

Faskally Forester Training School First Year. Eric Crofts.

At the end of Sept 1954, I alighted from the Inverness bound train at Pitlochry, Perthshire. I didn't know, then, that I was going to start a very happy period in my life.

Some other young men had left the train. We looked at each other as we made for the exit and the man calling "Faskally!" This man was Jackie Robb, the driver/gardener/handyman at the school. A large ex-army truck stood outside and we climbed aboard, to sit on benches along the sides. Jim Johnston introduced himself. He was tall, blond and friendly. The truck went up to the A9, the Perthshire/Inverness road, turned left, crossed over the railway and passed a road with a sign, < LOCH FASKALLY. BOATS FOR HIRE. This road marked the boundary of Faskally Estate.

About two miles from the town, the truck turned left into a road. This was Faskally's South Drive. Jackie's house stood inside the entrance. We went down a long, curving incline, emerged from the trees, went along the side of Loch Faskally and stopped at the front door of Faskally House.

We were welcomed by the two Forester instructors and taken to the dining room, where we met the matron and her staff of cook and three maids. After a meal, we were taken to our rooms at the rear of the house. I shared mine with Pete Fligg from Yorkshire.

We learned that Tom Robbie was the Principal and taught the senior students. Ian Robertson was the assistant Principal and taught us biology. Bill Stoddart was the Head Forester Instructor and Ian Garrioch the Forester Instructor who talked about forms.

Faskally House was a fine building in a fine setting. In front, beyond the North Drive, the Loch's east shore curved out around fields. Wooded hills lay beyond the other shore. At the rear of the house, tree and rhododendron covered ground rose to flat fields of Faskally Farm, the A9 road, the railway, more fields, then the tree dotted Craigower, the west shoulder of Ben Vrackie (2,757 feet). The Middle Drive went up the side of the house to climb the slope and go between the fields to the A9. The North Drive met the A9 at the south end of the Pass of Killiecrankie. Across the road from it, a cottage stood on the reputed centre of Scotland.

Robbie lived in an upstairs flat in the northwest corner of Faskally House and Garrioch in a house between the South and Middle Drives, beside the A9. Robertson's house was at the A9 end of the middle drive and Stoddarts high on the hill, east of the A9, facing the north end of the estate.

A lecture room was north of the front door, with the common room beyond it. From the dining room, a passage went to the stair to the staff quarters and to the kitchen. From the front hall, a passage went rearwards to an enclosed yard, the changing room, a lecture room, the games room, the stair to our bedrooms and the rear door. From the hall, wide stairs led up to the seniors' bedrooms, the Principal's apartments and a corridor to the rear rooms and our bathroom.

Loch Faskally was man made, formed by a dam at Pitlochry. The estate had belonged to the Butters family, but had been acquired by the North of Scotland Hydro Electricity Board in the late 1940's. Its lowest ground was covered by the loch and house was a school for Hydro-board engineers. The Forestry Commission acquired the estate in the early 1950s and the school moved from Glentress Forest, near

Peebles.

On the first evening, Alister Brown arrived. Like me, he came from Ardgartan Forest, Argyll. His small caravan had been towed by Jimmy MacTavish of Arrochar. They parked at the front door and Brown made a meal. While they ate, the tall, burly, close cropped, angry faced Robbie appeared in the common room. "WHO OWNS THAT CARAVAN?". When told, he stormed outside. Truck and caravan were moved to Faskally Farm. Others I met on that first evening were Davie Main, a very pleasant lad who adored the singer Doris Day. Pete Fligg, ex Royal Navy, Jim Mclean, another mild, pleasant fellow, Pat Alexander, who became my climbing and skiing companion and Roy Arrowsmith, soon to be named 'Concrete by some others. Pete had come on his 125cc BSA Bantam, Pat on his 500cc AJS bike/sidecar combination, Roy on his 500cc Triumph.

Our area, between the loch and the A9, from the north end of Pitlochry to the south end of the pass of Killiecrankie, contained woods, ponds and paths. One of the ponds held a collection of exotic ducks belonging to Peter Scott, the naturalist. In the next two years, I would spend a lot of time roaming through it. On Sundays, I would walk along it's paths to Mass in Pitlochry. A path went along the northeast bank of the loch. It passed a power station on the other bank, the junction of the Rivers Tummel and Garry at the head of the loch, then went up to the Garry at the head of the loch, then went on up the Garry to the Strath-tummel road and the claustrophobic Pass. Beside the power station, there was a memorial, in the form of a true to scale length of tunnel, in memory of those who had been killed in the tunnel which brought water from Loch Tummel to the generators. The River Tummel came from the west to end in series of falls. The River Garry came from the north.

The damming of rivers to form new lochs and lochans, the tunnelling and the building of power stations in this area of North Perthshire was a massive undertaking. Between 1947 and 1955, the River Errochty was dammed and the water tunnelled to turbines in a station on the River Garry. The River Tummel was dammed to feed the station at Loch Faskally and the waters of the Tummel and Garry turned the turbines in the dam at Pitlochry.

Some students hadn't arrived, so the first day was spent in officially meeting, Robertson, Stoddart and Garrioch. Roy Arrowsmith and I explored the grounds. Ron Troughton arrived on his motorbike, with Joe Pearce on the pillion. Other notable latecomers were Fred Burgon and Gordon Thirde.

The senior, second year, students arrived. They had been at Norfolk's Lynford, Monmouthshire's Parkend, Caernarvonshire's Gwydr or Argyll's Benmore Schools for six weeks. Basically, their week was the same as ours. A full day and Sat. morning at lectures, four days of manual labour in our woods or in neighbouring forests. The wages, or 'pocket money', was £2 per week, plus food and lodgings.

After lunch on the first Sat., I went up to the A9 and got a lift in a truck. The driver wanted more than my companionship. After some miles, he stopped at an hotel and I felt obliged to buy him a beer. Then, another stop, another beer. He had had a few beers by the time we reached Stepps, near Glasgow, and they made him drowsy, "I need to close my eyes". I got a bus to a tram terminus, then by trams to Newlands and stayed the night with my brother Edgar. Next day, I went by bus to Arrochar, Dunbartonshire, at the head of Loch Long, and crossed the river into Argyll to go to my home in Glen Loin. Monday was a holiday and I motorcycled to Faskally in the afternoon.

My BSA 500cc Star Twin gave me freedom to roam and made my life very enjoyable. A Professor Anderson had an idea to make woodlands uneven-aged and we had to realise his dream in our woods. In scattered locations, the seniors felled small groups of tall trees. We erected fences around the clearings and planted youngsters. The exercise was typical of impractical theorists. In a large forest, it would be unrealistic to fell scattered groups of trees, extract the logs, erect high fences and replant (we know that such openings would admit gales to devastate the forest).

Another thought came to mind, "Why weren't these trees, and the thousands of others in the grounds of stately homes felled for the war effort".

The first time Stoddart drove the truck to take us to work, I wrote in the dust on the tailboard, **OVERTAKE QUIETLY, DRIVER ASLEEP**. Later, students with driving licences were given the job. Pat Alexander, after driving hundreds of miles, asked the Commission to pay for his new licence. It refused, so he stopped driving and his Personal Assessment marks plummeted. They were, we supposed, to evaluate our enthusiasm, practical ability and diligence. We found that they reflected our instructors' prejudices. Stoddart was in the cast of the Pitlochry Choral Club's production of "The Quaker Girl" and asked our lads to join the chorus. Some did. They may have had theatrical ambitions or simply wanted to please him. Their PA marks were good. I dared to confront him when he knocked over my motor bike and broke the windscreen (only one of the seniors in the truck informed me, but made me promise not to mention his name. No one else did). Stoddart gave me a screen he found in a shed. My next PA marks were very low. I decided to leave. "If you have to be a creep, this is no place for me". Roy Arrowsmith, whose independence also lost him marks, talked me into staying. Stoddart got over his huff and my PA ratings in the next five terms were satisfactory.

In Pitlochry, there was a small, attractive cinema and a town hall where dances were held every Friday evening (on Saturday evenings, they would have to finish early to clear the streets before the Sabbath).

In November Roy dismantled his motor bike for a major overhaul. The housemaids complained that the parts stored under his bed prevented cleaning the floor and matron told him to move them. He took everything to the workshop and worked hard on rebuilding his machine. One dark evening, he came to tell me that it was re-assembled and asked me to listen to the engine. It was on its stand in the dark motor bike park at the rear of the house. Roy mounted, took it off the stand and invited me to sit on the pillion. "We'll go up the south drive, along the road and down the north drive". His first kick started the engine. There was no silencer! Before I could get off, we were away! We **ROARED** down to the loch and up the drive. Confined by trees, the noise was deafening. As we shot up the A9, every dog and person in Pitlochry must have heard Roy's bike. As it emerged from the trees of the north drive, we saw Robbie outside the house with his arms raised. Roy pulled down his cap and lowered his head, I turned my face away from the lighted house and pressed my head against his back. We thundered past Robbie, roared up the drive and along the main road. Roy stopped the engine near the middle drive and we pushed the bike home. At breakfast, we started the story of the Pitlochry motorcyclist using our drives and continued it when we met the staff.

I tried to go home every second weekend. In the short days, I made it just before dark and travelled back on Sunday afternoon. One Saturday it rained heavily and, as I went over a hill on the Killin/Crianarich road I saw a motionless car in the hollow

below. A very tallman stood beside it. As I roared down the hill, I saw' the flat road' was a great pool of water. The car had stalled and the ' the very tall man' was of average height but standing on his running board. I couldn't stop or slow, so I charged at the water. The man and his car disappeared behind spray. Speed took me through but one cylinder died and the other faltered. Then both picked up and I went on my way. I wasn't going back to face the drenched man! In spring and summer, I made my return journeys on Monday morning, leaving home at 0545 or 0600 and getting to Faskally before 0800, when breakfast finished. The roads were quiet and I enjoyed those trips in the new sunshine, when the world was clean. From the east of Loch Tay, I went via Aberfeldy or by Tummel Bridge. My bike gave me no trouble. Occasionally, I 'de-coked'(de-carbonised) her engine and she responded like a genteel lady.

The Pitlochry Festival Theatre had been established in a large circus tent in the late 1940's. It became Nationly known and a favourite venue for coach parties from Aberdeen, Inverness, Glasgow, Edinburgh and the towns between. By 1955 a large hall had been built around it. Patrons still flocked to the theatre in the hills. In may 1955 Pete Flegg and I got jobs as scene shifters.

I enjoyed the experience and the wages were good. We were paid by the hour. I remember the young David MacCallum starring in " The lass Wi' The Muckle Moo" (The girl with the big mouth), the elderly actor who was quietly rehearsing his lines beside me but fled when the handle of the wheel I was rapidly turning slipped from my grip, hit my wrist and made me cry out, " Oh ya bastard!". After the evening show the cast talked about the next play until after midnight. We would sit and wait for the final decisions, then get to work. As they wasted time our income rose. At 0200 when the afterglow and the dawn lightened the northern sky, I usually stopped where our drive met the loch, to look at the reflection of the dark hills ont he water and enjoyed a few minutes of pure peace. Eventually, instead of paying 10/- (50p) which would give me £3 a night the management decided to pay £1.10s for the shift, no matter how long. Pete and I resigned.

Teachers from the East of Scotland Agricultural College came to lecture on vegetable growing, lawn care, poultry and bees. I remember the grass man saying, in New Zealand a moss has been that is as green as grass. Grass cutting will be a thing of the past. Forty years on I am still mowing our lawns. Someone told the 'bee' man there were two hives in the walled garden. We stood a safe distance while he, without facenet or gloves, blew smoke from his puffer. "This calms them down" Joe Pearce, far from the exit behind me suddenly started to wave his arms, then ran across the open space. "Laddie you should never run past a hive" but Joe was already through the wall and away. The bees attacked. As soon as I saw hands beginning to swipe, I turned and ran. Everyone dodged, swatted and fought to get out. The old man feverishly puffed smoke on himself. Panic took hold and friends fought friends at the narrow gate. One of the seniors had eight stings on his scalp. Most had puffy eyes and swollen noses for days. I think Joe and I were the only unscathed ones. The 'bee' man was never seen again.

The RC church, in a glade near the dam in Pitlochry, was a large wooden ex army hut. I always enjoyed my walks to and from it through Faskally Wood.

From May to November, 1955, we had a magnificent summer. By July I was swimming in the loch on most days and taking my books to some secluded spot in the woods to study. However, I was not a dedicated student and I often stopped reading to watch birds and listen to their songs. I walked quietly through the trees and along the shore, saw dippers and woodcocks on their nests, treecreeper climbing vertically in search of insects, mallard mothers leading strings of duckling to the loch and weasels stalking and killing rabbits.

One evening, I sat under a pine tree beside the loch with Betty Kinnear, a Faskally maid. It was the magical gloaming, when most birds settle for the night. Suddenly, from above, there came a sound like a stick rattling along a wooden fence. It was a capercaillie (kaperkayly), the large wood-grouse, voicing his annoyance at our presence. Capers had been exterminated by the landowners in the 1880's and re-introduced from Norway in the 1920's.

The slaughter of wildlife continued in the 1950's. Gamekeepers advertised their dedication and competence by hanging the bodies of foxes, weasels, stoats, buzzards, kestrels and falcons on their roadside fences. The countryside had millions of destructive rabbits, but few were killed. The landowners wanted them for 'sport'. The disease myxomatosis had recently been introduced from Australia (which had no native predators and was over-run by hordes of introduced rabbits). In 1955 thousands sat, motionless and swollen eyed on roads. Pat and I, when riding our motorbikes, would head for an animal, swing back a foot and kick its head to break its neck. The roads were littered with carcasses. Our 'country loving' students weren't free of the hatred of 'vermin'. Working in a wood we disturbed a stoat in its white winter coat. The mob chased after it with spades. Fortunately it escaped.

We had a large rowboat. It was moored at the slip beside the South Drive. One April day I rowed to the falls at the mouth of the River Tummel to let the cook and a maid see the masses of cream, pink and red flowers on the riverside larch trees. In June Pat rowed the boat across the loch, with Roy and I swimming alongside. I was competent but, being a city bred pool swimmer, I didn't like to have dark, unknown depths below me. It was a comfort to have a boat near me.

One warm day, seniors and juniors went by coach to Tentsmuir Forest, on the North Sea coast of Fife. In what is probably the driest area in Scotland, only pines were grown on the sandy soil. We lunched in the sand dunes on the shore. Some lads stripped completely and headed for the sea. As the bare bottoms raced across the beach, a young girl and her boyfriend rose from their secluded spot and fled. Our elderly driver removed his tunic, boots and socks, rolled up his trouser legs and long underpants, and sat with his feet in a pool. Smoking his pipe, still wearing his peaked cap and waistcoat, he was the picture of contentment. On the way home my comb and paper saxophone provided music for songs.

We organised a dance in Pitlochry Town Hall to raise money for a record player. We brought records from home. A senior showed me his newly marketed, flexible long playing record. "It's unbreakable. Throw it against the wall". "No thanks". He did. It broke!

Pat and I climbed a lot of mountains. We travelled on his motorbike and sidecar. Schichallion (3547 feet) gave us a long walk, a long day and a grand all around view. On another day, we sat under a cloudless day on a summit above Dalnaspidal and looked at the circle of clouds on the horizon. We were in the centre of a high pressure area. A golden eagle flew near and came over to look at us. To Beinn a'

Ghlo (3671 feet), northeast of Blair Atholl we went separate ways. I went to Blair and up Glen Tilt, Pat went to Pitlochry and along the road to Glen Shee, then north along a track in Gleann Fearnachj. I reached the summit first, then he appeared. We had our lunch, exchanged padlock keys and separated again to descend to each others bike (this seems a foolish thing to do, but people do wander and climb alone. I did until I was 65).

Roy, Pat and I decided to climb Ben Vrackie to see the sun rise on mid-summer morning. Betty Kinnear and another girl wanted to come. We carried sleeping bags, blankets, sandwiches and flasks of tea in our rucksacks and took the direct route, via Craigover. This was steep but we took it easy. From it's top we had a long gradual climb. The summit was reached 2230. It was still light and very clear. We settled down, talked and ate, then slept. I opened my eyes at 0500. We were in a thick mist! Morosely, we drank our luke warm tea and set off to Faskally at 0600. We avoided the steep descent from Craigover and came down near the road which left the A9 for Stathtummel and Rannock. We were in time for breakfast. Glas Maol (3502 feet) was climbed to settle a silly argument. We were felling trees in Glen Shee in June. At lunchtime John Bartle pointed to a far mountain and said, "Yon white patch is quartz (rock)." The huge patch was obviously snow and Roy said so. John was adamant. "What do you think Eric? , "Don't involve me". They agreed to climb to the patch that evening and we formed a party. John had an old baby Austin car. He took Roy and two others, Pat and I went on his bike. We went back to Glen Shee, then north and east to Glen Isla. We left the vehicles at a gamekeeper's house at the head of the Glen. He and his wife were delighted to see us. We climbed a long way and eventually reached the white patch. It WAS a huge snowfield. The burn running underneath it had made a tunnel that was big enough for us to walk inside. We were on the south slope of Glas Maol. I suggested going on to the summit. Later, on the bare, stony top, we looked down to the head of Glen Shee and the Cairnwell Pass leading to Braemar(now the pass is a busy ski centre). Down the glen, the road climbed to the pass on the Devil's Elbow, a series of zig zags(now bypassed). The great, snw streaked mass of the 4000ft plus Cairngorm Mountains lay to the north west. As we ate our supper a cloud enveloped us. It was calm. We heard a muted, clicking sound to the north. It came neare, and clearer. The mist cleared and we looked down on a long line of red deer hinds and calves walking along a track(after mating from October to December, the spent stags leave their large harems and join their pals in bachelor groups. The hinds get together, give birth and keep away from the stags). After they passed we discussed the clicking sounds.. I remembered reading that the Eskimos could find migrating caribou in fog by aiming for the sound of thousands of ankle joints clicking. I thought we had heard the same sound. We went down the mountain in the gloaming and left the friendly couple at 2230. We were at home at 0100.

We played the seniors at football. I took the ball from a good experienced player. Probably resenful, he kicked my left thigh with his bent knee(foot kicks are fouls, knee kick and elbow punches are part of the rough and tumble) My leg swelled and stiffened. I went by train to Bridge of Earn Hospital for a week's rest. Back at Faskally I had a week of house duty. Dour Hector Cruikshank had replaced Robbie. He warned dismissal so I returned to my squad. I tried to keep my leg straight, but walking on rough ground and trying to step over logs and branches was difficult and painful. Months passed before I lost the stiffness and the pain when I bent my knee.

During the seniors' final exam, Cruikshank had to leave the room. He should have called in another staff member, but didn't. He put the lads on their honour, some copied from others. John Nicholson demanded abandonment. Cruikshank knew he would be censured for leaving the students unsupervised and was angry with John. He told him to leave the room. John did, then packed his bag and left. He lodged with the parents of Margaret, a Faskally maid, worked on the Butters' estate across the Loch and married Margaret. In time he became woods manager of Colquhoun's estate near Luss, Loch Lomond.

Our life wasn't all fun and games. We were formed into groups of six and seven and each member took turns as a ganger for two weeks. He kept records of the hours spent by each man on each job. We felled, brashed, weeded, drained and fenced. We visited sites and had to write reports in our own time. We went to Ledmore Tree Nursery, south of Dunkeld, to see the manager's invention, a plough for transplanting seedlings, and to Atholl Estate and Dunkeld Estate. We went to Dull, a clachan high on the hill between Aberfeldy and Loch Tay, to see a 'cruch house' (curved logs were stood on flat stones and fastened together to resemble an upturned boat with two flat sterns, then stone walls were built between the logs and across the ends). At Cortachy Estate, owned by the Earl of Airlie, the father of Angus Ogilvie, husband of Princess Alexandra, the laird spoke to us from the back of a horse.

Exams were held before Christmas and Easter and in July, with papers on Forest Management, Biology and Forms. Practical exams were also held, identifying twigs, cones, leaves and insects in a limited time.

Food was very important and caused never ending complaints. Amounts were never enough. I bought peanut butter and jam to make my own sandwiches. At lunch time, I would eat only the fillings and crusts of the school's 'pieces' and feed the birds with the bread. One day, we had kippers for breakfast. Many didn't like them. I filled my sandwich box with kippers. At lunch time, hungry eyes watched me enjoy them. "Does anyone want a kipper?" They did! War service had taught me not to waste food. Someone was loud mouthed, with a dirty mind. On every journey we had to listen to his obscene songs. Another could be a nice fellow, but would suddenly attack another for little reason. He was a tall, sturdy man. His girl friend came on a visit. She was very small. I thought of an old cockney song. "It's a great big shyme an' if she belonged t' me, I'd let 'er know oo's oo. Picking on a fella wot is 6feet 4 an' 'er only 5feet 2. They ine't ben married but a month, no more, when underneaf 'er fumb goes Jim. Isn't it a pity that the likes of her should pick on the likes of 'im. Others didn't like private conversations that excluded them. Ron Troughton was a very pleasant lad with a permanently happy face and wide open eyes behind large spectacles. He claimed to be qualified 'constrooctional engineer'. Pat Alexander was a very likeable fellow. He had been educated at St. Peter's Quaker College in York. Roy Arrowsmith was one of life's memorable characters. He was called by the evangelist Billy Graham at a big rally in Glasgow's Kelvin Hall. In the small Kirk high on the hill above the junction of the Tummel and Garry, he stood up and told everyone about his 'conversion'. The enthusiasts who had gone with him to the Kirk never went back! He, Pat, and I went north to the Cairngorms one Sat. Often fording burns, we followed a track up Glen Feshie on our bikes, then put up our tent and over a meal, made plans for a climb next day. On Sun. morning, Roy announced that he would have to go home to attend church!

Spring was later in the west. When the birch trees east of Crianlarich were bare, those in Argyll had leaves. Tankers took water to many towns and villages.

At the end of July on my way home for two weeks leave, I swam in Loch Tay, then in Loch Lomond. When would these waters be so warm again?

After my holiday I was to go to Lynford Hall Forester Training school.

Lynford Hall Forester Training School.

The second year started with six weeks at another school. After my two weeks leave in early August 1955 I went to Lynford Hall near Mundford, Norfolk. I packed camping equipment on my motor bike and went to Glasgow. I visited Edgar, Agnes and Elsie, then collected my youngest sister Edie and we set off to visit Dad in Hoylake in Cheshire. We stopped for a picnic lunch on Shap Fell. The day like the preceding days of that wonderful summer, was warm. We sat on the bank of a stream with our feet in warm water. Between Preston and Liverpool we erected a tent in a field, then set off early the next morning. We went through the Mersey Tunnel from Liverpool to Birkenhead, then to Hoylake.. Edie stayed in Dad's house and I lodged with a friend. Next evening I headed for Chester. It was dark before I saw a tent within a fenced enclosure. I went through the gate, erected my tent, lit my stove and made tea with the water in the container I always carried. "I'll look for the warden in the morning" When I woke, the camp was quiet. I dressed and looked out. There were wooden towers, a brick building and the tent I had seen. I went out. The tent was old. It and the building were empty. The site had been a wartime RAF wireless beacon..

I rode across England on a southeasterly course and arrived at Lynford Hall that evening.

The house was huge and H shaped. One leg lay along the quiet tree lined lane from Mundford and was joined to the other leg by the central bar, the former stables and coach house. The place seemed deserted and the only sound was the cooing of pigeons. I went along a gloomy corridor to the south leg where I met the male 'house boss' and the nineteen students from Benmore, Gwydr, Parkend and Faskally.

We lived in the south leg. My room was on the upper floor and overlooking the formal garden and the wood beyond.

Food was plentiful, as it would be in the other schools. The same amount was purchased each month, so we had forty men's rations! We made our own sandwiches with a variety of fillings, took tea in our vacuum flasks and a big bottle of orange or lemon juice.

On the track which went south from the house, I found a small RC chapel and a very old priest. Every morning, probably alone, he offered Mass. I was the congregation of one every Sat. and Sun.

I'll always associate Lynford Hall with calm, hazy, warm days and the quiet cooing off wood pigeons.

We were on the north edge of the Forestry Commission's huge Thetford Chase Forest. The soil was sandy and poor, the trees were pines. There was a great variety of uses for the timber. The men were experienced in cutting logs into pieces of certain thickness and stacking them in neat piles for pitprops, short planks, chipboard, pulp, etc. I spent some days on measuring the men's output, and I laid out and surveyed a roadline in West Tofts. There was no real need for roads in Thetford Forest. The dry, hard gravelly ground could support wheeled Vehicles

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The manager in West Tofts took me to an ancient track which had been used by prehistoric flintstone miners from France and southern England. This region known as Breckland, was rich in hard flints which were used to produce sparks for fire and later for firearms. Flints also formed the foundations of roads and, embedded in lime, as external wall facing.

Fellow Faskallian, Roy Arrowsmith, was a regular companion. He had his motorbike. Together we visited Grimes Graves, an ancient flint pit. We went into a small hole in the ground and descended a vertical ladder to the floor of the pit. From this chamber, narrow, low tunnels radiated in every direction. We crawled along some lighted ones. We visited a 'knapper'. He knocked flints together to remove pieces with sharp edges and exported them to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to be used in old muskets. One day we set off to visit Bodney, the former satellite aerodrome of RAF Watton where I had re-fuelled Miles Master training aircraft in Mar. 1943. We asked an Automobile Association patrolman for directions. He seemed reluctant to give them until he discovered that I was from Scotland and Roy was from North Yorkshire. "Oh I thought that you might be OIRA men. The Territorial Army has a camp at Bodney". He recommended the short route through the Battle training area (this huge part of Norfolk had been taken over by the Army in WW2 and evacuated. Its fields, woods and villages became a battle ground). We went along a quiet tree lined road to a barbed wire fence and a large sign BATTLE AREA KEEP OUT. The gate was open. "Well here goes" We passed cratered fields, blasted trees ruined farms and devastated villages. The large grassy area of Bodney on which planes had landed and taken off had been transformed into a camp of army huts.

As a group we visited an estate in Fenland, to the west. Long ago this huge, low flat area had been a swamp. Engineers (probably from Holland) had dug canals and installed water driven pumps to lift the water of the Fens to above sea level. The drained soil, a peat derived from the rich sediment of thousands of years, was extremely fertile. At the spot we visited, poplar trees grew along the sides of the drains. The growing of poplars in the Fens had led to an explosion of genetic research into species and crossed varieties. The once popular Black Italian was abandoned as too slow when cross breeds were found to be much more successful. Many crosses were given only letters and numbers, but the name of one parent species, Tacamahaca, sticks in my memory. What was wanted was ten feet of height growth a year. The clean logs between the rings of branches could be turned on a veneering machine whose massive blade would chisel a long, wide, thin sheet of wood. This could be cut into sheets for plywood, strips for fruit and vegetable baskets and tiny pieces for matches. We were impressed by the massive trees which had grown in a very short time on the rich Fenland Peat.

We visited an area where naturally seeded pines had grown in a close mass like grass. All except the final, spaced crop trees would be cut by hand. I was more interested in watching planes land in the nearby airfield. Leased to the USAAF, it housed huge jet engined bombers. As each landed a parachute would open up behind the tail to slow it on the runway. (The planes are still there in the year 2000)

We also visited an abandoned WW2 airfield. The owner had planted pines in the cracks in the concrete runways and roads. He hoped they would break the thick surface more economically than machines. His great, present problem was a huge flock of starlings which came at night to roost on the larger pines. He tried transmitters which banged like guns or screamed like hawks, also clouds of smoke or

or vile smelling chemicals. The birds would rise, fly away and then return." Shoot them", was all I could suggest.

I went to dances in the nearby town of Brandon and to cinemas in Brandon, Thetford and Ely. My motorbike gave me freedom, and my non smoking, teetotal lifestyle gave me money for petrol. In Ely, I visited the cathedral and saw a film about Sigmund Romberg. On the return journey, I sang the final song of the film, "When I grow too old to dream, I'll have you to remember. When I grow too old to dream, your love will live in my heart".

Eventually, the magnificent summer drew near it's end and the evening mists lay in the hollows, often hiding stretches of the road. The end of September came and we had to return to our own schools. I left after lunch on the last day. I wanted to go to Lincoln, to visit the cathedral.

Before dark, I reached a field on a hill to the south of the city, within sight of the buildings huddled below the huge cathedral on it's hill. I erected my tent, had a meal and settled down to sleep.

Next morning, I packed up and went down to the cathedral. What followed my visit was extraordinary.

I went down to the road that would take me north. I reached traffic lights. They turned red as I approached. I stopped by the pavement, put my feet on the ground and sat up. A man stood beside me behind an open newspaper. Idly I looked at the headlines. He closed the paper. HE HAD BEEN A CABIN MATE ON THE SS ASTURIAS TO AUSTRALIA IN MAY/JUNE 1950! We had last met, by chance in Melbourne, Victoria in 1951. The lights changed several times as we talked. Meeting him was a spectacular coincidence but I heard of another one. HE HAD ARRIVED IN LINCOLN THAT MORNING! In Melbourne he had married a girl from Lincoln. They had decided to go home. Their ship had docked at Tilbury and they travelled north on an overnight train, arriving at 6am that morning! HE HAD GONE PUT TO BUY A NEWSPAPER. If he hadn't gone out. If he hadn't stopped at he lights to glance through it. If they hadn't made me stop! Like a jigsaw puzzle, each coincidence had led to the next one!

I had a night at home, then returned to Faskally on the next evening.

Faskally Forester Training School, Second year.

When I returned to Faskally I went by the familiar Arrochar, Loch Lomond, Crianlarich, Lock Tay and Aberfeldy route. It was good to be back home. As seniors we were now in the bedrooms at the front of the house. In the dining room, Betty Kinnear my frequent pillion passenger of the first year sat with 'A'. She went for my meal and returned to 'A'. Her laughter was forced and her attention to 'A' sycophantic. When I returned from putting my dishes in the scullery, they had gone (some months later, she had to leave her job. Jimmy Stewart of Pillochry married her and nine months after that first evening of our second year, she gave birth to a girl. A few years later she and Jimmy were divorced.

My new room was bright and looked towards the loch and the hills beyond, but I shared it with five others. The first year room at the rear had been small and dark but had only held Pete Flegg an I. In it on a winter morning I would wake up to the persistent 'pink pink' of a blakbird, telling me it was cold outside.

Hector Cruikshank was still Principal. Ian Robertson had been replaced by Esmond Harris as assistant Principal (Robertson, a war time pilot in the RAF, had lost a leg. We heard that deterioration of the stump had led to retirement) Daddy Stoddart and Ian Garrioch were still with us, but our former Matron had married one of last years seniors, Bill Edgar, and gone. Jean the cook had also gone to marry Hugh Thom, another senior.

Life was much the same as in the first year. We worked in woods or forests, had lectures on good days and debates on wet ones.

I still roamed the countryside on my BSA Twin, usually with a female passenger. Pat Alexander and I went far afield on his AJS/sidecar combination to climb mountains. I went to dances and the cinema, had walks along the loch and river and suggested to those who moaned that some day they may wish they were back at Faskally.

I had a small swelling on my upper gum. The Pitlochry dentist thought it might be an abscess and removed the tooth. "Sorry it's a good tooth. The swelling must have been caused by a fish bone.

As the winter of 1955/56 drew near, my leg improved and I confidently thought of a return to skiing. On a visit home I fastened my skis to the crash bar and panniers of my bike and took them to Faskally. Compared to the west, winter in the central Highlands was colder. Snow fell earlier, more frequently and longer. When the Town's Golf course was covered, Pat and I took my skis to it. I let him use them on straight on staight runs on to level areas. One night was memorable. It was clear, calm and moonlit. The white ground was as bright as in daylight. After some delightful hours we returned to Faskally. It was a magical night. The full moon hung above snow covered trees roof and ground. When we turned into South Drive we saw lights and dark figures on the frozen pond near the entrance. Two parallel rows of paraffin lamps were laid on the ice and the men slid curling stones between them. A real open air Highland bonspiel! We went over. With no roof to contain and echo sounds the players didn't need to shout. Their quiet comments and the faint rumble of the stones rose into the calm air. When the game ended the curlers invited us into the hut for a final 'dram'. Neither of us wanted whisky but the warm, freshly made tea was very welcome.

Many of the lads wanted to try skiing, so I suggested a dance at Pitlochry to raise money. A few weeks earlier I had gone to a dance in Dunkeld and heard a dixieland jazz band. The players were very popular. I spoke to the young leader and got his address. I knew if I got this band for our dance, bus loads of supporters would come with it. I booked the town hall and the band and encouraged our instrument playing students to form a band for the interval. On the big night the jazz band came with bus loads from as far as Aberfeldy and Perth. When the boys took a break, Jackie Sallie (accordeon), Tavish MacMillan (fiddle) and Bill Britee (drums) played for the St. Bernards Waltz, Pride of Erin, Canadian Barn Dance and other sedate, popular old time dances. The affair was a great success. I went to Glasgow and bought several pairs of skis and sticks, with a discount for bulk buying in Martins Sports shop in Minard Road, Shawlands. They were delivered by carrier. I hired a bus, advertised in the town and filled every seat. We went to Dalnaspidal Summit, the Perthshire/Inverness boundary on the A9. With members of the Dundee Ski Club, we climbed to the high, less steep slopes with firm snow. I organised more day trips to Dalnaspidal. On some weekends the other lads wanted to stay and study, so Pat and I went on his combination to Dalnaspidal, Ben Lawers (Loch Tay) and Glen Shee.

Once we went to Glen Shee with a Pitlochry enthusiast in his car. Snow blocked the direct road and we detoured via Dunkeld and Blairgowrie. We always planned to join the Dundee skiers. They had a small, portable ex Army petrol engine with a winch. This was anchored, then a post, sledgehammer, pulley block and the end of a very long winch rope were taken up the hill. The post was hammered in, the block tied to it, the rope put through and taken downhill to be wound on to the winch. They had S shaped steel bars and we were given one each. With the engine running and the rope on the move, the top hook gripped it and the skier was pulled uphill. The engine could pull six or seven. When a skier was seen to leave the rope another one hooked on.

One Sat., the skis and I went into Pat's sidecar and we went to my home. On the Sun. morning, we returned to Crianlarich and took the Glen Coe road to Meal a' Bhuiridh (Myal a' Voorie), where I had skied in 1949/50. There were still no lifts or tows so every foot had to be climbed. We reached the summit snowfield, had some good runs, then skied down to the corrie and walked to the edge of the steep, rocky drop to Rannoch Moor. My leg ached. As I looked down that awful slope, a voice asked "Is that Eric Crofts?" It was Jimmy Hamilton, an old friend in the Lomond Mountaineering Club and a pioneer of skiing on the Meal (he was an engineer and much later designed the chairlifts that now take Winter skiers and Summer visitors to the top of Meal a' Bhuiridh) When I left I watched him 'jink and jook' between the rocks. We walked down!

For a time I was friendly with Charlotte Stewart of Moulin, the village above Pitlochry on the Glen Shee road. On clear, calm Winter nights when the countryside was covered with snow, the view from Moulin was spectacular. Down below, the lights of Pitlochry filled the valley and faint sounds rose from the town. To the north, Ben Vrackie rose above the lights of Moulin.

In Spring 1956 the students went to Fonab Moor, above and west of Pitlochry, to plant trees. For the first time I saw ground that had been ploughed for planting. The formerly level moor was a mess of jumbled rocks. When I spoke of the future problems for horse or tractor extraction, someone stupidly said, "Oh the weather will have worn the rocks to sand by then". I thought, "You silly man. Thousands of years will pass before they'll be worn down".

On the north shore of Loch Rannoch I saw a metal sign pointing north. In faded letters, it read THE ROAD TO THE ISLES. Pat and I decided to investigate. With a tent, sleeping bags, cooker and food we set off after lunch on a Sat. We rode our motorbikes along the track leading from the signpost. After a few miles a river blocked the way. With loaded rucksacks we walked on and came to Loch Ossian and the SYHA youth hostel of Corroul (hostellers travel on the Glasgow/ Fort William train to Corroul Halt, then hike two miles to the Hostel). Corroul was owned by John Stirling-Maxwell of Pollock in Glasgow. About 1900 he pioneered the Belgian method of planting trees on turves at Corroul (this was done in nurseries dotted over an area. If the trees were alive after a year, the turves were carried on stretchers to their spots. Dead trees were replaced and their turves eventually positioned). We camped near the hostel, rose early and walked round the Loch. We watched a Pine sawfly at work on a log. She knew exactly where another insect had laid eggs. Above them she extended her serrated, hair like ovipositor from her rear and started to sink it, sawing up and down. It grew longer until the eggs were reached. She got the message and sent one of her own eggs down the central tunnel in the ovipositor, then retracted it

it flew away to find another lot of eggs. Her egg would hatch at the same time as the others and her grub would eat them, then make it's way to the surface. On the Sun. evening, we hiked to our bikes and returned home.

Edgar's eldest daughter, Isobel, aged 16, came on holiday to Pitlochry and I found lodgings for her. I spent as much time with her as I could but had to go away during her second week. Our year went to Inchnacardoch Forest at the southwest end of Loch Ness, Inverness-shire. Now I can't think why, we stayed in an ex-Army wooden hut. Inchnacardoch was where the first ploughing trials were held in the 1920's, using a farm plough and horses, but in 1956 it's forest and nursery were no different from others. Hugh and Jean Thom lived there. A jolly woman invited some of our lads into her house. Joe Pearce reported that she had three daughters. "That's why you were welcomed. She hoped you would take one of them off her hands". Joe was given a present, a huge framed print of 'The Monarch of the Glen'.

Pat, Roy and I planned to go to Ballater and Glen Muick, Aberdeenshire to camp overnight and climb Lochnagar(3314feet). Jack and Edie came. Pat and Roy went without me.

Each of us had to give a talk on some aspect of forestry. Pat spoke about meteorology and his explanation of warm and cold fronts, temperature inversion and air pressures was most interesting to me. When Cruikshank enquired about my subject, I said I would talk about my experience in felling large trees in Australia. He wasn't happy. To mollify him I spoke about the large scale replacement of scrub eucalypts by fast growing Monterey pines, but this reduced the time for the subject I wished to talk about. The other lads were interested and I could have entertained them with a two hour illustrated talk quite easily.

We had our final exams in July. I passed the Forestry one with 68%, but failed the mathematics test in the Royal Scottish Forestry Society exam (I re-sat this part in 1957 and passed) The FSFS exam was more extensive, with papers in meteorology, insect predators, birds and road making. Few of our lads were prepared to do the extra studying.

M.V. Edwards the head of Silviculture Research in Scotland, known as the Principal Siliculturist, came to the school to interview those who had expressed a wish to join the branch. For some time I had been making a collection of mosses for Harris and rooted cuttings of exotic trees and shrubs for Garrioch. I was interested in something more than forest management. I must have impressed him, I was accepted.

I didn't look forward to leaving Faskally and my friends. Many of the lads gave me lasting and Joyous memories.

Roy Arrowsmith must lead the list of memorable characters. His talk on forestry was simply a show of views from mountains. I enjoyed them. When we had seen a few slides, Cruikshank's voice came from the dark, "What has this to do with forestry?" Roy was quite chirpy, "Well, beyond the first ridge is X Forest and behind the high mountain on the left is Y Forest!". On a cold day in Jan. we were near the Loch on a height measuring demonstration with a hypsometer (the instrument has a sight, scale

of heights, a free swinging needle and a trigger. Measure the distance from the tree, look through the sight to the top, let the needle come to rest, press the trigger to lock it, read the height on the relevant scale) We wore coats, woollen hats, scarves, gloves and two or more pairs of socks. Someone said, "It's too cold for a swim today Roy". "Oh I don't know". "I'll bet two bob(10p) you won't go in". "So would I", said four others, eager to make fun of Roy. He took them on. I held the money. Roy stripped

to shirt, trousers and socks, dived in, climbed out and ran home. His friends carried his clothes. By the time we reached the house, Roy had bathed, dressed and was seated by the fire in the common room. Just before the final exam I sat next to him in the back row at a lecture. Cruikshank, as usual read from a book. I had a copy opened at his page and, with my head down, was miming his words. There was silence! "Arrowsmith, what are you reading". "My bible!". "Go to your room". Roy stood up, everyone turned to look at him. With great dignity, he said, "I'm going to leave. Cheerio boys!". I almost applauded (years later I heard he was a Baptist minister)

Hundreds of gulls nested on an island on Fonab Moor. Joe Pearce waded to it and brought eggs in his hat, inside his shirt and in his pockets. That evening and on the next two or three, Joe had six or more boiled eggs at a time. "He will be constipated for a month!" My bed was beside the room door. Joe was on his knees at the window putting a patch on his trousers with Copydex glue (instead of sewing patches on clothes or darning holes in socks, we stuck on cloth or woollen patches). He could have applied pressure with a pile of books, but was hitting it with the heel of a shoe. One learns to live with noise in a dormitory. I lay on my bed reading. I saw the door slowly open. Cruikshank's head appeared and turned towards Joe/ "Pearce what are you doing?" Joe stopped hammering and looked at Cruikshank incredulously. Wasn't it obvious?" I'm mending my trousers!" "Oh!". The head withdrew, the door closed, the banging restarted. (Joe died suddenly in 1985).

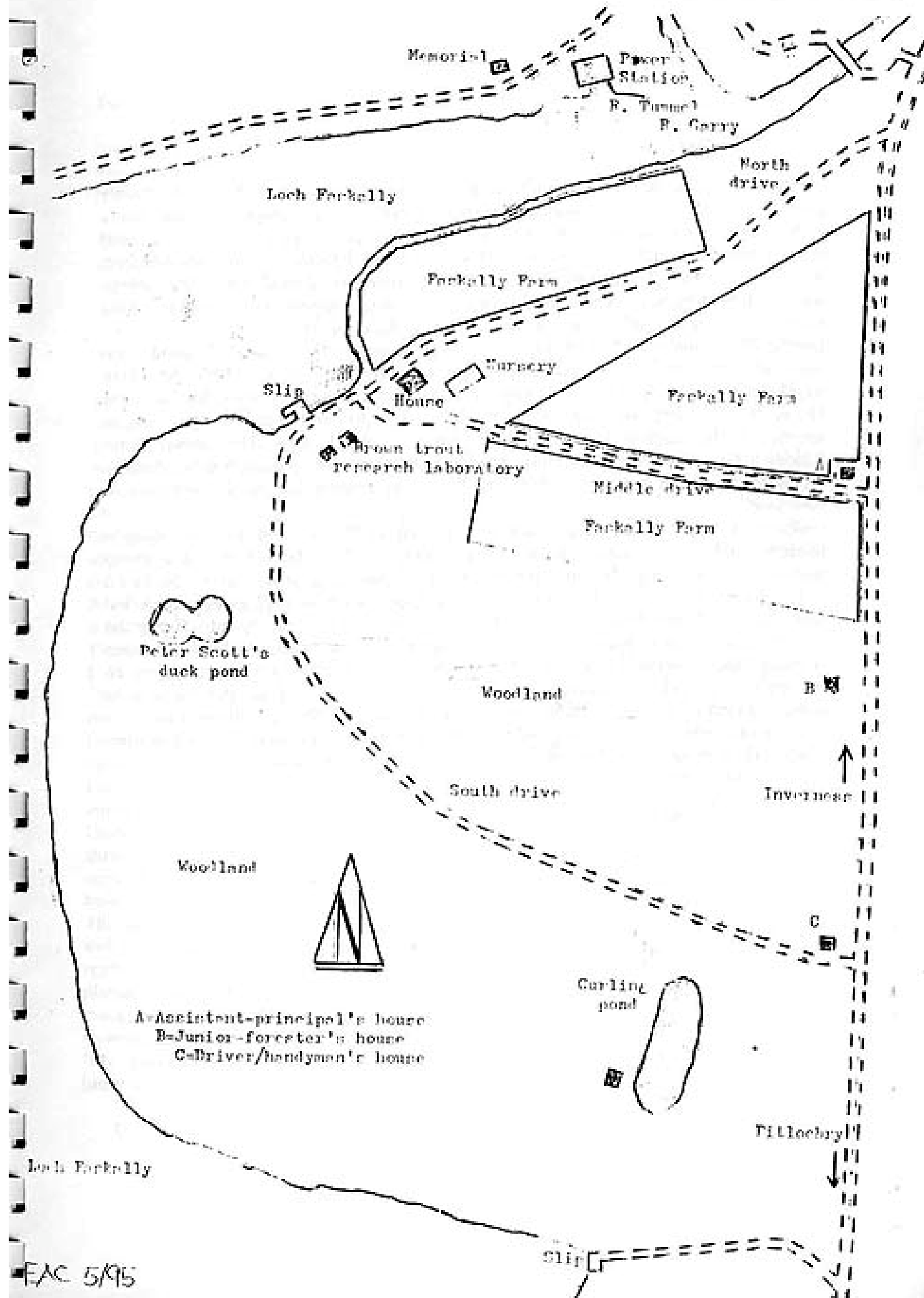
Dave Williams bought a kilt, sporran and socks from Johnston for £2. Before we separated he sold the outfit to me for the same amount. I wore that kilt to country dances, weddings and work. Often it had to be re-stitched. I gave it with the sporran, a jacket and socks to a friend in 1994 for his American grandson.

Roddy Ross joined the Vale of Atholl Pipe Band as a piper. He went to university after graduating and worked for the Scottish Woodland Owners Association. In 1976 he competed in the Gaelic Mod and won the gold medal in the male solo singing event.

It had rained heavily and we were in the classroom. Cruikshank got a phone call. "Put on your coats and boots and get aboard the QL". We went to Pitlochry dam. On the far bank below the dam, a stepped series of concrete tanks connected by large diameter pipes allowed water to flow down from the loch. Salmon on their way to breed could swim up and on to the head waters. Glass fronted tanks, with internal lights let the public see the fish on the move. Before the heavy rain thousands of salmon waited in the river. That day they got the signal to go. Both tanks were packed with huge fish. Occasionally an idler would suddenly shoot through the pipe to the tank above or one would explode from the one below.

On another wet day there was another phone call. We walked north to the high bridge which carried the Strathmummel road across the River Garry, in the Pass of Killiecrankie. Part of the south parapet had gone. As we watched more stones fell. Suddenly, a great section of the arch collapsed into the river far below. (Later the Army put a Bailey bridge, the excellent prefabricated, sectional bridge of WW2, across the gap. Now a fine very high level bridge goes over the gorge)

At the end of July we left Faskally for the last time. I was to go to Siliculture Research at Rashfield, between Loch Eck and the Holy Loch, in Cowal, Argyll.



EAC 5/95

Faskally Ian Garrioch.

Contrast Glentress Barrack Accomodation with Faskally used by the Hydro Electricity Board used by them as a residential college (Staff) and a showplace it had every gadget (electrical) imaginable from shoe polishers to potato peelers and the central heating was all electric and expensive. It was said and I think in some measure, true, the electricity used by the college was sufficient to service a small town. The college was a palace, a prestige symbol in a young and growing industry. Loch Faskally's tidal waters were a reasonable stones throw from the college portal.

During the summer of 1953 all this was gradually adjusted to the needs of the FC, no shoe polishers and the central heating was converted to oil. The HEB had kept largely in the role of a private estate. The gardens supplied produce for the Big House. Home farm supplied milk, etc. A forester found himself in the kennels, another in the gardens and other staff lodged in the Lodges. The Brown Trout Research Unit nestled in our midst creating traffic on a limited vision drive close to the waters edge in places. In this respect it was comparable to the situation at Benmore.

Faskally, in one way, was unique as it was decided it's Policy woodland amounting to 180acre would be managed by Professor Anderson where he introduced a group system aimed at giving a normal annual yield i.e. rotation 130years / area 180. i.e. 1.5 acres of each age class to be planted in small groups (15) and 1/2 acre to be felled each year. Professor Anderson enjoyed a certain amount of fame by introducing the HOPPSIL as a unit of measurement of management. I was chosen to be the forester in charge and answerable to Frank Oliver in the east Conservancy while still being an instructor at the school. Needless to say student labour was ideal for putting such an ambitious plan in action. I wonder now what is the state of play now 50 years later.

Faskally numbers were less than half the Glentress student numbers, 65 in it's heyday. I rather think these methods would not be tolerated today in 2000.

I left Faskally in 1965.

Timothy Walsh, 1969, Faskally, Dean 1970.

All support and success to your endeavour to record the history of the Forest Schools, later Forester Training Schools. I hope you receive a lot of anecdotes, facts, guiding assistance and letters; mine cannot be much for I was at the end, the last course, the last year 1969-1970, but I was glad to have been a part.

Although not a professional forester, I have practised forestry and lived as a forester for myself, unpaid- put into use the forestry learned thirty plus years ago. Have kept in touch with two room mates, though they write rarely. Other F.T.S. men will be able to tell you more than me, but here is an outcome of my time and experience.

Working at Grizedale in 1967-8, I wished for an F.T.S. in Scotland, not in England or Wales, and since Benmore had been closed I settled for Faskally. It turned out right, for the year there remains a fond and dear memory, and I loved it, place, people, work, surroundings, forestry, learning- not all pleased or was good, but I love it in memory. Did pretty well too, unusually for one very poor at school. Faskally was a good experience, school had been a harmful mistake. Forestry liberated and made independent the youth retarded- suppressed by school and Faskally completed the recovery. All the more pity that Faskally was closed half way into our course, July 1970. The name probably derives from the Gaelic Fas Coille meaning "woods home", fas =home, coille= wood, not exactly "home of- in the woods but close to it, same idea. It had been built by the Butter family c. early 1830 whose men served the empire as army officers in India; Faskally was the Butter family mansion, bought from them shamefully cheaply by the North of Scotland Hydro Electricity Board which sold it to the F.C.

The staff in 1969-70 included foresters Tom Queen, Angus Murray, Jim Cram and D.O.Alistair Jones, the late Norman Tulloch (and his two boxers), Jim Clark (maintenance and caretaker), names of matron and kitchen staff not remembered, I regret, but matron was a sweet, elderly lady (with a name like Miss Bunty). Faskally House radio call was "Cragfire". I think we had short range handsets and no computers, so slide rules were used.

I was the last appointed librarian, since the lads saw how bookish I was and still is my interest. The library was in the tiny room at the foot of the main stairs, Perthshire County library books mostly fiction on the left, forestry and associated books on shelves on the right. I helped prepare the books for dispersal in June 1970, I bought a copy of Dallimore and Jackson myself. Also a sickle from the tool store which I still have.

The house still has the fine oak panelling in the hall and stairway, it's ceiling renewed well with radiator pipes the same, otherwise the changes are considerable inside. I am really glad to have done forestry there, albeit an unfinished course. Who has the photographs of the graduating years, which hung in the hall, I know not. I have a colour print of students and staff of 1969-70, a Faskally F.T.S. tie and a blazer badge showing the Faskally crest and motto, "Is c Gníomh Foghlaim" which may translate, "My purpose/ office is to instruct/teach" or perhaps "It is my function to improve/guide/instruct". Great days (and years) in a job of worthwhile work.

During many visits down the years I have acquired some information of interest and relevance, but cannot vouch for as certain facts, i.e. not all. After Faskally was bought by Strathclyde council for an outdoor pursuits centre for youngsters; sold again c 1995 it is now a Christian Trust for church groups. The manager Mr A Pollard showed me round the house much altered since 1970, last October '99.

In October 1972 I may well have been the last student (ex) to see the house as it was, as we knew it. It was being altered and renovated extensively inside, and has been more changed since when Jim Clark (ex FC) let me in to look round. I like to think that I was the last FC student in seeing it at least partly as it had been, but even if I was not at least I did see it then. Have explored the policy woods several times since, especially last October. Mr Pollard told me of a foresters re-union a few weeks before my visit last year, perhaps in September, a gathering of ex-students for the fortieth anniversary of their year there, presumably them starting September 1959. You ought to hear from them about that re-union- I hope so.

Our senior year completed the course at Faskally and received certificates and awards summer 1970, and my year was moved to the Dean F.T.S. after the summer recess. We met there in August 1970 when the exchange course would have begun and we stayed on, the Dean students were on exchange at Faskally, so they were the last students actually working in Faskally regularly, while I may have been the last one to see around inside, October 1972, before all the changes were done

A few more remembered details have occurred. I have a photograph also of the Dean students and staff in autumn 1970 which were probably the last of all since the Dean school closed in 1971. The photo is monochrome, it's quality is better than the enlarged colour print of the Faskally students taken in summer 1970.

As far as I can make out Benmore was the first "Forest School" in Scotland, opening 1929 with Harry Watson among it's instructors. He wrote a little book about pines and Scots forestry, published in 1939. Benmore closed in 1965, but let others confirm these details.

Glentress opened after the war, say 1947, probably for men returning and desiring to continue outdoor service. I think Norman Tulloch was in charge of Glentress F.T.S. and it closed in 1953, he moved to Faskally in 1956. Some books in Faskally library bore the stamp mark of Glentress F.T.S. Gwydr closed in 1969. The beauty of Faskally policy woods is enhanced by the group selection work and experimentation done by Faskally students before my time, overseen by M.L. Anderson. The policies are richly varied and very beautiful.

This gives much of my knowledge and some of my reminiscences. A history of the Forestry Schools is a worthwhile task for readers now and for recording for posterity. If anything included here is useful and if you wish it writing more carefully please let me know. I have anecdotes at Faskally but they may be of interest to others of 1969-70 only, whereas I have tried to sketch here things of wider relevance.

Blessings for Paschal time too.

Timothy Walsh ,

1947/48

FROM

MRS DORRETT

HOWELL

HER LATE

HUSBAND

ERIC HOWELL

is

MIDDLE ROW

7th

FROM RIGHT

POSSIBLY

WYDR





GWDYR 1948 Wilf Telford

I went to Gwydr in March 1948, already there were the 'seniors' who had begun their training in the New Forest before they were moved to Gwydr a little before we started. The group photograph was taken in spring 1948.

We were all 'mature' students having recently been de-mobilised were not inclined to take easily to discipline. However, I don't recall any major crisis, the Personal Assessment was always a threat to excessive misdeeds.

There are a small number of Welsh in the photograph but by far the majority came from England and there was a degree of hostility from the 'natives', especially reinforced by the fact that the majority of hotels, etc. were owned by Lancastrians. Our junior intake had a much higher number of Welsh- again I don't recall any outbursts of hostilities.

The instructors on the photo are Messrs Cruikshank, MacDonald, Jenkins and Heavener. I can recall most of the names of my year but fail badly with the senior year.

For your interest I am seated in the front row wearing shorts, third from the left.

The other photo is from Glentress taken in early 1949. Gwydr joined on the exchange course by others from Benmore and included are also some of the junior's Glentress course



GWDYR 1948
PHOTO FROM WILF TELFORD SITTING FRONT ROW THIRD FROM LEFT

Aneddle, Caernarfon Road, Criccieth, Gwynedd. LL52 0AU

Tel. 01766 522650 E-mail - Allen.Powell@aneddle.freemove.co.uk

July 17th 2000

Dear Mr Smith,

I'm sorry I failed to respond to your original request for material re the Forester Training Schools - I will now try to make amends.

1. My eldest brother Cyril Powell attended the Dean School, I think from 1930-32.
2. I attended the Gwydyr School as a student from 1948-50 (Course No. 2) with my brother, Noel Stanley Powell. I have a picture of the course members plus the following course. Courses 1 and 2 consisted almost entirely of ex-servicemen - a very mixed bunch !
3. Early in 1958 John James, District Officer, Carmarthen was about to take over as Education Officer at the Gwydyr School. He was aware that one of the Forester Instructors was leaving and invited me to take his place (he knew I had trained as a teacher before the war !). I served at the School until it closed in 1970. I have photographs of most, if not all, the course members.
4. I can list all the Instructors but not accurate dates of their service. I assume there are records somewhere ?
5. You are welcome to all the photographs I've got. I will dig them out and see if they are a complete set. If not I think I know a man who has !

Please let me know what you want and how I can help - I've even got my lecture notes somewhere in the box room !

Yours sincerely,



(Allen Powell).