Hunter, 37 Kelttyhill Avenue, Keltty, Fife;
 Donald Angus Macdougall, 11 South Street, Grantown-on-Spey, Morayshire;
 Peter David Robinson, 5 South Terrace, Egglestone, Barnard Castle, Co.
 Durham;
 David Angus Ross, 3 Canon Bank, Montrose, Angus;
 Alastair John Watson, 8 Stirling Terrace, Dundee, Angus
 Ronald Smith, 58 Broomberry Drive, Gourrock, Renfrewshire;
 James Macaulay Stark, 109 Dormanside Road, Pollock, Glasgow SW3;
 Malcolm Montgomery Campbell, 2 Greepe, Dunvegan, Skye;
 James Dugald McKellar, Tayvallich, Lockgilphead, Argyll;
 Benson Steed Thompson, Greystone, Terrace Road, Braithwaite,
 Cumberland;
 Charles Gordon McGilvray, Airlie Arms Hotel, Kirriemuir;
 William Bartholomew, 169 Barmulloch Road, Glasgow N;

Best all-round first year student: James Armstrong, Gillsland, Carlisle.

Major Stirling

In his remarks, said that Mr. Robbie, in his report, had given them a most satisfactory statement. He had informed them that all students had received the Forestry School Certificate and they could not ask for better than one hundred per cent. It had been a great honour to him to be present and present the certificates. Glentress Forestry School had been in operation for seven years and during that time had sent out two hundred trained men to carry out good forestry all over the country. He was happy to express the thanks of the Commissioners to the people of Peebles and district and their thanks also were extended to Provost Daniels for the way in which they had entertained and received the students who attended the school and their thanks also went out to Colonel Jamieson, Director of Education, for his assistance in many directions.

Glentress Forestry School was closing down and students would renew their activities at Faskally, Pitlochry and he was sure that there they would receive as warm-hearted a welcome as they had received at Peebles. The success of the Glentress Forestry School was due to the man in charge, Mr. Robbie, whose work spoke for itself, and also to his staff. Their new school was situated in the centre of the old forests of the old days and to those men with great forests on their estates the country owed a great debt and also to their head foresters. Some of those who passed out of their schools may go to private estates and he would urge that they not only take an interest in solid

The slogan, "Safety First", was one of the worst slogans which had ever been launched. It was all right for the roads, but it was being misused in other things which mattered. In forestry, they could not reckon on safety first. They had to use their common sense and adapt themselves so that they could go ahead; be wise and take responsibilities; go to isolated places; be human and be good foresters and if they could follow that out they would find success and great happiness in their careers and he terminated his remarks with wishing the young students who were passing out, every success.

Mr. Robbie, on behalf of the students, thanked Major Stirling for his wise and kind words and his fatherly advice. They would be long remembered after the men to whom they had been addressed were scattered to the four winds.

Provost Daniels said he was proud to be with them on what was, perhaps, a sad occasion. The Glentress Forestry School was closing down and, on behalf of the people of Peebles, his part was to express sorrow on their leaving the district as Glentress had been one of the bright spots in the life of the community. He was proud, however, to congratulate the students, Mr. Robbie and staff on the efficient manner in which their studies had been conducted and of the high measure of success which had been attained which was most gratifying indeed. In Peebles, they would miss them very much. Mr. Robbie had always been helpful and generous.

In going through life they met many people of various standards as they travelled the various places and that provided one of the best of educations. Some would go to isolated parts but, talking of matrimony, Peebles would find the going of the students rather hard as many of the students had married Peebles' girls. Pitlochry, he could assure them, was a very nice place but, perhaps, he had looked at it through rose-coloured glasses, as it was there that he had spent his honeymoon.

Source: Peeblesshire News and St. Ronan's Standard
31 July 1953
Price 3d