

The Forestry Commission in Wales 1919 - 2013



Written and researched by Barbara Spence, March 2013

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Jane Holloway, Aled Thomas, Peter Jones, Peter Rees Jones, John Roe, John Read, Peter Charlesworth, Carolyn Griffiths, Richard Davies, Sue Ginley, Bill MacDonald, Colin Sobota, Chris Edwards, Hugh Jones, John Browne, Ian Blake, Roland Lidell, Les Starling, Will Jones, John Griffith, Clive Davies, Colin Morton, Shaun Mather, John Hunt, Roger Nock, Neil Stoddart, Dafydd Fryer, Tony Egan, Keith Jones, Peter Oxbury, Tim Harland, Dai Evans, Lee Dawson, John MacFarlane, Neil Campbell, Cerys Phillips, Lowri Owen, John Weir, Jo-Anne Anstey, Nick Fackrell, Andy Wright, Yvonne Spencer, Liz Hopkins, Carol Travers, Jonathan Price, Sue Williams, Leigh Denyer, Antony Wallis, Gwen Thomas, Robert Griffiths, Cathryn Lane, Ros Wardman, Hayley Evans, Matthew Jones, Carwen Jones, Simon Mead, Charlton Clark, Llinos Morgan, Irwin Ellis, Helen Cariss, Catherine Oldham, Haf Leyshon, Richard Carrick, Patience Eastwood, Margaret Davies.

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Foreword

When the Forestry Commission (FC) came into being in 1919 its sole purpose was to create woodlands to supply timber for the nation. This followed World War One when the nation had great difficulty getting enough timber for its war-time needs. At that time just 4.2% of the land area in Wales was woodland, much of which had been felled to fulfill demand during the War. Today 14.3% of Wales is woodland, much of which is as a result of the activities of the FC since its creation.



When it was formed the benefits of forestry were seen simply as a source of timber. However, the long-term nature of forestry has meant political and public expectations change, and this has been reflected in the initial requirement to supply timber being supplemented by the need to provide recreational opportunities, enhance the landscape and improve environmental benefits. In recent times woodlands are increasingly valued as a natural resource to mitigate the effects of climate change through carbon sequestration and the production of renewable energy. All of these many benefits can be generated in the same place at the same time. A great example of sustainable development in practice Through its flexibility the FC in Wales has been able to adapt to all of the changes as they have arisen.

It must be remembered that the FC in Wales has not just been involved in growing, managing and marketing produce from publicly owned woodlands. It also creates and manages roads and other infrastructure, manages boundaries and buildings, works with neighbours and the general public particularly through the recreational and educational opportunities and other health and well-being benefits the woodlands we manage provide. The FC in Wales has been responsible for managing woodland grants which have contributed to the increase in, and sustainable management of, privately owned woodlands. The Commission also has responsibility for regulatory aspects of tree and woodland management and has managed a wide range of national and European projects and grant schemes related to forestry on behalf of the Welsh Government.

I am proud to have been part of the FC and to be one of the many thousands who have contributed to its achievements. Now that we are joining with the Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency Wales to become Natural Resources Wales (NRW) our past achievements form a valuable legacy and platform for the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales.

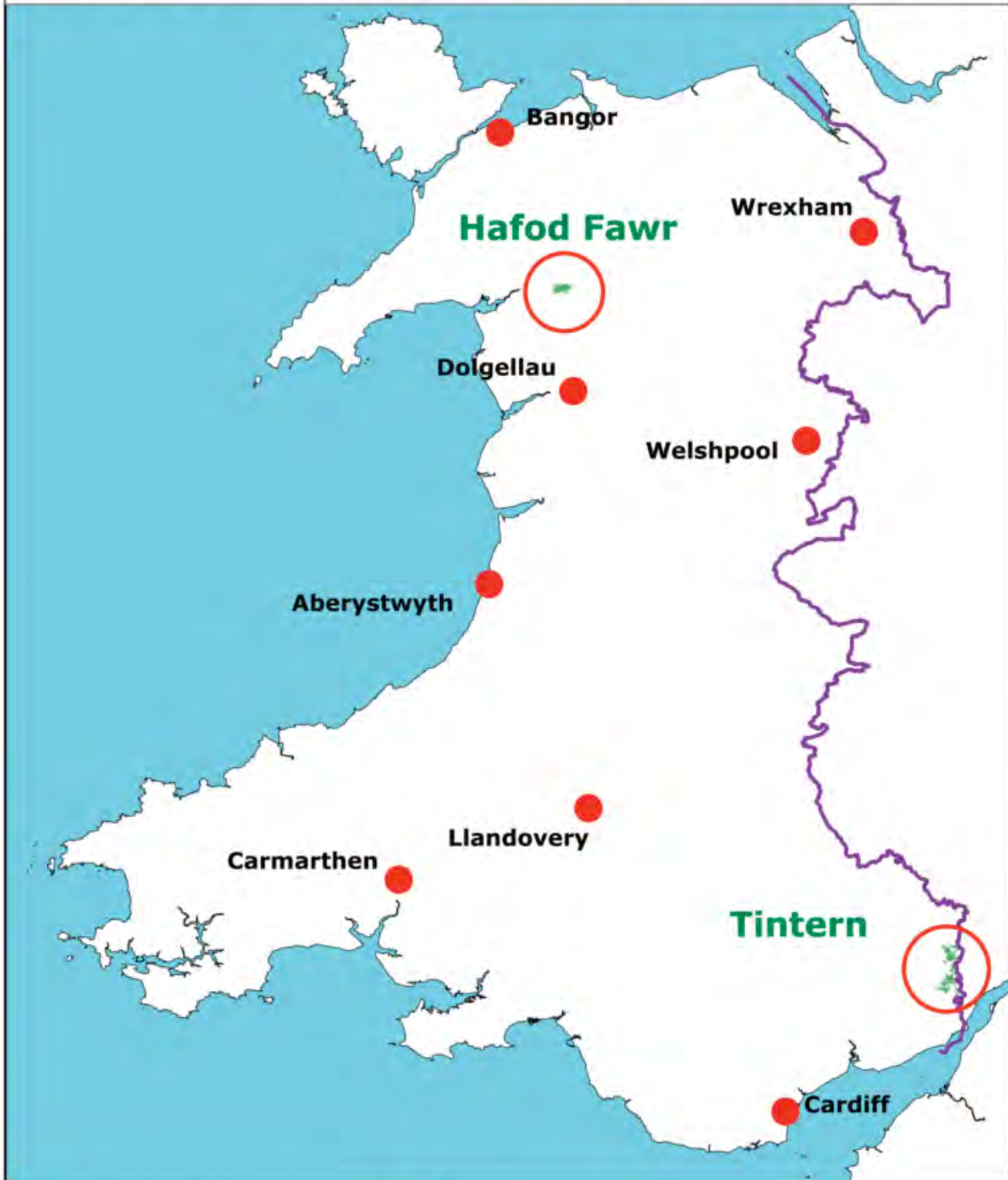
As you read this history you will get a better understanding of the events and policies that have influenced the management and activities of the FC in Wales and recognise what a flexible and adaptable organization it has been – attributes which are being taken forward into NRW.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trefor Owen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Trefor Owen

Director Forestry Commission Wales

Crown Woods in Wales 1919



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Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru
Forestry Commission Wales

To begin at the beginning

The Forestry Commission was established on 1st September 1919 as a result of difficulties experienced meeting the demand for timber during the First World War.

Woodland resources had been declining in Britain since the Middle Ages, and had reached an all-time low in the wake of the industrial revolution. With the outbreak of war in 1914 the country was no longer able to rely on timber imports, and in July 1916 Prime Minister Herbert Asquith appointed the Acland Committee to look at the best ways of increasing the nation's woodland resource. The committee reported to Asquith's successor, David Lloyd George, in 1918. They recommended that a state organisation would be the most effective way of co-ordinating a reforestation plan to meet timber needs for the foreseeable future and also establish a strategic timber resource. Lloyd George later admitted that Britain had been nearer to losing the war through lack of timber than lack of food.

After receiving Royal Assent from George V in August 1919, The Forestry Act came into force on 1st September. This set up the Forestry Commission and gave it the responsibility for woods in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Eight Forestry Commissioners were responsible for promoting forestry, developing afforestation, the production of timber, and making grants available to private landowners. They met for the first time in November 1919 under the Chairmanship of Lord Lovat. Their remit was to build up a state forest resource of 715,000 hectares by the end of the century. By 1999 this had been surpassed, as by then 800,000 ha of woodland was being managed by FC GB on behalf of the nation.



Lord Lovat
First Chairman of the
Forestry Commissioners

There were a number of state-owned forests in Britain prior to 1919 which were known as Crown Woods. Two of these were in Wales and, on the creation of the Forestry Commission, Hafod Fawr in Merionethshire and Tintern Forest in the Wye Valley, were the first woodlands to come under the management of the new organisation. Previously under the responsibility of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods Forests and Land Revenues their management had been overseen by Crown Foresters.

In 1919 woodland represented 4.2% of the land area of Wales and by 2013 this had risen to 14.3%. This represents a massive increase in the area of woodlands since the Forestry Commission was formed nearly 94 years ago. It has been successful in reversing the decline in woodlands, achieved within a backdrop of immense changes to the social, environmental and political fabric of the nation.

The woodlands it has created and managed will now be part of Natural Resources Wales and will continue to produce much needed timber for Wales in addition to providing wide ranging social, economic and environmental benefits.

1920s

The driver of forestry policy in the 1920s was the need to rebuild and maintain a strategic resource of timber. Stocks had been so depleted by the demands of the First World War that the new Forestry Commission was given significant freedom to acquire and plant land.

Financial stringency was imposed from the beginning because of high post war inflation, but agriculture was depressed and the Commission was able to acquire land cheaply.

Hafod Fawr, near Ffestioniog in Merionethshire was one of the two areas of Crown Woods that came under Forestry Commission (FC) management. This woodland had been acquired by the Office of Woods and Forests for the Crown in 1899 for the purpose of planting conifers for timber production. This was a significant milestone in the history of land-use, and landscape development in Wales as it was the first time that land had been acquired by a government agency for coniferous forestry, this occurred a full 20 years before the creation of a state forest service. Until that time the only conifer planting schemes in Wales had been on private estates like Hafod in the Ystwyth Valley, or land owned by corporate bodies for example Lake Vyrnwy Estate - owned by The Corporation of Liverpool.

The experience gained at Hafod Fawr with regard to the tree species planted was invaluable to the FC as it began the process of afforestation in the Welsh uplands. The success of Sitka spruce and Japanese larch in Hafod Fawr was evident and both species were commonly planted in the new Welsh forests.



Dafydd Fryer

Diosgydd, Gwydyr Forest 1922

1920

- Tintern Forest, a former Crown Wood, which was now managed by the Forestry Commission, had a labour force of 48 woodcutters and labourers. It also employed 18 women and girls in Fair oak nursery near Devauden. Tintern was managed from the Forest of Dean until it was transferred to the Welsh directorate in 1946. By 1952 the workforce totalled 173 and included 26 women in the nursery.

1921

- The first trees were planted by the Forestry Commission in Wales at Llantrisant Forest in what is now Rhondda Cynon Taf. That same year the first trees were planted in Gwydyr Forest in North Wales.
- In 1921 a total of 800 acres of new woodland were planted by the Forestry Commission in Wales.

1922

- 1922 was nearly the last year of the Forestry Commission, when the Committee for National Expenditure appointed by the government to find where cuts in State expenditure could be implemented, recommended that



Dafydd Fryer

the afforestation policy adopted by Parliament in 1919 should be completely scrapped. Through the efforts of Lord Lovat who was the chairman of the FC at the time, the scrapping of the FC was rejected - although the expansion programme had to be reduced.

- To encourage private owners to help replace the loss of woodland and increase the area, a grant of £2 per acre was authorised.
- Wages in the early 1920s were 3 shillings a day for a boy, the basic rate for a Forest Worker was 28 shillings a week (5 ½ days) and £18 6s 8d a month for a Head Forester (Pay Band 5 equivalent). If piecework was available workers could hope to get 25% above day rate. The day began at 7am. There was no provision of wet-weather clothing and bad weather shelters had to be made from materials found in the forest like poles, bracken and turf.
- The first planting in Rheola Forest in the Neath Valley was undertaken by the FC.

1924

- There were 13 Forestry Commission units in Wales
- The creation of Forest Workers holdings was launched which recommended one holding per 200 acres of plantation. The typical holding would have 10 acres of arable land and the holder would be guaranteed 150 days of work a year in the forest.
- The Forestry (Transfer of Woods) Act 1923 came into force giving full responsibility for Crown Woods to the FC.

1925

- The FC lost 80 acres of newly planted trees in its first bad fire at

1920s

Beddgelert Forest in N Wales.

1927

- The Forestry Act 1927 recognised the need for public access to forests, and introduced regulations to cover this.

1928

- The Forestry Commission acquired the land that was to become Pembrey Forest and began planting trees there in 1929. Prior to planting, the dunes were stabilised with brushwood fences and by planting marram grass. In 1930 a nursery was established at Pembrey to supply trees for planting in the new forest and also for other areas of GB where trees were needed for the expanding FC estate. By the 1940s the nursery and forest provided employment for around 100 workers. The nursery closed in the early 1970s.

G W Hollis was the first forester posted to Pembrey which, in 1928, consisted of 5000 acres of sand dunes. He was told to go there and sit on the dunes for three months and find out all he could about blowing sand. In his 11 years at Pembrey about a third of the



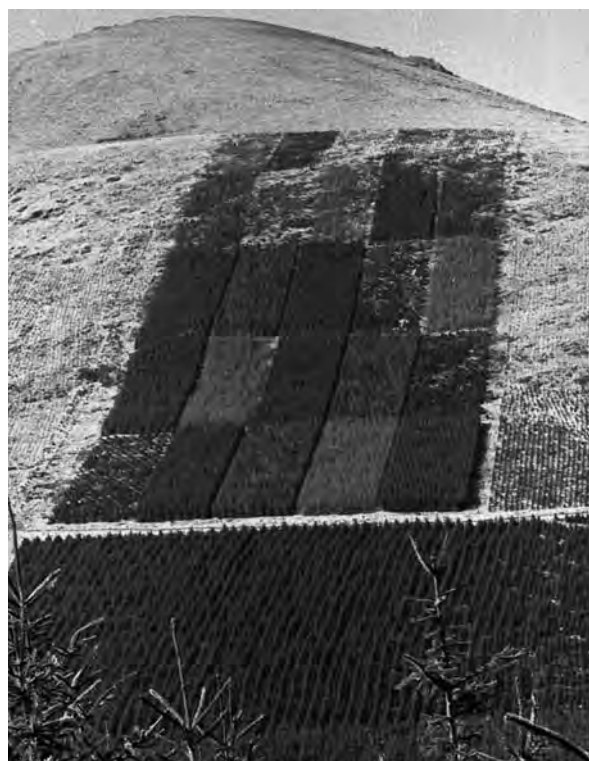
Dunes and planted marram at Pembrey

area had been successfully planted mostly with Corsican pine

1929

- A 5x5 Latin Square design for an experiment was laid out in Beddgelert Forest in 1929 at a range of altitudes to study the effect of exposure on Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, Japanese larch, Lodgepole pine and European larch. Some of the plots were pure species and others were mixtures. The Latin square layout meant that the treatments being compared (species and exposure) were replicated in each row and column (think of Sudoku). The experiment was designed by Ronald A Fisher FRS, an eminent statistician and geneticist, and was the first field experiment in the world to use a randomised experimental design, hence it was historically important.

By 1984 due to landscape design issues some of the higher elevation plots had been removed and the integrity of the experiment was lost.



High elevation plots Beddgelert, 1953

1930s

The early 30s were dominated by a worldwide recession and the later years by a slow but steady build up to war. However against this backdrop the Commission's estate continued to expand.

The main market for timber was pit props with the nation's expanding heavy industries almost entirely reliant on coal. This dependency continued throughout the war years.

In 1937 the Commission began working with the Board of Trade to draw up detailed plans in the event of war. In order to secure the domestic supply of timber, woods were placed into three categories: woods which could be felled immediately (mature stands); woods which could be felled if necessary (slightly younger or older trees); and woods to be felled only in extreme need. The Home Grown Timber Advisory Committee was also established in 1939 as part of these preparations.

On the day war broke out, the Commission was divided into two: The Forest Management Department, to carry on its normal activities, and the Timber Supply Department to deal with war demands.

The Commission remained in charge of the home timber supply until 1941, when the responsibility was given to the Timber Production Department of the Ministry of Supply.



1930s

1930

- The guaranteed minimum wage of an adult male forest worker in regular or seasonal employment was raised to £1 10s per week.
- The first planting took place in Ystwyth and Clocaenog Forests.

1932

- Wages had risen for Forest Workers for a 50 hour week to £1 15s for over 21s, £1 12s for 21 & under and £1 for 15-16 year olds

Welsh Forests 1932

Map from 1932 FC Annual Report
Red = land acquired that year



3 Hafod Fawr	47 Beddgelert	71 Mathrafal
5 Tintern*	48 Cynwyd	72 Pembrey
19 Gwydyr	49 Dovey	79 Brynmawr
20 Vaughan**	50 Radnor	81 Myherin
30 Kerry	55 Brecon	87 Clocaenog
31 Rheola	56 Brechfa	88 Dyfnant
32 Margam	66 Glasfynydd	89 Crychan
33 Llantrisant	69 Cwmeinion	90 Caio
34 Llanover	70 Tarenig	94 Mynydd Ddu
35 Chepstow*		

* managed from the Forest of Dean

** now Coed y Brenin

1934

- There were now 27 forests in Wales. The largest three by plantable acreage were: Gwydyr 11000 acres, Clocaenog

9000 acres and Coed y Brenin 9000 acres

1935

- Since the late 1920s the Forestry Commission had provided work for the unemployed under the instruction of the Ministry of Labour. Residential and non-residential camps had been created for these workers. In 1935 one non-residential camp was opened in Rheola in the Neath valley and two residential camps were opened in Brechfa in Carmarthenshire. At Rheola men were bussed in each day from Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil and other South Wales valley towns. The camps provided work and, most importantly for the time, breakfast and mid-day meals.

Training courses at the camps lasted for 16 weeks and provided outdoor work experience and good food. The camps were closed before the outbreak of WW2. The camp at Brechfa was taken over for military training, others were converted for housing for FC staff after the war, such as those at Dovey and Treglog.

- A probationer District Officer's (Pay Band 4 equivalent) salary was £250 a year. Many had to save up to afford the new Forestry Commission tie.

- Awareness of public reaction began when the Forestry Commission in Wales began working closely with the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales to protect areas of Snowdonia from insensitive planting.

- The first thinnings took place at Llantrisant Forest where the first trees were planted in Wales by the Forestry Commission in 1921.

- In commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of King George V, Coed y Brenin (The King's Forest) received its new name. It had previously been known as Vaughan Forest.



The Kings Stone at Coed y Brenin

1936

- The South Wales coalfield was identified as one of 3 'Special Areas' in Great Britain where there was widespread unemployment due to the depression. Forestry was seen as an industry which could offer employment through its expansion. It could provide a high level of employment for low capital expenditure and at the same time also help increase the strategic timber resource which had been the purpose of the FC's creation in 1919. As a 'Special Area' a divisional office was set up in Cardiff. During this period the Commission's land holdings increased across South Wales through the purchase or lease of land including areas that became Taf Fawr, Talybont and Ebbw Forests.

- To prepare for the expansion of

forests it was decided a large nursery would be needed to supply the trees to plant. It was also realised that a large number of staff would be required to manage the nursery who would also need to be housed which would justify the creation of housing in the area. Tair Onen in the Vale of Glamorgan was chosen as the site for the nursery as there would be space to provide



Sowing seeds at Tair Onen nursery in 1953

housing as well.

- Smallholdings were created to help increase the labour force in the 'Special

1930s

Areas'. In the mining towns of the S Wales valleys prospective tenants were gathered through the labour exchanges. These smallholdings would give the opportunity for unemployed miners to have a home, a guaranteed job with a small wage, and some land they could call their own. The smallholdings came with 10 acres – not really enough to be viable, however the area of each holding was decided by Whitehall.

This experiment was not an overwhelming success and some only stayed for a few weeks before returning to the valleys. But for many it worked well, although it ended in 1939 with the outbreak of war.

1937

- To help encourage wider public access the Forestry Commissioners created Snowdonia Forest Park. This comprised Gwydyr and Beddgelert Forests and their outlying woodland blocks. In 1951 the area became part of the Snowdonia National Park.
- Beddgelert Campsite opened.
- The land that was to become Hafren Forest was acquired. Before planting the area was comprised of separately owned farms and sheepwalks, also land where lead and tin mining had been important in the past. The first planting was 164 acres of spruce and pine. By 1962 (Hafren's 25th anniversary) this had grown to 8600 acres of plantations.

In Hafren roads were poor and until 1940 a car could not be driven from Nant Felin to Llwynygog, except during May and June when it was sometimes possible, with the help of a spade and a little luck, to traverse the bog at Cwm Biga. There were 29 gates between Old Hall and Machynlleth.

- Forester Humphrey Williams was laying out a fence line at Groes Uchaf

in Hafren when a twin engined RAF bomber flying at about 200ft crashed on Cwm Biga sheep walk – there were no survivors.

1938

- The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Forest Park was created to provide recreation opportunities for local people and visitors. This included Tintern and Chepstow Forests in Wales. At this time all of the forests in the lower Wye Valley were managed from the Forest of Dean.
- Trade Unions were introduced into the Forestry Commission

1939

- The Forestry Commission acquired Newborough Warren, which was to become Newborough Forest. It was immediately taken over by the army for military training purposes and was not handed back to the Commission until 1946.
- War was declared on 3 September however forestry work carried on as normal.



1940s

The Second World War and its aftermath had an enormous impact on forestry in Britain. During the War 90% of timber produced in Britain came from private estates as many of the Commission's forests were too young to produce viable timber. Pit props were a very important product for the mines producing the coal on which so many of the armament and other industries depended.

Employment in forests increased and included women in the Women's Timber Corps also known as the Lumberjills. Post-war labour shortages meant that Prisoners of War (POWs) often had to be deployed to help catch up with the backlog of work.

Licences for timber felling were introduced during the War and retained afterwards as a conservation measure.

Once the War was over, restoring the forest estate became a priority, this included managing and restocking felled or derelict woodlands. During the period 1946 – 1949 the Forestry Commission's estate in Wales grew by 40,000 acres (16,000 ha) with 20,000 acres (8000 ha) of new woodland being planted during the same period. By the end of the decade the Forestry Commission's landholding in Wales had grown to 213,000 acres (86,000ha).



1940s

1940

- Despite the War, planting grants remained at £2 per acre for conifers, £4 per acre for oak or ash, £3 per acre for beech, sycamore or chestnut or £2 per acre for other approved broadleaves.

1942

- In Dovey Forest a fire which started above Blaenglesyrch, Esgairgeiliog, went over the mountain to Fronfelen at Corris. The fire was so intense that fire brigades and the Army had to come and help the villagers of Corris and Esgairgeiliog put it out. It started when a Forester ordered the women from the Women's Timber Corps to burn brash and then bury the ashes – this was against their ganger's wishes.



Lord Haw Haw mentioned the fire in one of his propaganda programmes on the radio.

- The Women's Timber Corps and other women who worked for the Forestry Commission were essential to

the War effort. They worked in the nurseries, undertook planting and other forest management duties as well as felling and hauling timber to roadside. It must have been a cultural shock for some girls coming from England to live in small villages like Esgairgeiliog where the locals didn't speak much English and the girls didn't speak any Welsh.

- In Margam forest, due to shortages of labour during the War, some local women were recruited and were described by the District Officer of the time as being a "valuable addition to the labour strength. They were particularly good at such jobs as brashing with the billhook and weeding, at least as good as men, if not better and they were certainly cheaper."
- In Coed Ely in South Wales Grand fir was planted in a crater created by a landmine. The staff took advantage of the deep cultivation with good results.
- Thinning began at Coed y Brenin.

1945

- After the War the concept of providing smallholdings for forest workers was abandoned and replaced with houses with gardens in Forest Villages. In these new villages Forest Workers each had the same house, also earned the same wage and had the same boss. Where Forester's houses were needed they were constructed at a slightly higher elevation and with minor design changes.
- Forest Workers basic wage was £3 10s per week.

1946

- Newborough Warren which had been acquired by the Forestry Commission in 1939 but used as a military training area during the War was handed back

to the Commission. When Forester Bob Griffiths arrived with a load of fencing material in 1946 it comprised 1700 acres of mobile sand dunes strewn with high explosives.

When Bob set about the task of creating a forest there was no tradition of forestry in Anglesey and at the time no similar Forestry Commission acquisition anywhere in GB. It was extremely exposed with no vegetation more than 3ft high. The first men recruited didn't really think they were entering permanent employment.

Bob faced two major problems – stabilising the dunes and preventing further encroachment of sand from the foreshore. This was achieved by developing and fixing dunes on the edge of the shore. To do this he innovated by spreading roadside cuttings on the dunes. By the early 1950s 35 – 40 men were employed, making a considerable contribution to the local economy.

By 1951 apart from the benefits of employment the community was beginning to benefit from stopping sand encroachment which had been taking place for over 600 years. The

original village had been overwhelmed in the late middle-ages and agricultural land was still being lost. The sand movement had been contained and the surrounding land became sheltered enough to encourage farmers to convert rough pasture into arable land.

By the early 60s the whole area had been fixed and planted. The forest was also becoming very popular for recreation and Bob responded by providing facilities such as car parking.

Today the value of Newborough Forest for its recreational opportunities and conservation coupled with the timber it produces are a tribute to Bob Griffiths' ingenuity, resourcefulness and hard work. Head Forester Bob Griffiths was awarded the MBE in 1978 and retired in 1980 after 34 years at Newborough.

- A new partnership agreement for 999 years was set up between the Forestry Commission and the Liverpool Water Company at Lake Vyrnwy. The state had been a partner since 1914.
- Due to labour shortages following the War, German POWs from a camp in Presteigne were employed in Radnor forest to help catch up on all of the maintenance work that had not been



Newborough - brushwood fencing to protect against the wind

1940s

done during the War. In Clocaenog, German and Italian POWs were employed to undertake draining, ground preparation and planting. They were described as being very 'green' and "close supervision was required."

1947

- The total area of new woodland planted during the year by the Forestry Commission in Wales was 5500 acres.
- The Dedication Scheme came into effect, allowing private landowners to dedicate their land to forestry in perpetuity in exchange for grants for planting and management. The scheme resulted in an expansion of private forestry. The Dedication Scheme closed to new applicants in 1981. In all over 780 schemes, amounting to over 37,000 ha, were grant aided in Wales during the 33 year operating period. Currently (2013) there is just one live scheme remaining.
- The first planting at Taf Fechan was undertaken on land leased by the Commission from the Taf Fechan Water Board.
- The Aberystwyth Forestry Commission Social Club held their annual dinner. Entertainment included games and dancing. A day or two later the Social Club staged a Christmas party which began with a 40 minute pantomime staged by The Twigs.

1948

- The Forestry Commission's land holding in Wales was 200,000 acres (82,000 ha) of which over 92,000 acres (38,500ha) were planted.
- In Wales the Engineering Branch Roads Unit, which was responsible for all road construction and maintenance in addition to machinery and equipment, employed more than 650

staff.

- In Coed y Brenin forest large scale planting resumed following the War and by 1948 the workforce had risen to 120 with a further 20-30 employed on road construction. The forest had more than 40 Forest Workers' Holdings and the occupants formed a valuable section of the workforce.
- The Forestry Commission employed almost 2,500 Forest Workers in Wales and they were paid nearly £600,000 in wages during the year. It was estimated that by 1951 4,000 Forest Workers would need to be employed in Wales.
- Because of the shortage of paper The Slasher, the FC's in-house newspaper (which began in 1948), was only issued directly to Foresters and Foremen but not Forest Workers. Following a complaint from a Forest Worker it was requested that Foresters and Foremen share their copies with other staff.
- During the year Coed y Brenin produced 31,000 cu ft of pit props, 17,000 cu ft of fencing stakes and poles for rustic work.

1949

- Dennis Waldron, a Forest Worker at Glasfynydd forest, was injured when a mortar bomb exploded. He was taking part in a harrowing operation when the mortar bomb was detonated. He was badly cut about the feet, legs and face and was taken to Brecon War Memorial hospital where he was treated.
 - Coed y Brenin covered 17,000 acres or nearly 7000ha of which nearly 7000 acres (3000ha) had been planted by 1949. The area was being planted at a rate of about 300 acres (120 ha) a year.
- By 1949 the thinning programme was 200 acres a year and it was expected

to increase to 400 acres annually by 1950 and to continue increasing.

- Tintern Forest employed 120 Forest Workers which at the time was described as being "three or four times that of former days." In 1949 the 4,000 tons of thinnings the forest produced went for pit props.
- The Dovey Instructional Centre at Ceinws which had been constructed for the unemployed (many from Liverpool), was taken over by the Forestry Commission and became the centre of operations for Dyfi Forest. The main office, in addition to the office for the Roads Department, was located there. There were also fourteen houses for the Foresters and the Forest Workers, a church, village hall and library. There was a garage with three mechanics and an assistant. The Camp was a community in itself.
- In 1949 the labour force in Rheola forest was 128 and the numbers were expected to rise as the area of plantations requiring thinning increased. A high proportion of the men employed were ex-miners who had left the pits because of occupational diseases. Hence forestry provided employment to a section of the working population that may otherwise not have found work. The employment was full-time which was an important factor in an area such as

the Neath valley which had more than its share of unemployment in times of industrial depression.

Rheola forest covered nearly 14,000 acres, and by 1949 nearly 7,000 acres had been planted. Of the balance some 2,500 acres consisted mainly of mountain tops which were grazed by sheep. The planting programme at the time was nearly 1000 acres a year so that in four or five years the whole of the available plantable land would be carrying trees. The thinning programme was approaching 250 acres a year and would expand until out of the total of 11,000 acres of plantations ultimately established, around 2,000 acres would need attention every year.

"The desire is to maintain forever hillsides, once barren and unproductive, as green and fruitful sources of the timber that will always be needed in these busy Welsh valleys" quote from FC booklet: Rheola Forest South Wales published 1950.

- For private woodland owners a subsidy of 3d per cubic foot for thinnings was introduced and planting grants were increased from £10 to £12 per acre. Maintenance grants increased from 3s 4d to 4s per acre. Compulsory purchase was threatened where woodland was not adequately managed.



Unknown

The Dovey Instructional Centre, Ceinws

1950s

This period saw a major expansion of the FC landholding in Wales which grew from 215,500 acres to 343,500 acres at the end of the 1950s. By 1959, 222,000 acres of the total area was now woodland and of this, 118,600 acres had been created during the decade.

Controversy arose in 1950 when a proposal to expand the area of forest in Wales, through compulsory purchase of land, focussed on the upper Twyi. This controversy continued until the proposal was dropped in 1954.

The decade saw the continuing development of FC Forest Villages and the opening of a number of village halls across Wales. These halls were provided as facilities to be used not only by FC staff and their families but also the wider community in the area.



Cross cutting pit props , Clocaenog Forest 1957

1950

- The FC became the owner of 5255 acres of the Hafod estate, in the Ystwyth Valley, which it had leased since 1929. The estate had been established by Thomas Johnes who became famous for his trailblazing work in planting upland forests and landscape design in the years 1780 – 1813.

The estate was designed in the 'Picturesque' style and became a destination for tourists visiting Wales in the 18th Century. Johnes built Hafod mansion on the estate in 1785 but when the FC obtained the ownership of the house it had fallen into dereliction. Part of it had already been demolished and it had become a danger to the public. There was an outcry when it was made known that the FC wanted to demolish the ruin. Attempts were made to preserve it and approaches to



Unknown

Hafod Mansion 1920s

amenity and preservation organisations were made but all of them declined. It was finally demolished on 13th August 1958 by the Royal Engineers as a demolition exercise.

Today FC Wales is working in

partnership with the Hafod Trust to conserve and restore the historic landscape, protect its important habitats, and provide access and enjoyment for walkers.

- A scheme was proposed to provide Wales with its biggest state forest. The site of the new forest would be on the Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire and Breconshire border within the upper reaches of the River Twyi. The scheme proposed the planting over 40 years of some 46 sheep farms which between them covered about 20,000 acres. The size of the forest was justified by the need of scale to warrant roading and long term planning. The farmers who were to be affected opposed the scheme but the Ministry of Agriculture ruled that, in the national interest, the area was best given over to forestry.

It was emphasised that the scheme would bring more people and jobs into the area which then had a population of fewer than 200. When it was fully established it was expected to provide employment for 300 and result in a population of about 1000 men, women and children. There would be no compulsory purchase unless all attempts at voluntary negotiation had failed. As farms were planted the occupants would be offered the option to remain in what would become Forest Workers Holdings which would mean they would have a piece of land and the guarantee of work with the FC.

The proposed scheme developed into a major political battle when the National Committee for Wales decided that the land should be compulsorily purchased. A heated meeting with those affected took place in Llandovery which was

1950s

followed by a public enquiry. Due to the opposition, led by the MP for Cardiganshire, in 1954 the Minister of Agriculture announced that the scheme for compulsory purchase would be dropped. However by 1965 16,000 acres of land in the area had been voluntarily sold to the Forestry Commission, and private investors had bought up more land alongside.

- The first co-operative forestry movement in Wales was created in the Dovey Valley. Members were woodland owners who contributed money to establish the co-operative which included contractors who would undertake forest operations. The first balance sheet showed there were 23 members who between them had subscribed £2300. A nursery to grow trees was established and in 1950 Mr W T Jenkins, a Forester, had been seconded by the FC to be the Manager of Dovey Woodlands Ltd (Coedlannau Bro Ddyfi). It continued to operate until 1967 when following changes in ownership the Economic Forestry Group (which later became part of Tilhill) took over the management of the woodlands. The interest in forestry in the Dyfi valley amongst private landowners has continued to this day resulting in high numbers of woodland grant schemes being taken up in the area.

- Workers at the FC's Tair Onen nursery near Cowbridge escaped death when a Bristol Freighter crashed in their midst. The plane was on a test flight from Filton airfield near Bristol and the four crew lost their lives.

Forester F Slatter was first on the scene (he was only about 50yds away when it hit the ground) but little could be done. Tair Onen employed on average 150 and at the time of the crash a number of the younger employees were in the vicinity. Fortunately no-one was hurt and the

damage caused in the nursery was not great though wreckage was widespread.

- The first village hall to be built in Wales by the Forestry Commission opened in Llaneglwys. It was built as a facility for the local community, many of whom worked for the Forestry Commission in Brycheiniog Forest. It was created from a nissen hut from a disused army camp. The Commission transported and rebuilt it, and kitted it out with a kitchen and other facilities. It was then leased to trustees at a nominal rent. The hall is still in use in the village today.



Llaneglwys village hall 2013

Chris Jones

- Rheola forest had its own football team called The Rheola Forest Rangers. When it came into being an appeal for funds raised £10 which was used towards the purchase of their green and white kit. Each member of the club voluntarily contributed one shilling a month towards the club's funds.

- Oak timber grown in Monmouth and prepared at the FC's sawmill in Tintern was used to make a new table for the Speaker in the House of Commons. The Houses of Parliament, which had been damaged by enemy action during the War had been reconstructed. New pieces of furniture including the table were required to complete the refurbishment. A request for timber was forwarded to Forester A Jones in

Tintern who personally undertook the task of finding something suitable. Tributes were received on the quality of the timber and the co-operation of the FC in providing it.

- A UFO was spotted by J W Bowditch (clerk) and 12 forestry employees from Brecon Forest when travelling to work in an FC lorry. It was described as a similar shape to an airship with a flat top. It was at about 1,000ft and moved very fast towards Brecon without making a sound. They stopped the lorry and kept watch on the object for what must have been 5 – 6 miles. Mr Bowditch stressed that "the majority of the party is strictly teetotal."

1951

- During the year 12,713 acres of new woodland were planted by the FC in Wales and four new FC forests formed.
- There was a disastrous fire at Glynceiriog Denbighshire resulting in two forest workers losing their homes and that of a third being damaged. Sadly the father-in-law of Mr H Roberts

died and Mr Roberts, his wife and young child had barely escaped. They lost all of their possessions and FC staff set up a relief fund which raised £134.

- Coed y Brenin had a workforce of 120 men. Road making employed a considerable number including miners and quarrymen suffering from silicosis and other ailments.
- Grant aid increased from 1 Oct 1951 rising from £12 to £14 per acre for planting and 4s to 4s 6d per acre for maintenance.
- Llwynygog forest village near Staylitttle in Montgomeryshire was officially opened. Although still under construction it was seen as the forerunner of such villages. It was built to house the increasing labour force required in Hafren forest as timber production was beginning. Staff were also required to be on hand in case of fire. The development included a village hall which was opened by GF Hamer, Lord Lieutenant of Montgomeryshire.



1950s

At the time 53 staff were employed at Hafren and it was expected this would increase to 74 the following year. It was envisaged that Llwynygog would be the nerve centre of the forest. The 21 houses built by 1951 were seen as just the first phase of development that would grow to a total of 80 houses all with modern amenities.



Llwynygog Forest Village 1951

In due course a saw mill, or saw mills, were expected to open with associated industries to use the sawn timber. It was intended that as Llwynygog grew, more shops would be built and a school and recreational facilities would be developed.

- A Forest Worker clearing a fence line in Slebech Forest S Wales found a machine gun. It was half buried and had obviously fallen from a height. It was decided that it may have been jettisoned from a plane or accidentally fallen from one during the war.

1952

- Staffing at Rheola Forest showed how forests generated employment. Before the FC began there were just 13 jobs in the area. After the forest was created there were 169 people employed.

- Brechfa Forest employed 104 staff including 12 who were mainly engaged in road construction. In addition there was a direct labour gang of 9 men under the Clerk of Works (estates), a mobile mechanic and 2 workshop fitters at the machinery workshop at Treglog.

- District Officer W A Lindsay-Smith of Betws y Coed was selected to represent Great Britain at hockey in the Olympic Games at Helsinki

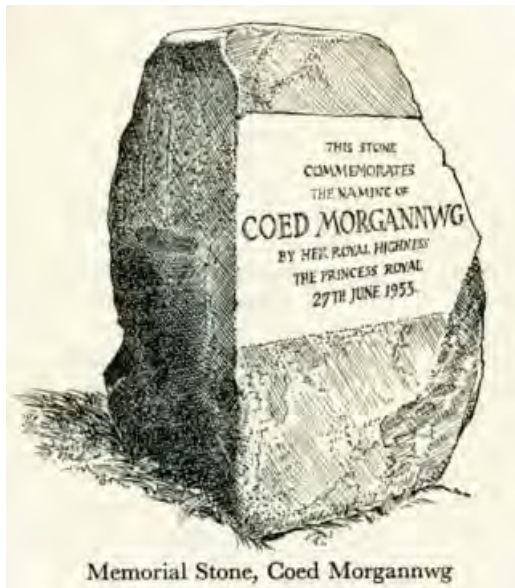
- Another Forest Village Hall opened at Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws. It was converted from a large hut and was leased to the local Recreation Association at a nominal rent. It had a large stage, plenty of room for dancing and a well equipped kitchen.

- The 1952 Christmas party for the Welsh Directorate was held at the Belle Vue Royal Hotel in Aberystwyth. 'The Pine Coons' concert party comprising staff from Victoria House provided entertainment and the typists sang topical songs. There was also dancing and party games. The prizes that were awarded included - a bottle of sherry, a duck and a pair of nylons.

1953

- The first planting in Tywi forest took place

- As part of the celebrations associated with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II the Princess Royal, Princess Margaret unveiled a commemoration stone for the naming of Coed Morganwg. This marked the formation of the largest forest in Wales when the separate forests of Crynant,



Rheola, Pelana, Michaelston, Margwm, Dunraven and Cwmogor came together as a single unit.

By 1953 they were already touching and merging at many points as they expanded and covered an area of 53 square miles.

She also gave the name 'Ffordd y Frenhines' (the Queen's Way) to a 22 mile long forest road which served Coed Morgannwg.

- Three versions of the Forestry Commission tie could be bought from C H Munday Ltd of 7 Irving St, Leicester Square, London They were: rayon at 7s 6d, rayon non-crease at 9s 6d and silk at 15s - postage was 3d.
- G Morris a ganger at St Gwynno forest obtained a regular place with Newport RFC as lock forward.

1954

- Tair Onen which was the location of the biggest forest tree nursery in Britain now had a recreation ground. Two acres had been set aside at the

disposal of the Forestry Social Club. Tair Onen gave regular employment to 130 workers and there were by then nearly 40 houses on the site.

- The official opening of the village hall at Tirabad by the Lord Lieutenant of Breconshire, Major G T Raikes took place, and was commemorated with a tree planting ceremony. Tirabad was a Forest Village built by the FC in the heart of Crychan forest. The hall was the fifth provided by the FC to be opened in Wales. The amenities of the hall were available not only to staff but for all inhabitants of the district.

- Following their completion the Forest Villages at Llwynygog, Tirabad and the new extension to Brechfa were hailed as constructive feathers in the Forestry Commissioners' caps and there were schemes for similar lonely developments elsewhere. However following the collapse of the compulsory acquisition scheme in Towy it was urged that no more of these isolated forest villages should be planned. When more forestry houses were needed they should be situated in existing villages. The idea of Forest Villages quickly faded.

1955

- First tree planting in the St Asaph forest was undertaken by Lord Mostyn.
- South Wales Conservancy won 1st prize for their stand in the trade display section at the Monmouth show and a silver cup at the Gower show.
- At the Royal Welsh Show in Havefordwest teams from Brechfa & Slebech forests finished 1st, 2nd & 3rd

1950s

in a fence erecting contest.

- The North Wales conservancy party was held in the Lion Hotel in Shrewsbury. The foresters were blindfolded and dressed in a new 'uniform' and it was easy to imagine their surprise when they found they had been dressed as can-can dancers. Oo la la how they danced! The prize for the highest kicker went to Head Forester J E Evans from Coed y Brenin
- Forest workers and staff at Crychan Forest helped in the rescue of the pilots of 2 jet aircraft which crashed after they collided. The pilots baled out and one was rescued from the larch tree into which he had descended. Both were taken to hospital after resting in the FC's office at Llandulas.

1956

- FC staged a display at a careers exhibition at Llandudno. They took part because FC wanted to attract more Welshmen to be involved in Welsh forestry.
- At a meeting of Aberystwyth Town Council, Mr G B Ryle, Director FC Wales, presented a wooden plaque made of Welsh oak to the Council. This was in gratitude for the assistance the Council had given in providing a number of houses for FC staff following the opening of the FC office in Aberystwyth. The plaque was to be inscribed with the names of the Mayors of Aberystwyth. Mr Ryle said it was fitting that the presentation should be made at the time when Her Majesty the Queen had planted a tree to commemorate the planting by the

Commission of one million acres, nearly a fifth of which had been planted in Wales. Accepting the plaque the retiring Mayor, Alderman W G Rowlands, said it would be a reminder of the happy relations that existed between the Commission and the Council.

- The South Wales Conservancy Office table tennis team won division 4 of the Cardiff and district league, reached the semi-finals of the Cardiff knock-out competition and won the men's singles in the Civil Servants' knock-out competition.



Draining peat, Beddgelert Forest 1950

- In 1956 there were 500 fires recorded in Wales. 1,100 acres were burnt and 1,500,000 trees destroyed resulting in a financial loss of £41,000
- The crowning of the first Forest Queen in Wales took place when Blodwen Rowlands, aged 15, from Ceinws was crowned at the local gala. The event took place in the village hall which had been provided for local people by the Forestry Commission in 1952. At the ceremony, the vicar, Rev E



John Read

Kerry Forest staff 1956

M Evans said the occasion reflected the “contribution that afforestation was making to the life of the area”.

- North Wales conservancy staff from the Shrewsbury office played the Aberystwyth office team (Welsh Directorate) at cricket. North Wales won.
- 18 year old Pat Price a clerk at Dreathen forest (the forest office was on the site of the FC office at Rudry) came 4th in the Foxhunter class at the Horse of the Year Show in London.
- In December 1956 the staff of the office of Director Wales presented the first performance of the pantomime Babes in the Wood at Llwynygog village hall (Hafren forest). Musical accompaniment by Hughie Humphries (messenger) was greatly appreciated by a large audience. The pantomime was also performed at Esgairgeiliog (Dovey forest), Tirabad (Crychan forest) and Caersws (Carno and Bechan forests). All proceeds went to the funds of the village halls.
- Welsh Directorate staff held their

annual dinner at the Belle Vue Royal Hotel in Aberystwyth. Guest of honour Lloyd Owen chair of the National Committee joined the band to supply rhythm on the maracas.

1957

- The latest FC silvicultural instruction - Silvicultural Memorandum (SM) 66 laid down the policy on growing broadleaves. It made it clear that they should only be grown on carefully selected sites meaning that fewer broadleaves and more conifers would be grown. SM 66 stated that the demand for hardwood timber would fall and that for softwood would rise. In addition it stated that the early financial returns from conifers would help in the development of good forestry.
- Head Forester J E Evans of Taliesin Forest in N Wales was lowered 70ft on a rope down a disused mine shaft to rescue a sheepdog which had fallen in. The width of the shaft was 3ft x 6ft. Sadly when he reached the dog it was

1950s

found to be dead.

- The first thinnings at Hafren forest took place.
- A grove of beech and oak trees was planted in Artist's wood in Gwydyr to signify the planting of the first 100,000 acres in N Wales.
- The FC made a contribution of £50 towards the maintenance of the remote Soar y Mynydd chapel in the Camddwr Valley. At a service in the chapel attended by members of the Welsh National Committee and FC staff. George Ryle, the Director Wales spoke of the large amount of planting the FC were undertaking in the area. He said "The land use change that is happening will benefit the community as a whole and enable farmer and forester to work together in mutual confidence and friendship".



Unknown

Soar y Mynydd chapel

- A reminder to staff in Wales in November – "The staff of Director Wales will hold a Christmas dinner dance at the Marine Hotel on 19 Dec. There will be novelty dances, spot prizes and games and music from Hughie Humphries and his band. Tickets 12s 6d from Mrs C Baldwin in Victoria House."

- Staff at Gwydyr held the first ever dinner dance for North Wales staff at the Swallow Falls hotel. Staff from the Foresters Training School at Capel Curig, members of Work Study Branch, Forest Research and timber merchants, were invited. Dancing and games were enjoyed. Pat Jones, daughter of the Head Forester from Beddgelert, gave a display of tap dancing.

1958

- Seven teams supervised by Foresters took part in a fire-fighting competition at Rheola Forest in S Wales. The event was won by Crynant beat by a margin of 1 min and a bonus mark. Prizes for the first two teams were provided by the Rheola Forest Workers sports fund. District Officer R J R Marnie acted as judge and Mrs Marnie presented the awards.
- The Festival of Wales, the first nationwide festival in the Principality, took place during the year. It began with a Salute in the Capital parade in Cardiff. This included a tableau by the Forestry Commission which illustrated the link between farming and forestry and showed some of the benefits forestry brings to Wales. A festival grove of 15 oaks was planted at Castell Coch by members of the S Wales Regional Advisory Committee. Schools were given thousands of trees to plant in their grounds as mementos of the festival. In July conducted bus tours from Cardiff, with Foresters as guides, visited Tintern Forest and Coed Taf Fawr.
- As part of a tour to look at the benefits of forestry in Wales eight

MEMORIES OF THE FC FROM 1958

When I started work with the FC in 1958 my wages were £3 19s 7½ d for a five and a half day week. My digs in Betws y Coed cost £3 per week.

To make our tea at work we used to heat water over a fire in a billy-can made out of a dried milk tin. We would throw a match into the water, as this was supposed to stop the tea smelling of smoke. I don't think it ever worked, but we still did it.

We were not expected to work in the rain, so no wet weather clothing was issued. When it rained we had to shelter in old barns and outbuildings. In the hard winters of the early 1960s I was on the felling team. We worked with a bushman saw and a 7lb axe, but the trees froze so hard that the axe was of no use. It was like hitting a block of ice so we had to go and do other work. The piecework rate was 1shilling (5p) per tree. For this they had to be felled, snedded and moved to a group of five, ready for the horse to pull them out. Our target was 40 trees per day to make £2.00, which we seldom achieved.



Will Jones

Will Jones Civil Engineering Works Manager, retired 2002

Welsh MPs planted trees in what became known as Parliament Grove in Dovey forest.

1959

- The retirement took place of the three oldest employees at Gwydyr who between them had joint service of over 100 years. Fred Owen (warrener) age 69, Griffith Pierce 69 and Morris Thomas 71. They all started working at Gwydyr in the early 1920s and their sons now worked in the woodlands they had planted and tended.

- The Forestry Commission won all the main awards at the Civil Service Sports

Association meeting in Aberystwyth. Forest Worker T G Jones of Dovey won the 220 yards, 440 yards, and the mile and was 2nd in the 100 yards. District Officer R C Stern of Dovey was 1st in 100 yards, long jump and high jump. District Officer F H Webb of Cardigan District came 3rd in the mile. The Forestry Commission shared the team shield with the Post Office.

- The Dovey Corris Forest Centre at Ceinws Camp and the adjoining village of Esgairgeiliog were commended in a best kept village competition.

1960s

The 1960s were the age of increased mechanisation with the axe and cross-cut saw being replaced by the chainsaw. Timber production increased and with a guaranteed timber supply new markets opened up in the timber industry. Coal mining now used only about a third of the FC's output but growth in forestry and its related industries created thousands of jobs.

Acquisition of land and expansion of forests continued with a further 42,000 acres being added to the FC in Wales. By the end of the decade 79,000 acres of new woodland had been created by the Commission in Wales and the landholding stood at 385,000 acres.

An awareness of public access and recreation needs grew along with landscape and conservation considerations. Dame Silvia Crowe was appointed as the Forestry Commission's first landscape consultant and the public were given a 'right to roam' in the Commission's forests.

1969 was the Golden Jubilee year of the Forestry Commission.



Loading pitprops. Morganwg 1962

1960

- Interesting fact - in North Wales Conservancy there were 268 Jones on the payroll representing 17.4% of the total workforce of 1540 in N Wales.
- In March a ceremony took place to mark the completion of the planting up the Aberbargoed tip in Caerphilly County Borough. For more than 50 years this eyesore had been visible for miles around. The final trees were planted by school children and Local Authority dignitaries. This was the first large scale afforestation of colliery waste. The Commission had purchased the 43 acre site from the Coal Board for £1.

This was an early example of reclamation where the solution was to stabilise the tip by planting trees. The site was eventually sold to Rhymney Council in the late 1980s after which the trees were cleared then the tip removed and landscaped, which illustrated how land reclamation had moved on in nearly 30 years.

- The first Forestry Commission planting in the Rhondda Valley took place at Llwynypia in October 1960.

1962

- The planting of the 250,000th acre of forest in Wales by the Forestry Commission was marked with a tree planting ceremony in Llantrisant forest followed by a luncheon given by Glamorgan County Council. It was at Llantrisant in Feb 1921 that some of the first trees were planted by the Forestry Commission in Wales. One of those who planted these first trees was former employee Mr T A J Caddy aged 82. He had the honour of planting one of the commemorative beech trees. Since 1921 Llantrisant forest had produced 16,000 tons of timber which was mostly pitwood. First thinnings began

in 1935.

- The Outward Bound Sea School in Aberdovey constructed their 3rd log cabin in Dyfi forest at Hendre Ddu. All of the timber (excluding manufactured windows, shingles and linings) used in its construction was provided by the FC from a stand of Western Red Cedar planted in Dyfi in 1930. The cabin was designed by the Forestry Commission's clerk of works W E Griffiths. These cabins are still in use by the Outward Bound Trust.



Log cabin in Dyfi , 2013

Richard Carrick

- In Coed Morgannwg the Western Welsh bus company began running 3 hour evening tours of the forest. They were so popular that several thousand people took the trips. The value of the forests was recognised in the local press who described them as follows: 'Tracts of barren hillsides magically changed to colourful wooded productivity with the ugly scars of industry hidden for perhaps all time, typifying the work of the Forestry Commission'
- 1962 was Hafren Forest's 25th anniversary. Thinning had begun in 1957 which produced about 1000 tons. The forest started with just 164 acres in 1937 and by 1962 extended to 8600 acres. It comprised land purchased from 40 separate farms and sheep-walks and at the time employed over

1960s

50 people. 30 new houses had been built to accommodate them. A road linking Nant Felin and Cwm Biga had been created by the Forestry Commission in 1940 and had been taken over by the council. The road came through the forest linking Llanidloes, Llwynygog and Staylitle and was a considerable asset to those living there.

- In August two men aged 23 and 35 were sent to prison for 12 months for starting fires in South Wales. The fires burnt 17500 trees over 13 acres

1963

- The winter of 1963 was very hard. During the freeze 150 men from Brecon Forest District cleared snow for the County Council and earned a reputation for hard work. At Mynydd Du Forest the Forester, T H Lewis's, Land Rover was the only vehicle able to get through to the main road 7 miles away although sometimes the journey took 10 hours. Tenants relied on it for bread and groceries. But Mr Lewis said – "we considered ourselves fortunate by comparison with 1947. Then we had to walk those 7 miles with all our supplies for something like 8 weeks."

- Forestry Commission staff attended a dedication service at The Abbey Church of Strata Florida in Cardiganshire. This followed the Commission's support for the church restoration project which had begun in 1960. An appeal was made to the Commission to provide timber for the construction of a new lych gate. They not only provided Welsh oak from Tintern Forest but also made a donation towards the construction of the gate. The new gate bore the inscription 'This lych gate of Tintern oak was presented by the Forestry Commission'. Much of the surrounding land, which was once owned by the Abbey, had been acquired by the Commission.

1964

- Total area of Forestry Commission land in Wales was 373,021 acres (150,956 ha) of which 282,437 acres (114,298 ha) was afforested.
- The Forestry Commission appointed Sylvia Crowe as a landscape consultant. She had been the landscape consultant for both Trawsfynydd and Wylfa nuclear power stations and was a past president of the Institute of



John Roe

Gwydyr Forestry Training School 1963, students and instructors*. Back l-r Mostyn Pugh, Len Billington, Alec Surman, John Roe, George Harrison, Roger Mitchell, Brian Pulford, Joe Kingsmill, Brian Jones, Chris Caister, Ashley Brown, Stan Wilson, Frank Stanbridge. Front l-r Paul Rashidi, Geoff Rose, Allan Powell*, Bob Kemp*, David Perry*. Gwyn Francis*, Geoff Clayden*, Mr Macoris, Arthur Miller and Dave Craze.

Peter Jones



Barbara Spence

FORESTER'S UNIFORMS

The Forestry Commission designed and issued uniforms to Foresters and Rangers up until 1981.

Perhaps one incident which gives me great amusement was when a new Forester's uniform was about to be introduced. It consisted of a green tweedy suit with an orange velvet collar decorated with 2 crowns. To order a new suit self-measurement forms were sent out and you were required to give chest, waist, leg length measurements etc. Also on the form was a series of pictures illustrating physique types. Sadly when the uniforms arrived they were so ill-fitting you often wondered if you'd received someone else's uniform. Such were the complaints that Hepworth's agreed to make the uniforms but we had to attend the nearest branch so that their staff could take the measurements. The nearest branch to Clocaenog was at Oswestry – a pleasant city and home of a little shopping. Hepworth's staff were interested to know why so many foresters had Mr Universe like physiques – You can guess which picture they'd picked on the form pictures.

John Read, Head Forester, Forest Surveys, retired 1991

Landscape Architects. Some of her early work with the FC was undertaken at Gwydyr forest.

- In August two machines, a D7 joined by a winch to a D6, were being operated by Drivers T Hamilton and T Morris on Rhigos Mountain near Hirwaun. The foreman Mr D R Jones had just given instructions when lightning struck Mr Jones and he collapsed. Mr Hamilton was holding the winch rope and was thrown backwards

and lost consciousness. Mr Morris, whose cab had been struck, jumped down suffering from shock. Mr Hamilton and Morris recovered and found Mr Jones, they tried to revive him but there appeared to be no sign of life, so they covered him over. Suddenly he started to come round but had difficulty breathing. The police were contacted and an ambulance sent for. He was detained in hospital overnight and allowed home the following day. Deepest thanks were extended to

1960s

Mr Hamilton and Mr Morris for saving Mr Jones's life.

- The 1964 season saw a record total of 11,400 campers spending 49,000 camper nights at Beddgelert campsite in Snowdonia.
- Some of the Forestry Policy in 1964 will be very familiar to us today (2013). The main points being:
 - To increase the production of wood as a raw material for industry by extending the area of their (the Commissioners') forests at a steady rate, in accordance with sound land use; and by making each forest as productive as possible.
 - Within the limits set by their other objectives to manage the forest estate as profitably as possible.
 - To provide employment in rural areas, especially those most affected by depopulation, and in so doing to maintain a skilled labour force.
 - To help in maintaining an efficient home timber trade
 - To give due attention to the aesthetic and protective roles of the forest and to encourage open air recreation
 - To foster industrial and social development ancillary to forestry.
 - To encourage the orderly development of private forestry and specifically to assist in retaining conditions in which produce from private as well as Commission forests can be marketed to best advantage.
- In October the Forestry Commission took part in a ceremony to dedicate a navigation light at the harbour entrance at New Quay Cardiganshire.

THE ROADS DEPARTMENT IN THE 1960s

I began working for the roads department (Civil engineers) in 1964. I was issued with a safety helmet and wet weather clothing as we were expected to work in all weathers. Training was minimal and in my early days no instructions were given before using high explosives.

Our canteen was a corrugated hut 2.5m x 1.5m with two benches one either side. This was for 8 workers. The hut was transported on the back of the lorry and we all sat in it as well to move from site to site which wasn't very warm in the winter.

The tractors and bulldozers we used in those days didn't have a safety cab and on wet days you had to sit in a puddle of coldwater 'till it got warmed up by your body heat.

An occupational hazard at that time was the massive headaches received through using the high explosives. The nitro-glycerine went into your bloodstream. We received no medicine for this, but I do not think any medicine would alleviate it. It just had to be endured.

Will Jones, Civil Engineering Works Manager, retired 2002

The harbour light had been lost 40 years previously and funds had been raised locally to purchase a new one as entering the harbour was becoming hazardous. The Commission was approached to provide a post for the light and one was provided, made from Welsh oak. The cost of the post was covered by donations from FC staff in Cardiganshire. The light was dedicated to the dead of two world wars and the

A TALE OF THE SWINGING SIXTIES

Looking back to the "swinging sixties" when we supposedly became liberated my recollections are of a somewhat different reality. I completed training at the Forest of Dean Forester Training School in July 1965 and in August was assigned to my first post as a probationary trainee forester at Brechfa in Carmarthenshire. I was to report to John Howsen Head Forester I/C Brechfa North and duly arrived that first Monday. John hustled me around his beat introducing some of his workers and describing the work programmes. My duties were to begin by accompanying the "squad ganger" and getting to know who did what, which was largely silvicultural maintenance.

Brechfa North had a good work force and I enjoyed a gentle introduction to the wizardry of "man management". In the days that followed as brashing came to an end I was placed in a tariffing team consisting of two experienced Assistant Foresters. Life was pleasant, even though I was 3 hours distant by road from my fiancée.

John introduced me to other members of FC staff on my first trip to Maes y Groes the administrative centre for Brechfa, to collect the wages. He cautioned me in regard to the incumbent Chief Forester, so it was with some trepidation that I presented myself for "inspection". His instructions were that I should observe stringent nasal hygiene and maintain the stance of a participant in trench warfare. Undeterred (Oh, callow youth !) I resumed my working routine.

Friday afternoons saw me returning to my fiancée's family home just across the border into Gloucestershire. We became engaged in October that year and made plans for an Easter wedding in '66. I had become aware that a house was untenanted in the forest village at Maes y Groes and approached the Chief Forester with a request that I could rent the house, this received a "Hurmph". Encouraged, I asked Bryan Hicks, resident of the village, if he could let me have some idea as to dimensions of windows, rooms etc. Bryan left me a note for collection the next Thursday. John warned me that the Chief Forester had intercepted Bryan's note and was greatly displeased! My transfer to Rhondda arrived in early December.

Roland Lidell, Conservator, Forestry Authority, S Wales, retired 1996

post included a prominently displayed plaque acknowledging the contribution made by 'Forestry Commission staff in Cardiganshire'.

toured local villages on a decorated lorry which was led by the Corris District Band.

1965

- Esgairgeiliog and Ceinws forest Village at Dovey held a gala day which included the crowning of the Forest Queen. She was Isabel Tear daughter of Forester Jock Tear. After the crowning the queen and her retinue

- Islwyn Jones and David Samuel found a hoard of 682 Roman coins while bulldozing in the Erw Hen block of Caeo Forest Carmarthenshire. The coins covered a period from 249 AD to 291 AD and depicted 17 different Emperors. The coroner returned a verdict of Treasure Trove and therefore the coins

1960s

belonged to the Crown. They were found about 3 miles north of Ogofau gold mines at Dolaucothi which had employed about 3000 people at their peak.

- Ogmore and Garw Urban Council thanked the Forestry Commission for bringing back beauty to the mining valleys. The benefits of forestry featured in the annual report of the councils' Medical Officer of Health, Dr B T Jones. The report stated that afforestation schemes had brought about a complete change in form, texture and colour in the locality and would give great pleasure to the community. Dr Jones said that the forests are "a further attraction to people who want to stay in these lovely hills and away from the congested towns and cities. It is simply wonderful to behold the scene, looking down from the Bwlch over the forestry."

1966

- The structure of the Forester grades was revised in 1966 and the new grades of Chief Forester, Head Forester, Forester and Trainee Forester were

created. The changes revealed overstaffing and as a result the normal retirement age for Foresters went down from 65 to 60 to help reduce numbers.



Bomb disposal team at work on the Ranges 1966

- The Forestry Commission purchased a former artillery firing range near Trawsfynydd from the Ministry of Defence. The area had been used as an ordnance range from 1903 to the late 1950s. The area is known as the Ranges.

In preparation for planting with Sitka spruce the area was ploughed by John



Armoured plough on the Ranges 1966

Tudor Jones and Douglas E McRobert in specially armoured tractors. As they completed the work they unearthed in the region of 900 live missiles and about 20 tons of dead shells. In 1971 they were both awarded the British Empire Medal.

In 2002/03 the area was cleared of Sitka spruce and has been allowed to regenerate as a broadleaf woodland.

1967

- In February 1967 the Spelbrook Memorial Woodland was created near Merthyr Vale. This woodland was planted with funds from Spelbrook



Unknown

EARLY YEARS AS A TRAINEE FORESTER IN S WALES

In 1969 I was posted to Cymmer Forest, in the Afan Valley, following two years at Faskally Forestry Training School in Perthshire. Seeing coal tips and working mines was a real culture shock after starting my career in Devon and being trained in Scotland.

There were 7 Foresters in Cymmer at the time, comprising a Chief Forester, Head Forester, 4 Foresters and me as a Trainee Forester. There was an Industrial workforce of 25 who undertook planting, fencing and brashing, together with a small thinning programme at Glynogwr Nr Bridgend. Wages were poor in comparison to mining and local industry so the work force could be testing at times, to say the least. My own salary was £960 a year.

Sheep trespass and vehicle dumping were an issue but the main problem was forest fires in the spring. Fire duty could be very onerous from March-June, with Foresters expected to be on duty every other day and every other weekend. Cymmer was particularly vulnerable as it was a young forest, most of which was trying to close canopy over molinia grass that ignites readily when dead. It was not unusual to suffer several hundred incidents in a fire season, resulting in plantation losses of hundreds of hectares annually.

My time at Cymmer was very testing and it was a relief to be posted to Rheola Forest in the Vale of Neath in 1970. Here there was much more was going on due to a large timber production and restocking programme. At that time the chainsaw was king, although axes were still used for snedding, especially Larch - extraction was undertaken by Ford County tractors fitted with double-drum Isachsen winches. Within a few years Timberjack frame-steered tractors had been introduced. Everything continued to become more mechanised. I was promoted to Forester grade in 1970.

Ian Blake, Hardwood Sales Manager Wales, retired 2009

1960s

school in Hertfordshire following the Aberfan tip disaster of 1966. The disaster was the result of the catastrophic collapse of a colliery spoil tip that occurred on Friday 21 October, inundating the Pantglas Junior School in Aberfan and killing 116 children and 28 adults. Shortly after the disaster the children and staff at the primary school at Spellbrook near Bishops Stortford in Hertfordshire collected £20 16s for trees to be planted near to the site of the disaster. The forest plantation remains to this day. Spellbrook is now spelt Spellbrook

1968

- Until the introduction of the Countryside Bill in 1968, the main purpose of the Forestry Commission was to maximise timber production and sales. The new bill gave the public the right to use much of the forest estate for recreation, this led to the Commission providing additional facilities for the public.

- The death of Ffani Lloyd age 36 was announced. Ffani was a horse who had worked in Dovey for over 30 years extracting timber. She was owned by Idwal Lewis of Llwydiarth Farm who worked with her in the forest. In addition to extraction she had been employed in carrying plants up hillsides and during her last few years she had been hauling many of the same trees down the hill, as thinnings, to be converted into products such as fencing material.

- The Forestry Commission decided to stop training its own Foresters in its own forestry schools and stopped accepting individuals for training at its three remaining forestry schools one of which was Gwydyr.

- The Beddgelert Campsite charges were:
Adults: 3s per night or 18s per week

Children: Under 4 no charge, aged 4-14 years 1s 6d per night or 9s per week

Cars, caravans and tents – no charge

1969

- In 1969 Forestry Commission woodlands produced over 175,000 tons of timber valued at £600,0000. Most of this came from thinnings.

- Gwydyr Forestry School at Capel Curig closed in June 1969.

- Grant schemes for private woodlands included the Small Woods Planting Grant at £23 3s 6d per acre



- Sept 1969 was the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Forestry Commission. Jubilee celebrations in South Wales were concentrated at Margam and included a tree planting ceremony near the Coed Morgannwg stone. Tours through the forest took place with over 1900 cars and 72 coaches paying for admission. It was estimated that over 12,000 people visited the forest during this period. Local people said they didn't realise there was so much forestry close at hand until their visit.

The events at this time formed part of the Croeso 69 celebrations for the investiture of the Prince of Wales which took place in Caernarfon castle on 1 July that year. The Prince of Wales visited the special forestry exhibits at the Royal Welsh Show.



AN APPRENTICE MECHANIC'S TALE

Tony Egan was the first Mechanical Engineering apprentice in S Wales, starting in July 1969 at St Hilary Workshop near Tair Onen nursery. He was taken on as the need for mechanics increased due to the expanding forests, increasing harvesting programme and the associated road construction which resulted in a growing fleet of machines, equipment and vehicles that had to be maintained. In addition saw benches and peelers, chainsaws and clearing saws, sprayers and nursery equipment were plentiful. Mechanics had to be familiar with an ever widening array of machines from a range of manufacturers including County, Roadless, Holder, Bruunett, Kockums, Gremo, Valmet, Ponsse and Timberjack.



Over the years Mechanical Engineering staff worked from a number of sites throughout Wales including Clawdd Newydd, Maesnewyddion, Chirk, Aberhirnant, Ceinws, Hafren, Tynybedw, Crychan, Resolven, Slebech, Treglog, St Hilary and Tintern. Facilities ranged from forest sheds constructed from local timber and steel sheets, to major workshops with offices and stores..

Tony says: After serving a 4 year apprenticeship and a further 3 years as a mechanic I got myself promoted to a Foreman Instructor in North East England and worked in the wilds of Kielder Forest and the Scottish borders, finally returning to Wales to manage Mechanical Engineering Services Chirk and Crychan Workshops then Business Sustainability Manager FCW.

Tony Egan, Business Sustainability Manager, FC Wales



1970s

During the 1970s an awareness of public access and recreation needs grew along with landscape and conservation considerations. These issues became more central to the Commission's planning and forestry policy. Following the appointment of Sylvia Crowe in the 1960s landscape design began to be considered on a far wider scale, creating woodlands which were aesthetically pleasing as well as productive. Forests were identified as important wildlife reserves, and conservation became a special responsibility for Commission staff.

Facilities for recreation were developed and this focus allowed the Forestry Commission to become the largest provider of outdoor recreation in Britain.

In the private sector the Approved Woodlands and Small Woods grant schemes were closed and a new Dedication Scheme (Basis III) introduced which included provisions for public access.



Les Starling

Blaen Llia picnic site 1979

1970

- The first person to receive a Forestry Commission long service certificate in N Wales was John Davies of Lledr Forest when he retired after 44 years service. At the time certificates were presented after a minimum of 30 years service and only to Industrial Staff - Forest Craftsmen, Gangers etc.
- The first golf match between FCW and the timber trade took place when N Wales Conservancy met the N Wales Timber trade on Sept 11th. The match arose from a challenge earlier in the

year and Bowater Ltd donated a challenge cup (Bowater Challenge Cup). The Forestry Commission lost the first match. By 2012 FC Wales had won 16 matches and the timber trade 27.

- A BBC TV programme, 24 Hours, featured an item which was highly critical of the Forestry Commission's planting policy. It arose following complaints from the Forestry Action Group for Wales whose activities are anti-forestry. Filming took place in several locations in N Wales and featured senior FC staff. Max Hastings was the journalist involved in putting

A TALE OF THE UNEXPECTED

In 1970 Crychan Forest was chosen by Atholl Whyman, Chief Work Study Officer for FC GB, to stage a demonstration of first thinning skidder extraction using polypropylene rope as slings - which was something new.

As this demonstration would be attended by everyone who was anyone in the South Wales production team, Work Study and Training Branch the senior production foresters had shied away from preparing the site and it was left to me as Assistant Forester at Crychan to set things up.

The prescription provided for the layout was very precise. The thinnings were to be laid out in a chevron pattern. Each tush was to contain five or six poles with the tips pointing at a 30 degree angle towards the extraction rack. The tips were to be raised off the ground on a bearer and gathered together, the branches were to be trimmed as close to the poles as possible and the rows were to be free of brash.

The day of the demonstration arrived. The Crychan senior production team had stationed themselves at the front of the gathering of about 40 people with Gwynne Francis who was Assistant Conservator Harvesting and Marketing. I was at the back of the crowd.

Atholl Whyman stood on a stump and declared this was the worst demonstration site he had ever seen and demanded to know who had prepared it. Everyone moved to the background as Whyman continued to hurl his disapproval. "I'll not stop until I find out who did this" he said. I came forward and said in a loud voice "I did". He glared at me saying "What is your name?". I replied "Peter Charlesworth." "Well Peter" said Whyman "this is by all means the very best I have ever had prepared for me. Well done."

Peter Charlesworth, Chief Forester, Surveys Branch (England and Wales), retired 1994

1970s

the item together.

- The Forestry Commission won three awards in the Prince of Wales Awards for Achievements in the Countryside (Cefn Gwlad 1970). The first award was for 'a model picnic site' at Pont-melin-fach at Coed y Rhaeadr. The second was a joint award with Glamorgan Education Authority for an educational scheme 'Man in the Environment' involving 2000 students taking part in projects at Margam and Cymer forest. The third award won jointly with the Monmouthshire Naturalist Trust and the Nature Conservancy Council was for a nature trail and car park at Wyndcliffe Forest Nature Reserve in Tintern Forest in the Wye Valley.
- David Whitney Clerical Officer at Aberystwyth was selected to play for Wales in the Amateur football international against England. Wales lost 3-0 but David figured prominently – he was a regular for Aberystwyth Town.

1971

- The Forestry Commission adopted metric measurement to coincide with decimalisation in the UK when the hoppus foot was replaced by the cubic metre and the acre by the hectare.
- In 1971 the Forestry Commission's total land holding in Wales was 158,000 hectares. This was made up as follows: Woodlands 126,000 ha; to be planted (currently at a rate of over 2000ha per year) 9000ha; Hill grazing nurseries etc 23,000ha.
- From the Western Mail 23rd June 1971: An elderly woman councillor

A CHIEF FORESTER'S TALE

In 1971, after 44 years service Jack Jennings the Chief Forester at Crychan Forest retired. He started working for the FC in 1927. There was a depression on at the time and you had no need to have a 'good' job to be regarded as an important chap – you were a big cheese if you had any job at all.

Forest workers had a rough time in those days. For a start, when you turned up in the morning you were never quite certain that you would be permitted to commence work. If it was raining then you were told to stand by until 11am. If it was still wet at lunchtime, that was the end of that, and home you went for the day, without pay let me add. There was no dole or unemployment pay for agricultural workers. The adult wage was about 30 shillings a week. The working week of fifty something hours was six days with Saturday morning counting as a full day.

from a South Wales local authority took part in a debate on the afforestation of a reclaimed industrial site. She said "I don't know about this afforestation but what about planting some trees there?"

- A raven from Wentwood forest went to the Tower of London. Colin Titcombe a forest worker in Wentwood found a young raven which was half starved and could hardly fly. He raised it but it would not fly away so he wrote to the Tower to see if they could give it a home and they agreed. It went to the Tower in July and as one of the official ravens it had a meat allowance of 30p per week.
- It was decided that the Forestry Commission headquarters were to be

reunited in Edinburgh as since 1966 they had been divided between London, Basingstoke and Edinburgh. This took some years to complete and eventually HQ moved to what is now Silvan House in 1975.

- The Sutherland Cup for the winner of a golf competition between North and South Wales conservancies was won by Dick Stumbles of South Wales.

1972

- The Cwmcarn Scenic Drive opened on 19 May. It was an experimental venture involving the Forestry Commission, the Countryside Commission and local councils. There had been a new emphasis on amenity and recreation in the recent Forestry Review and it was decided to discover more about running such a facility. Cwmcarn was chosen as it was close to a large centre of population.

Research and development, plus the annual running costs for the first 2 years were met by the Countryside Agency. £1500 was spent on preparing the road for public use which allowed

speeds up to 20mph on a one way circuit. Four car parks and picnic sites were constructed and view points created. Annual running costs were expected to be about £4000 a year. It was opened for an experimental period and at the time it saw controlling vandalism as being one of the factors which could affect its success. Despite poor weather 4000 cars visited the drive in the first 6 weeks.

During the first season the forest drive attracted over 70,000 visitors. It was open daily 11 – 8pm Easter to August, and 11-6pm Sept-Oct. Entrance cost 30p per car.

In its first year it won a Prince of Wales award.

- As mechanisation increased staffing numbers reduced and by 1972 approximately 1800 were directly employed by the FC in Wales with an annual wage bill of £2,100,000.
- In 1972 there were 49 forests in Wales. The total forest area was 158,000ha of which 126,000ha was woodland, 9000ha to be planted and 23,000ha other land. The annual production volume was 290,000 m³



Cwmcarn Forest Drive 1970s

1970s

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING FOR FOREST WORKERS

In 1972 in preparation for the Health and Safety at Work Act coming into force the Forestry Commission began the process of providing protective clothing for forest workers. Until then I recollect the only protective clothing provided were communal waders and wellingtons for working in very wet drains.

I was seconded part-time to introduce over 1000 Industrial staff in S Wales Conservancy to wet weather and protective clothing and support the trials of clothing being tested for suitability. The trade unions were assured that having wet weather clothing would not undermine the wet time working agreements, but was to help keep staff warm, dry and healthy. Initially staff were expected to pay for clothing but in a short time it was decided that much of it would be supplied free of charge to all workers who needed it with special equipment, like chainsaw trousers, provided for those who were trained and certificated. Staff were also able to buy clothing at cost price.

I visited all units taking samples for examination. I was also responsible for taking and delivering orders. It was interesting that S Wales had more small feet than the whole of England. The trial took about two years to complete. Then HQ went into full swing and set up a supply department at Kelty, Fife. The system for ordering and supply, and the eligibility of free, at cost, or subsidised price for the Forest Worker grades was instigated. The supply and provision of safety clothing was in operation before the 1976 HSAWA Act came into force.

**John Roe, Operations Manager
North Wales, retired 2001**

with a value of £1,400,000.

1973

- The Young Forester's quiz at the Royal Welsh Show won the gold medal for the best outdoor exhibit. It was designed and set up by Head Forester Edgar Yerbury from Irfon forest and his team of helpers.

The forestry area at the show took on a new look as a result of landscaped tree planting including an avenue of birch trees which had been planted as part of the Forestry Commission's contribution to 'Plant a Tree' year.

- Cwmcarn Forest Drive won a Special Commendation certificate in the British Tourist Authority's "Come to Britain" Trophy Competition for 1973.

- Margam and Ebbw forests featured in a Japanese TV programme describing Wales and Welsh life. Industrial pollution was a major problem in Japan at that time and they were therefore very interested in environmental improvements forestry had brought to the industrial valleys of S Wales.

1974

- Slasher, the FC in-house magazine, was issued to all retired employees for the first time.

1975

- The new Forestry Commission headquarters at 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh opened.

- A new scheme to issue free and subsidised safety gear to staff came into force.
- 12,000 visitors took the opportunity to take part in the first Rhondda Safari open day. This was a project involving the Forestry Commission, Mid Glamorgan Council and the Rhondda Borough Council amongst others. The purpose was to introduce people to the scenic beauty of the Rhondda and its potential for recreation and access as well as assess public interest in countryside recreation. Free Land Rover trips and guided walks helped visitors get a better appreciation of the beauty and history of the Rhondda. These open days in the Rhondda ran each year until the end of the 1970s attracting many 1000s of visitors and importantly gave the public an insight into working forests and the spectacular scenery on their doorsteps. The project won a Prince of Wales Award in 1977.
- The American pilot of a helicopter crashed in Coed-y-Brenin in September. The helicopter was being used to apply fertiliser to young plantations and when coming in to land the engine failed. The pilot did not suffer any major injuries.
- Maesgwm Visitor Centre at Coed y



Peter Jones

Brenin won a Certificate of Commendation in the British Tourist Authority's 'Come to Britain' Trophy competition 1975.

1976

- A gale struck on 27 January 1976 and blew down an estimated 220,000 m³ across 20 Welsh forests. Worst hit were Radnor and Ceri both suffering 25000m³, and Ystwyth 15000m³ of windblow which was the equivalent of two years production in each forest. Brechfa and Crychan suffered damage of 30000m³ or 18 months production.
- A supplement of £6 per week to all full time forestry workers and forest craftsmen over the age of 20 was introduced. This meant that basic wages increased to £37 for Forest Workers and £40.10p for Forest Craftsmen.
- 300lbs of explosives were use to create a wildlife pond in Dyfnant Forest. Wildlife Forester Peter Lodge and Head Forester Goronwy Jones selected a site which was left unplanted because it was boggy and couldn't be ploughed and with Roger Lovegrove from RSPB they agreed a pond would be a good idea. Forestry Commission Roads Branch undertook the work.
- Garwnant Visitor centre in the Brecon Beacons near Merthyr Tydfil opened on 14 April. It was a converted farm building with the timber used in the main exhibition hall being Douglas fir grown in Brycheiniog Forest, most of the construction was done by local Forestry Commission staff. The exhibition illustrated the history of the

1970s

valleys from primeval forests to the present day. The story was told through photographs, slides and models. It had a lecture room to cater for school parties.

- In August, fires in South Wales resulted in 750 ha of forest being lost and a further 120 ha of other land was burnt. The worst fires were at Coed y Rhayadr where over 400 ha of young plantations were lost in a 24hr period, and Ebbw where 3 large fires burnt over two days resulting in losses of 270 ha.



Neil Stoddart

John Zehetmayr

Most of the fires were caused by acts of arson and John Zehetmayr, Senior Officer Wales, suggested that Foresters should go to forest gateways with their wives and act as courting couples to take numbers of cars acting suspiciously.

- The Garth Falls all-ability walk opened in Gwdyr forest near Betws y Coed. This was the first of its kind and was the idea of recreation Head Forester Donald Shaw who had realised that less-abled or elderly visitors often remained in the car while other members of the family enjoyed forest walks. The walk was paved and had seats and tables that everyone could use. It also had hand rails along its length with Braille embossed plates giving information about the

surroundings.

1977

- Various events took place to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

The Secretary of State for Wales opened the Coed Morganwg Way a 23 mile long distance footpath established to commemorate the Silver Jubilee. It began at Craig y Llyn the highest point in Glamorgan and ended in Margam Park. The route was almost entirely on Forestry Commission land in Cymer and Margam Forests.

A commemorative Jubilee oak tree was planted by Dick Towler, the Snowdonia National Park Forestry Officer on behalf of the Royal Forestry Society in the Caen-y-Coed picnic site in Gwydyr Forest near Betws-y-Coed.

- Bwlch Nant yr Arian, the first building in Wales designed and constructed as a forest interpretive centre at a cost of £32,000, was opened on 16th September by Baroness White of Rhymney, President of the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales. Following the opening event, a 2 ½ mile way-marked footpath named the Jubilee Walk was opened by Councillor J Glynne Thomas. This path was part of the Forestry Commission's contribution to the Jubilee celebrations. The centre provided information about man's influence on the landscape and uses a range of interpretation methods and displays including wildlife exhibits, photographs and a slide programme looking at the life of the Forester in 1977.

1978

- A 21m (69ft) Douglas fir pole of 61cm (24in) butt and 43cm (17in) top diameter was shipped from Tintern Forest in South Wales to St Lucia in the West Indies to be used as a mast for a schooner being built there.

The tree was 75 years old having been planted in 1902 by the Office of Woods who managed Tintern Forest prior to the creation of the Forestry Commission. The tree was felled and the pole peeled by Forestry Commission staff at Tintern.

- On the first of three open days at Coed Taf Forest about 1300 schoolchildren from as far afield as St Albans and East London as well as local children from Tredegar descended on Garwnant visitor centre. They were able to take part in guided walks to see

a working forest. The tours took in felling, extraction, cross cutting, peeling and pointing stakes. The children also took part in a thinning competition organised by Forester Brian Jones from Brycheiniog Forest. There were also displays by Forest Research, Brecknock Naturalist Trust and the Wales Tourist Board. Over 3000 visitors over the three days made the event a great success.

- Barbara Wilson became the first female Forester employed by the Forestry Commission in Wales. She was posted to Gwydyr Forest to work as a forest management Forester under Head Forester Bill Jones.

1979

- The Forestry Commission's Diamond Jubilee year.

- The basic pay of a Forestry Worker of £43.50 increased to £48.75. That of a Forest Craftsman rose to £54.85 per week. The price per standard minute for piecework was now 2.89 pence.

- Land acquisition was described as disappointing for the year with 192 ha acquired in Wales. The price of land had increased by 80% over the previous year. The average cost was now £295 per hectare compared to £164 in 1978.

- The FCW landholding was 160,900 ha. This included land under plantations, land awaiting planting, unplantable areas, and agricultural and grazing land which would eventually be sold. Out of a total 140,900 ha of forest land 135,000 was described as being under plantations.



Peter Jones

Coed y Brenin 1970s

1980s

The 1980s were years of change and challenge. The early 80s recession hit timber users and the pulp mills at Shotton and Bristol closed. The Commission had to develop export markets and timber was being shipped abroad mostly to Scandinavia.

The Forestry Commission's two tree logo came into being in 1981 and the first computers were used in Forest Districts in 1985.

The Forestry Commission landholding in Wales reached its peak of 161,000 ha at the beginning of the 1980s. Government proposals to rationalise the FC estate saw the sale of 18,000 ha of land during the decade of which 7000 ha was woodland. By 1989 the landholding had fallen to 143,000 ha.



Rob Spence

Cwrt, Coed y Brenin 1981

1980

- Forest Craftsman Peter Wyn Rees Bevan from Ystwyth Forest was selected to represent Wales at the International Fly Fishing contest at Loch Leven, Scotland.
- Successful open days were held at Penllyn (near Bala) and St Gwynno Forests which attracted nearly 2500 visitors. The events included tours of the forests and demonstrations of forest operations to give people an insight into the scale and scope of forestry in Wales.
- Anti nuclear demonstrators staged a peaceful all-day sit-in at Victoria House Aberystwyth in the Conservator's office. The group was called MADRYN, which stands for Mudiad Amddifyn Dyfi Rhag Ysbwreil Niwclear (the movement for the protection of Dyfi against nuclear waste). They were protesting against the Forestry Commission giving permission to the Institute of Geological Sciences to enter Dyfi, Rheidol and Hafren forests for surface reconnaissance as part of the Government's research programme into the disposal of radioactive waste.

1981

- Beddgelert campsite won the AA campsite of the year award. Adam Easton was the resident warden and Forestry Commission employee who had been in the post for 16 years. Adam's tireless work and attitude were described by the judges as one of the reasons for the award. 80,000 camper nights were recorded annually with campers staying on average 3 nights.



- The Forestry Commission two tree logo came into being. It was derived from the symbol depicting 'wooded areas' which was recommended by the Tourist Boards and Countryside Commission from their list of 'Symbols for Tourist Guides, Maps and Countryside Recreation.' Originally used as a badge for the uniforms it was described as "giving an impression of both dignity and authority as well as identifying the wearer as a member of Forestry Commission staff."

The original logo showed the conifer in front of the broadleaf tree. This was changed a few years later when the broadleaf came to the front resulting in the version that has existed to this day

1980s



Rob Spence

Bruunett forwarder in Cwrt, Coed y Brenin, 1981

- A pay award for Forest Workers was agreed with the basic rate increased to £64.50 per week and the Forest Craftsman's rate increased to £73.35. The Foreman's rate became £93.50 (rise of £9) rising to £95.50 after one year's service. For piecework the price per standard minute became 3.77p. In addition there were an extra 2 days annual leave.
- The final Forester's and Ranger's uniforms were produced.
- The Forestry Commission provided 112 Red oak trees for the memorial to the mining disaster at the Park Slip Colliery near Bridgend. In 1892 an underground explosion killed 112 miners. Local schoolchildren helped plant the trees which formed an avenue to the memorial. The Forestry Commission was involved in the restoration of the whole site as agents for the National Coal Board.
- The Forestry Commission introduced the Bruunett Forwarder into its harvesting fleet in Wales. For a time it became the favoured extraction machine for direct production. Teams were trained up in shortwood felling techniques to present timber produce correctly for forwarder extraction.
- Open Days at Wentwood Forest attracted over 4500 visitors including 1500 school children from as far afield as Bristol, Bridgend and Rhondda. Guided tours allowed visitors to see a wide range of forest operations.
- A grove of 40 oak trees were planted in Afan Argoed Country Park in Margam Forest to commemorate the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. Lord Gibson-Watt a Forestry Commissioner and chairman of the National Committee For Wales planted the first tree and the rest were planted by children from Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and guests.

1982

- Head Forester Reg Wheeler retired from Coed y Brenin after 36 years with the Forestry Commission. Reg had worked on recreation and was the person who developed the Maesgwm Visitor centre which received a Prince of Wales Award in 1978. He had the distinction of beating the panel on the TV programme 'What's My Line' in the 1960s with his role of 'tree cyclist' a technique used to climb trees in his work in Forest Research.

Aled Thomas



1983

- 70 people took part in the first Coed y Brenin Yomp. This event involved 'yomping' in the fashion of the Royal Marines in the Falkland Islands campaign of 1982. Organised by staff at Dolgellau FD entrants were split into

3 age groups 17-25, 26-40 and 41 and over. Entrants had to carry packs of gear (25lbs for males and 15lbs for females) over a 12 – 15mile route through the forest and across the open hill. Prizes were presented by Dafydd Ellis Thomas the local MP who also took part in the event. These events continued for another 8 years with the final event taking place in 1990.

- The management of the FC had been reviewed and from 1 April a three-tier management structure was introduced - HQ, Conservancy, Forest District. Following reorganisation there were 14 Forest Districts in Wales. It was also proposed that the Forest Officer and Forester classes would be merged.



Welsh Forest Districts 1983

- The Forest Centre at Ceinws and a stretch of forest road in Dyfi Forest were featured in the TV series Jewel in the Crown which was screened in 1984. The award winning series was an adaptation of Paul Scott's the Raj

1980s

Quartet. The Forest Centre featured as the home of the Fifth Pankut Rifles and the road was used in a scene with Dame Peggy Ashcroft in a hand-drawn cart hurtling down a forest road in monsoon.

- The Queen opened the Forestry Commission's log cabin style pavilion at the Royal Welsh Showground. The Commission had for many years felt the need for a permanent building as a focal point in the showground and a place where visitors could be entertained and discuss their forestry problems.



Roger Nock

The pavilion was built entirely from locally grown timber from Brechfa, Crychan and Brycheiniog forests. Douglas fir was used for the main support beams, spruce for the walls, roof, ceiling and floor and Japanese larch for the ramp, posts and rails. It was built by a team of four forest craftsmen – Roger Nock, Ganger and site foreman (Brechfa), Elwyn Davies Craftsman (Brechfa), Jimmy Gittoes Craftsman (Irfon), Rex Jones Craftsman (Crychan).

Help and support for the project was given by architects, sawmills and other product manufacturers. When it was opened it was expected to last for



Rex Jones, Jimmy Gittoes and Elwyn Davies

Roger Nock

about 10 years. It was last used in 2009 and was dismantled in 2010.

1984

- In 1984 John Griffiths was appointed as the Forestry Commission's first Community Forester when he took up the role in the Rhondda Valley. John was a local man who had begun working in St Gwynno Forest in 1954. In his new role he was raising awareness amongst a population of 86,000 of the value of the 10,000 acres of forests in the area. During his time in the role he took forward a number of initiatives including the creation of Penpych Woodland Park in Blaenrhondda. When it was officially opened in 1989 it became the first community woodland in Wales. The Park included a car park, picnic area and, significantly, access to waterfalls high above the valley which were formerly inaccessible. All of these valuable facilities are still in constant use by local people and visitors to the area.

John, a talented snooker player, was 3 times British Civil Service snooker champion. He represented Wales in the World Amateur Snooker Championship

in New Zealand in 1987 where he reached the quarter final. When they were still amateurs John beat future Professional World Champions Alex "Hurricane" Higgins and Terry Griffiths a few times. John was awarded the MBE in 1996.

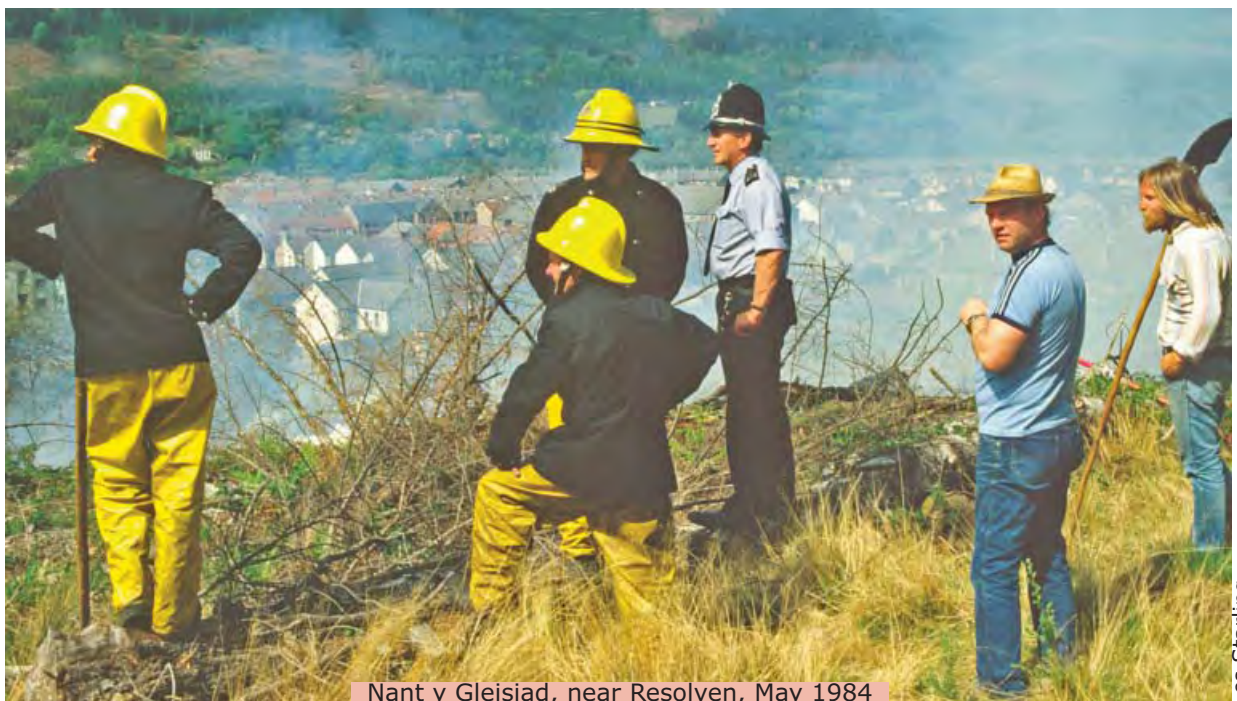
- For the first time the Forestry Commission trialled the use of helicopters for fire fighting. The field trials were led by John Hunt, Chief Forester, Llanwynno FD. It had been recognised there was becoming a need to move away from reliance on men on the ground as the numbers of staff continued to fall and also traffic congestion in the valleys prevented a rapid response to outbreaks of fire. FC staff were trained to set up landing and refuelling bases, liaise with emergency services and direct ground-based fire fighting teams. Using helicopters proved invaluable during the fire season that occurred that year. At times during that season up to 4 contracted aircraft were based at the



John Hunt

FC depot at Ynysybwl and the office was manned 24hrs a day.

- The devastating fire season in 1984 saw 1170 ha of plantations lost in 749 fires in South Wales. The majority of the fires took place from 18 – 30 April when 95% of losses occurred. Conditions at that time were tinder dry and windy with many fires occurring in thicket and semi-mature crops. The dense smoke from a fire on Dinas Mountain above the M4 resulted in vehicles on the motorway being reduced to crawling speed and having to use headlights.



Les Starling

Nant y Gleisiad, near Resolven, May 1984

1980s

At the peak of the fires all available staff were mobilised to help in S Wales. Mechanical and civil engineers and Radio Branch staff provided support keeping everything running. A helicopter doused the fires and Green Goddess fire engines were brought out of retirement. Assistance from the Army, Welsh Water Authority, RAF St Athan and mountain rescue



John Hunt

John Hunt, with the General Officer Commanding Wales, in the fire control centre at the Llanwynno Forest Office, Spring 1984

organisations, amongst others, were all put to good use. Conservancy office staff ran a 24hr soup kitchen over the worst week of the fires.

- The Forestry Commission staged an exhibit at the Liverpool International Garden Festival during the summer of 1984. The Model Forest was one of the most popular exhibits at the Festival and was seen by an estimated 600,000 visitors. The exhibit was a miniature living forest and was based on an area of Dyfi Forest. It demonstrated modern forestry practice, forest design and recreation opportunities. It sought to increase the public's understanding of forestry and of maintaining British wood supplies for industry and highlighted the link between forests and wood products.

It covered an area of 700 m² to a scale

of 1:100 and used more than 250,000 transplants to create the woodland which included streams and other natural features.



Barbara Spence

The Forestry Commission spent an estimated £100,000 on the exhibit. Designed by FC landscape architects Simon Bell and Mary Clark and graphics designer Julie Barrowman, the Model Forest won a Gold medal and a special award for the 'most original theme'.

1985

- Wales became a single Conservancy when the S Wales office in Cardiff closed on 1 April.
- An AA award for the best picnic site in Wales went to Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Rheidol forest.
- The first computers were supplied to Forest District offices. Each office was supplied with a Merlin computer from BT. Each system included 1-3 workstations (screen and keyboard) with sufficient disc capacity to store 10 or 20 million characters of data which is the equivalent of 10 – 20 MB. Each system also included a printer, with an acoustic cover to reduce the noise level and a floppy disk drive to enable

programs and data to be copied into and out of the system. The first application was a payroll package for calculation of net pay for the Industrial forest workers. The payroll up until this point was a weekly task completed over at least 2 days using a calculator and paper forms held in place with a Kalamazoo.

- More than 70 school children

gathered at Tair Onen nursery to complete the sowing of half a ton of acorns collected by the Forestry Commission. The sowing was expected to provide 50,000 seedlings which would be available for environmental tree planting schemes for International Youth Year – 'Woods for Wales', and the International Year of the Forest projects.

FORESCO AND THE FC SPORTING LEGENDS

In 1985 National Office staff in Aberystwyth formed the Foresco social club. The club ran a tuck shop and held social events but the main focus was sport and recreation. The Foresco cricket team entered the Aberystwyth & District Cricket league for nearly a decade. Regulars were legendary captain Paul Keyworth, openers Huw George Evans and Ken Searson, all-rounders Shaun Mather and Gareth Price, batsmen Keith Jones and Ian Frost, together with wicket keeper Mike Over. Outside help came in the form of Richard Lucas and Johnny Ireland. Casualties in the line of duty were many with Trefor Owen

dislocating a finger, Ian Frost cutting his eye open and Shaun Mather breaking his arm. The team started in the 2nd Division and were promoted to the 1st Division which they won in 1990. From 1986, Foresco players were part of the Aberystwyth Civil Service football team which took part in the all-Wales CS competition. Though the event featured many semi-pro footballers Aberystwyth won the Cup in 1988.

The team included Kevin

Jenkins, Shaun Mather, Huw Evans, Ian Frost and Tony Meyler. By the early 90's the competition had lost a bit of its edge, so much so that Aberystwyth entered two teams who both reached the final. Held in Penrhyncoch, the teams included, Jenkins, Evans, Mather and Frost together with Keith Jones, Paul John, John Mullett and Mike Over.

The Foresco bowls team competed in the Aberystwyth league. Regular players included Paul John, Les Warmington, Elfed Parry and Gary Hopkins. The society also held internal competitions with Gary Hopkins being king of the dartboard and Dave Clark dominating at table tennis.

Age and home commitments took their toll and by the early 1990s Foresco ceased to be. It was a golden age that is still remembered with great fondness.

Shaun Mather Office Manager, National Office Aberystwyth



Aberystwyth CS team 1991. Back - left to right: Paul John, Gareth Price, Neil Welch, Kevin Jenkins, Mike Over, Alwyn Jones. Front left to right - John Galbraith, Richard Lucas, Keith Jones, Ian Frost, Shaun Mather, Brian Isaac.

Unknown

1980s

1986

- There was a unique Welsh approach to one of the objectives of International Youth Year - Participation. The aim was to plant a tree for each young person in Wales and, as far as North Ceredigion was concerned this was achieved. At the start of National Tree Week trees were planted at a range of sites within Aberystwyth Forest District. FC Wales staff and families took part and the trees were provided by FC Wales and Fountain Forestry Ltd. The trees, all native broadleaves, were planted on private land.

1987

- A deputation of 400 Foresters from

all over Britain went to FC HQ to protest over the amalgamation of the Forester and Forest Officer grades of managers.

- Arwel Thomas cartographical draughtsman in the Wales Conservancy Office in Aberystwyth won the Welsh Civil Service pool championship for the third time.

1988

- The Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) opened to applicants on 5 April 1988. Following the announcement of a reformed tax system relating to forestry, entry to the Forestry Grant Scheme and the Broadleaved Woodland Grant Scheme ended. The WGS ran

A FORESTRY COMMISSION CIVIL ENGINEERS' TALE

I started working for Llandovery Roads on 7th November 1988, as surveyor/ superintendent of works. There were 21 men working for 'Roads' in Llandovery then. I remember coming into the Llandovery forest office on my first day, only to be told that Mr David, Area Civil Engineer (ACE) was not based there but was at his office at Tirabad by the workshop. When I arrived I was greeted by a black timber shed with a Portacabin bolted on the side! Ann Moses made me a cup of tea, the first of many.

I soon understood that I was part of a huge organisation spread across GB with many different Cost Centres. Within Wales "Roads branch" was split into 4 areas, Llanrwst (led by David Killer), Newtown (Spencer Davies), Llandovery (Colin David) and Neath (Wave Tyrell).

As surveyor I was involved in setting out many roads over most of South Wales and occasionally some in the North. One of the first I set out was in Dalar Wen in Tywi forest. After approval by the ACE, I arranged for it to be felled, to allow construction. Unfortunately the D8 dozer got stuck in the only wet spot, I remember Graham Wilson commenting "the new surveyor needs to keep on the hard ground".

Since then I have been involved in all manner of civil engineering and building work. I've been involved in building roads, bridges (concrete, steel and timber), repaired water supplies, rebuilt septic tanks, re-laid drains, attended to landslips, diverted rivers, blasted in quarries and recovered machines from bogs. In fact I seem to get involved in everything!!

John Griffith, Area Civil Engineer, Llandovery

from 1988 to 2006. In 2006 the Better Woodlands for Wales scheme was introduced.

- In 1988 it was reported that cycling in woodlands was beginning to become popular. An outdoor pursuits entrepreneur took out an agreement with Dolgellau Forest District to take conducted cycling parties around Aberhirsant forest near Bala.
- Beddgelert campsite wins AA Campsite of the year for the third time in eight years.
- Tony Summers Conservancy Civil Engineer in Wales retired at 64. Tony had represented Great Britain in swimming at the London Olympics in 1948 and was still swimming competitively. He swam in Masters Tournaments often winning gold medals and clocking up records. He won his first swimming medal when he was 12 and had won both Welsh junior and Rhodesian senior titles. He had flown Spitfires and Tempests with the RAF from 1942 – 1947.

1989

- Prince Philip visited the Forestry Commission stand at the Royal Welsh Show. The Prince chatted with Brian Prosser (Llandovery FD) and Mary Breeze (Newtown FD) who were looking after the publications. Brian explained to him that the Forestry Commission recipe book was the best seller and there was particular interest in the recipe for squirrel pie. "I'll have to tell the good lady about it" he is reputed to have said.

Forestry Commission exhibits won two

gold medals that year; one for the display relating to safety and training run by Don Case, Head Training Officer in Wales, and Trainers Gerwyn James and Jim Sauter. The other medal went to a display 'Welsh Forest Harvest' put together by recreation staff Brian Pulford and Derek Bayliss.

- Denis Milsom, Forest Craftsman from Morgannwg, was hailed as a life saving hero after rescuing a neighbour from his blazing home. His 75 year old neighbour William Thomas Rees had fallen asleep and had left a chip pan on the stove. It caught alight setting his house on fire. Denis rescued Mr Rees and went back to fight the flames. He was commended by the Fire Service for his actions.
- Jon Westlake from FC Wales won an award for his photograph capturing the beauty of woodlands in a national competition sponsored by Pentax and the Forestry Commission.
- After further amalgamations the 14 Forest Districts in 1983 were now down to 8: Llanrwst, Clwyd, Dolgellau, Newtown, Ceredigion, Llandovery, Morgannwg and SE Wales.
- The FC landholding in Wales had reached its peak in 1979 and disposals, which began in the 1980s, resulted in public protests. The area reduced by 18,000 ha during the decade.



1990s

The 1990s saw the beginning of the mountain bike phenomena in Forestry Commission woodlands when Dafydd Davis began constructing trails at Coed y Brenin.

1994 was the 75th anniversary of the Forestry Commission.

In 1997 the referendum for devolution of Wales and Scotland took place, with both countries voting in favour. The responsibility for forestry was devolved to the three countries and in 1999, following elections, the National Assembly for Wales came into being.

At the end of the decade work began to unify the grades of staff in the Forestry Commission. At the time a two-tier structure existed with Industrial grades (which included Forest Craftsmen and Gangers) and Non-industrials (which included the Forest Officers and other managers).



1990

- Steve Hunt, FOIII Private Woodlands, broke the Welsh record when he caught a brown trout weighing 18lb 13oz (4lbs heavier than the previous record) at Wentwood reservoir. He had a 2hr 20min fight to catch it on a line with a 4lb breaking strain



Steve Hunt

Steve Hunt and the one that didn't get away

- Coed y Brenin Forest Park was declared open by Michael Griffith chairman designate of CCW. It was only the second Forest Park in Wales to be designated since Snowdonia Forest Park in 1937.
- Gethin Woodland Park was officially opened by David Hunt Secretary of State for Wales. It was described by John Morgan, Conservator Wales, as the second of our new-style community woodlands - the first being Penpych Woodland Park which opened in the Rhondda in 1989. Gethin included car parks, picnic places and a play area.
- The Llandovery office in Llanfair Road was officially opened by Councillor Myrddin Evans, chair of Dyfed County Council

- Dolgellau FD provided 2 Noble firs to be part of the stage decorations for a 'Joy to the World' carol concert at the Royal Albert Hall to raise funds for NSCPP. Princess Margaret was guest of honour and stars including Jane Asher, Paul Daniels and Chris de Burgh took part.

1991

- Clocaenog Forest, in Clwyd FD, hosted a North Wales Mountain Bike Association event which attracted 200 entries. The event reinforced the Forestry Commission's recently announced change of policy regarding cycles on FC land. There had been a review because of the growth in cycling and increasing demand to use forests. Individual cyclists would continue to have free access but organised groups had to pay a charge.
- The Valleys Forest Initiative (VFI) was launched in Cardiff by David Hunt the Secretary of State for Wales. He said the initiative was "a positive drive to develop further public benefits achievable from our forests". The initiative was set up to help the people of the Valleys of S Wales make the most of their surrounding woodlands. More than 1 million people lived within the area and the emphasis was focussed on partnership working. David Evans, a former Forest District Manager, became the project director. Some of the first projects were the Rhondda Gateway Project, working with Rhondda Borough Council, the development of Afan Forest Park near Port Talbot which included a visitor centre (opened 1993) in partnership with West Glamorgan County Council, and the ranger service for Kilvey Hill in Swansea with the support of Swansea city Council.

The VFI Ranger service gradually

1990s

expanded to include all recreation rangers in Wales and eventually became the Wales Recreation Team which provided a full recreation service for the whole of FE Wales in late 1998.

- On the morning of 10th May, a Sea Harrier of No 801 squadron crashed in Wentwood Forest, half a mile from the forest office. The pilot had experienced severe pitch control restriction, forcing him to eject. He was badly injured.
- On June 19th 1991, following extensive refurbishment, the Garwnant visitor centre was reopened by BBC Wales personality Roy Noble. The refurbishment included a new tea room, audio visual display and a classroom.
- The Forestry Commission stand again won awards at the Royal Welsh Show including a silver award for training branch for the best outdoor non-machinery exhibit. Of particular interest was the Amazing Woods exhibit designed by Recreation Planning Officer Bryan Pulford. The maze housed conservation displays and was constructed from half-round timber. It stood up well to wind, torrential rain and searing heat and attracted in excess of 7000 visitors.
- On his way to work one morning Dennis Jones, a grader operator for the Roads Department, came across a woman whose car had come off the road and was stuck. Dennis could not resist helping a damsel in distress and got her back on the road again. She wanted to pay Dennis for his help but he refused and carried on to work. Imagine his surprise when a few days later his Foreman, Winston Davies, arrived and presented him with a pot plant from the motorist he had rescued. It was not clear how she found out that Winston was Dennis's Foreman, or where he lived, but Dennis

was delighted to accept his reward.



Colin David

Dennis Jones (left) receiving his reward for gallantry from Winston Davies

- A map of Coed y Brenin created by Mike Over, FCW cartographer, was included in a submission of a selection of Forest Visitor guide maps that won The British Cartographer's award for map design.

1992

- A restructuring of the Forestry Commission took place on 1 April 1992. This was to create a clear distinction between the forest management and regulatory roles. This resulted in the separation of the Forestry Commission into Forestry Authority (FA) and Forest Enterprise with separate regional and local offices. Three FA Conservancies (North, Mid & South Wales) were created, with offices in Clawdd Newydd, Llandrindod Wells and Abergavenny and there were eight Forest Districts in Wales.
- Forest Enterprise Wales joined with the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust to launch a Heritage Partnership at Hafod, near Pontrhydygroes. Landscaping at Hafod began in the late 18th century and was created by Thomas Johnes, the pioneer of large-scale broadleaf and conifer planting in Wales. The Trust worked with FE to ensure planting

proposals had the approval of the Hafod Advisory Committee, which specialised in landscape conservation. Approved projects were to be financed by the Trust. In 1994 a new charity was formed, Ymddiriedolaeth yr Hafod - the Hafod Trust - and the partnership reassigned accordingly.

- As she worked in the most fire-prone district in Wales it was appropriate that when Tracey Mahoney, the receptionist/typist at Coed Morganwg, married Stephen Farley at St Catwg's Church, Cadoxton, Neath on 2 May 1992 members of the admin team formed a guard of honour with fire beaters. As the newlyweds came out of the church they were greeted by Jean Watkins, Nerys Owen, Jane Williams, Lynfa Perkins and Catherine Carter.



Tracey Farley

- Rally driver Colin McRae won the Forest Enterprise trophy for the best driver through the Welsh stages of the Lombard RAC Rally. The award, an oak shield made at the Maesgwm signs Unit at Coed y Brenin, was presented by Regional Director John Morgan.
- A project to complete Forest Design Plans for all FCW woodlands in one year was instigated by Bob Farmer, Forest Management Officer for Wales. Richard Carrick from Dolgellau District described the exercise as "the best thing we've ever done". This was the

first country-wide exercise to complete plans for FC woodlands.

- The Merit Award Scheme (Gobwr Teilyngodod Rheoleath Coetir) was launched by Chief Conservator David Hughes. The aim of the award was to encourage high standards of woodland management in Wales.

1993

- Parc Goedwig Gwydyr, the Gwydyr Forest Park, was opened by Sir Wyn Roberts. At the opening it was stated that the 13,500 acres of woodland would continue be managed for timber production, recreation, conservation and landscape improvement. A leaping River Conwy salmon was adopted as the logo.
- On 2 August, Clwyd and Llanrwst forest Districts merged to become Llanrwst FD. The FDM was Trefor Owen and district foresters were Peter Garson and Dai Jones.
- Whitestone recreation site managed by Forest Enterprise in the Wye Valley was awarded the Forestry Authority Woodland Management Merit Award.
- Afan Forest Park visitor centre opened. Valleys Forest Initiative funded 25% of the cost.
- Garwnant 'Fun in the Forest' event attracted over 2000 visitors to the visitor centre north of Merthyr Tydfil.

1994

- Nick Watts and Chris Dixon from the Maesgwm Signs Unit in Dolgellau District designed and made the bardic chair for the Urdd Eisteddfod which was held in the town in 1994. The chair was donated by FE Wales. It was made of oak and featured intricate Celtic

1990s

patterns. The chair was awarded to Mererid Puw Davies who was considered the most outstanding young poet at the Eisteddfod. To be awarded the chair is one of Wales's highest honours. The Urdd Eisteddfod is run by the Welsh Youth Movement.

- Dafydd Davis began work at Coed y Brenin to establish the first purpose built single track mountain bike trail centre in the UK. The first trail, sponsored by Red Bull, opened in 1997. During 2012, the trails attracted 150,000 visitors to the area and are a major source of income to local businesses. In 2013 it is still the largest centre of its kind in the UK with over 140km of trails.

- Forestry Authority provided support for Gwaith Maes, a newly launched environmental education group in Dyfed. It was set up to provide a link between Welsh speaking schools over issues of environmental education. At the launch, Meirion Davies, the Conservator Mid Wales, presented educational material about forestry in Welsh.

- The Young Foresters' quiz at the Royal Welsh Show won the gold medal for best indoor stand.

- The Forestry Authority in Mid Wales set up the 'Squirrel Initiative' in an effort to save the remaining red squirrels and curb the effects of greys. The steering group, which first met at the Royal Welsh Show in July, consisted of representatives from the Forestry Authority, the private sector and Forest Enterprise interests in the area.

- The first Neolithic wooden site discovered in Wales was uncovered during the construction of a conservation pond in Talybont Forest near Brecon in 1994. John Dodd, FE Wildlife Ranger unearthed a shaped oak plank from the

peat that was being excavated. More planks were found and the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust were called in and confirmed that many of the timbers had been worked by man. Analysis suggested that the timber formed a structure of perhaps 30x25 metres based on upright oak piles. It was identified as having been constructed before 2700BC. Water-logged peat deposits had preserved the timbers for over 5000 years. Prior to this discovery, the site had no archaeological designation and had been carrying a managed conifer crop. Wood from the site was used to make the Millennia Bowl, which is awarded to FC Wales staff each year for achievements in archaeology and heritage.

In 1995 Andy Powell, Forest Craftsman from S E Wales Forest District, dived to the bottom of Talybont Reservoir to help preserve the timber from the structure. The timber was placed in cages and experienced scuba diver Andy found the deepest point to sink them and preserve them for future generations. Some of the timber from the structure was taken to the National Museum in Cardiff for preservation and eventual display but the majority went underwater.



75th anniversary commemoration stone in Llantrisant.

- In September 1994 the Forestry Commission celebrated its 75th

anniversary. A ceremony was held to celebrate the event at Llantrisant forest in S Wales where the first FC planting in Wales took place in 1921. Gwilym Jones MP, the Undersecretary of State for Wales unveiled a commemoration stone to mark the occasion. The stone is located in the car park.

1995

- Morgannwg Forest District experienced a difficult fire season. Losses in the South Wales Valleys amounted to 175ha of trees as a result of 400 incidents. The cost of these losses amounted to about £250,000 not to mention the loss of wildlife and the effect on the landscape. All staff in the district, from the FDM to admin staff, were involved in fire protection in some way.



Barbara Spence

- Paralympic champion Tanni Grey (now Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson) launched a new facility at Afan Argoed Countryside Centre. This was a 'Trandem' - a 3-wheeled cycle which comprised a seat in the front for use by the less abled. It could be powered by either of the riders or both together. The bike was bought using funds raised during the 1994 National Bike Week when members of youth groups raised over £1000. It could be hired from the centre to be used on the 14 miles of suitable track in Afan Forest.

- A wild boar was shot by one of FE's Rangers near Radnor forest.

- FA's Mid Wales Conservancy won 2 gold Medals for their exhibit at the Royal Welsh Show: one for the best outdoor non machinery display, the other for the best overall display in the forestry section.

- David Bills became Director General of the Forestry Commission in December 1995.

1996

- The Forestry Authority Merit Award was won by the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagans for its multipurpose woodland management. The museum was developing its living woodland exhibit which included a water powered sawmill which would be part of a display that would enable visitors to follow the woodland cycle, from seedling to sawlog. The award was presented by Roland Lidell, Conservator for South Wales.

- Cwmcarn Forest Drive hosted a Native American culture day which attracted over 1500 visitors.

- FC Wales won the Bowater Challenge Cup for the annual golf match against the timber trade. This was only the second time in 7 years that FC had won the cup.

- Forest Enterprise Wales won a major award for its commitment to environmentally sensitive forestry. Co-ordinated by the Business Commitment to the Environment, the award was in recognition of outstanding forest design plans for FC woodlands at Abergynolwyn near Dolgellau and Cwm Berwyn near Tregaron. The award was presented in London by the National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley. Criteria for the award included financial viability, aesthetics, nature conservation and

1990s

environmental education.

- Slasher, the Forestry Commission's in-house magazine, featured as *Guest Publication* on the topical BBC quiz show, Have I Got News for You
- The Forestry Commission Wales Cricket team won the 1996 Wales Civil Service Knockout Competition.

1997

- Morganwg Forest District began using thermal imaging to assess the status of the red squirrel population as, although it was believed there was still a remnant population, none had been spotted for 2 years. Ian Blake, District Forester, instigated the trial. None were seen.
- The referendum for the devolution of Wales was held on 18 September a week after the referendum in Scotland. The majority of votes cast were in favour of the creation of a Welsh

Assembly with devolved powers.

- Forestry Commission Wales was reorganised, resulting in a reduction of Forest Districts from 8 to 5. The districts were: Canolbarth, Dolgellau, Llanrwst, Llanymddyfri and Coed y Cymoedd.

1998

- The Scottish and Welsh Devolution bills were approved and the Government of Wales Act 1998, passed the responsibility for forestry to the National Assembly for Wales. The responsibilities for forestry relating to incentives and regulation, controls on felling, plant health and managing the public forest estate were exercised by the Forestry Commissioners.

1999

- Simon Hewitt, the Chief Conservator for Wales, announced that post devolution one of the key themes of



Les Starling

Forestry Authority meeting May 1998. Left to right: Peter Jones, Rachel Chamberlain, Simon Hewitt, John Ferguson, Paul Finch, Ken Smith (hidden), Mark Prior, Steve Hunt, Hugh Davies, Richard Gable, Chris Botting, Ruth Jenkins, Graham Robertson, Les Starling, Fraser Scott (front), Peter Garson, Varina Davies, John Roe, Keith Jones, Paul Sherrington

forestry in Wales would be community involvement.

- After two years of development, in May 1999, the Staff Unification project team began producing information about the creation of a 'single status' for staff in the Forestry Commission. This included taking roadshows to staff to answer questions about what unification meant. This was seen as one of the most fundamental changes to the Commission and its employees. At the time a two-tier structure existed with Industrial grades which included Forest Craftsmen and Gangers, and Non-industrials which included the Forest Officers and other managers. There were different conditions of service between the two groups including retirement age which was 60 for non-industrials and 65 for industrials. Colin Sobota, the FDM from Dolgellau, moved onto the work full time to take the process forward. The project team was led by Bob Farmer, Director Wales.
- The UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) was launched in June. Backed by PM Tony Blair, the scheme was recognised by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) and meant that woodlands managed to UKWAS standards would be eligible for certification under the FSC label.
- During 1999, Forestry Commission woodlands in England, Scotland and Wales were assessed against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) by an independent auditor. As a result, the Forestry Commission was successful in gaining FSC certification. This made the FC the largest supplier of FSC certified round timber in the UK. In recognition of this, in 2000, the World Wildlife Fund awarded the FC the prestigious 'Gift to the Earth' award.
- FCW and CCW signed up to a joint

vision for the future of rural Wales with the publication of their report *The Living Environment of Wales*. This identified the value of an integrated approach to land management.

- The Forestry Civil Engineers and Mechanical Engineering Services (MES) stand at the Royal Welsh Show won a gold award for the best commercial stand in the forestry section. The stand had been put together on a shoestring, whereas other stands had hired specialist designers. Civil Engineer John Griffith, almost single handedly erected a bridge on which Tony Egan of MES parked a timber harvester to great effect. The award was presented by David Bills, Director General of the Forestry Commission, who said he was proud to be "presenting yet receiving".
- Will Jones, who worked for Forestry Civil Engineers, won the Welsh Heritage Assets Project Millennium Award. Will, who had worked for the Commission since he was 15, received the Award from Bob Farmer, FE Director Wales. The award recognised his hard work as a member of the Forwm Plas Tan y Bwlch in recording the archaeological features of a Victorian slate quarry – Hafodlas, near Betws y Coed. The four year project culminated in the publication of a book about the quarry which had been acclaimed in the archaeological world.
- In November, a public consultation was launched for the creation of the first Wales Woodland Strategy.
- FC Wales received a Poetry Places award from the Poetry Society and the Arts Council Lottery Fund which was used to fund activities involving Welsh poets. The workshops consisted of a guided tour through the forest led by FE Rangers followed by poetry reading and writing. Nearly 200 children took part.

2000s

In 2000 a landmark was reached when staff unification was completed and the Industrial and Non-industrial designation of staff ended.

Wales Harvesting and Marketing (WHaM) came into being in 2000.

Social forestry became a more established feature of forestry in Wales. The restructuring of parts of FC Wales including the Forest Districts in 2000/01 helped take this forward through the creation of the Local Area Manager role, Community Rangers and the FE Education Service - which became the Woodlands for Learning Team in 2004.

Devolution brought changes to the structure and organisation of FC GB. There were centralised service functions such as communications, GB Grants and Licences services and Information Technology services but forestry policy and management were devolved to the 3 countries.

European funded projects made considerable differences to communities and businesses in Wales - such as Cydcoed (Woodlands for All) and the Wood Energy Business Scheme.

The Welsh Government (WG) Technical Advice Note 8 – Planning for Renewable Energy - was published in 2005. This identified 7 Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) where wind energy schemes would be considered appropriate. The SSAs contained extensive areas of land managed by FC Wales, who took on the responsibility for taking forward WG's aspirations for wind energy developments.



Barbara Spence

Community consultation in Betws near Newport, 2002

2000

- The name Forestry Commission was reinstated for the Forestry Authority grants and licensing team. The estate management side continued to be known as Forest Enterprise
- On 1 April Wales Harvesting and Marketing (WHaM) was launched as the country unit to manage all timber production and sales of timber on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate. WHaM's office was at Penrhyncoch near Aberystwyth

Originally the brainchild of Bob Farmer (Chief Executive of FE Wales) the unit was developed during the Summer of 1999 in direct response to the need to deliver the high risk activity of harvesting and marketing in a more consistent, professional and effective way whilst at the same time releasing resources and people to deliver the Commission's then widening social and environmental agendas.

Its highest output to date was in 2002 when it marketed 1.1 million m³ of timber and whilst levels of timber production in overall terms have reduced, the proportion of thinning has year on year increased together with the complexity in environmental and health and safety terms to deliver timber from the Welsh Government woodland estate.

Since its creation WHaM has achieved a more focussed approach to customers and contractors and has maintained delivery of produce within 5% of forecasted quantities. It has also encouraged and supported the growth of renewable energy production from low-grade fibre.

- Work to create mountain bike trails in Canolbarth Forest District began in April. The trails started from Bwlch

Nant yr Arian visitor centre.

- The first Forest Education initiative (FEI) co-ordinator was appointed in South Wales followed by a second in the North in early 2001. FEI had been established since 1992 in England and Simon Hewitt, Director of FCW at the time, was very keen to strengthen the Forestry Commission's social remit. FEI brought together interested schools and organisations to form local cluster groups and develop learning projects. The Forestry Commission provided funding for projects which helped increase the understanding and appreciation, particularly among young people, of the environmental, social, and economic potential of trees, woodlands and forests and of the link between the tree and everyday wood products
- The FC Wales Welsh language scheme was launched.
- Richard Gable, Woodland Officer, ran the London Marathon after taking up running again at the age of 41 following a 20-year break. He raised close to £1500 for the Ability UK's Stackpole Centre in Pembrokeshire which promotes healthy living for people with disabilities and mental illness.



Unknown

- The staff unification vote was concluded on 27 June 2000 with the

2000s

majority voting yes. Unification was implemented on 1 July 2000 bringing staff together under a unified grading structure which no longer designated staff as Industrials and Non-industrials.

- In July the British Olympic mountain biking squad trained at Coed y Brenin in preparation for the Sydney Olympics. At the time this was the UK's only purpose-built track.
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) came into force on 30 November identifying certain categories of land as 'access land' giving rights of access on foot. It was subsequently decided to dedicate as 'access land' much of the woodland estate managed by the Forestry Commission. In Wales, approximately 100,000 hectares of the freehold woodland estate had been dedicated as 'access land' by the end of 2006. This is some 80% of the total area managed by FC Wales. The remainder has not been dedicated due to title constraints or land not being classified as woodland.

2001

- The outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Britain resulted in all FC forests being closed to the public. Forest operations, including harvesting of timber, continued but with much tighter controls. Non-essential operations were halted.
- Wales Silviculture Operations (WSO) was established in April 2001, using a similar business model to WHaM. WSO was set up as a service provider to the Forest Districts to undertake all woodland establishment work which included ground preparation, planting, chemical applications and weeding. It incorporated the Silvicultural Machine Unit, which had previously carried out ground preparation in FC Wales, and also work in FC England. The wildlife

management team became part of WSO in 2009.

In the 2007/8 planting season 4.6 million trees were planted by WSO which is the largest number to date. The current (2012/13) annual programme is 3.4 million trees with an average of 36 different tree species being planted. The range of species is a response to climate change and the need to increase species diversity.

WSO also undertakes seed collection and biological control using nematodes in FC woodlands in both Wales and England. It works closely with Plant & Seed Supply and Forest Research.

- A public consultation – Coed i'r Cymoedd – Valleys Woodlands for Valleys People was launched. This FC initiative aimed to find out what the people of the S Wales Valleys wanted from their woodlands. The initial phase focussed on six communities and included meetings with schools, youth clubs, community groups and local councils. Richard Siddons, Community Engagement Officer who led the project, said, "Our objective is to make sure that everyone in the community has a say in how we manage our woodlands and so far we have had tremendous help from people."
- The Forest Enterprise Wales Education Team was established with staff initially based primarily at visitor centres. In addition to delivering educational activities on FC land the team undertook school visits, supported long term projects and ran events such as Christmas visits where children met Santa and collected the school Christmas tree.

At the same time the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) was expanding and by the end of 2001 there were seven local



Pont Gilrhyd, on the Mawddach after the storm, July 2001

Aled Thomas

FEI cluster groups. They were supported by two FEI co-ordinators and part-time admin support. FEI brought together interested schools and organisations to form cluster groups and develop learning projects. It was through FEI staff that a new approach to outdoor education – Forest School – was developed.

- In July the Woodlands for Wales strategy, which set out a 50-year plan for woodlands in Wales, was launched by Carwyn Jones the Rural Affairs Minister. At the time he said "We will use our woodlands to help achieve the Assembly's aims of a prosperous economy, healthy environment and social justice for all." A Woodland Forum was established to implement the new strategy.
- A severe thunderstorm on 3 July caused major damage to bridges and roads in Coed Y Brenin. It lasted only a few hours but the rainfall which was recorded locally at 3 ½ inches in 3 hours caused serious flooding and was considered a once in 300 year

occurrence.

The Pont Gilrhyd was seriously damaged and had to be rebuilt. This was a public right of way and FC Wales installed a temporary bridge until it was replaced by Gwynedd County Council. A similar fate befell Pont Gwynfynydd, which was also a public right of way but also an important part of the mountain bike network. Again FC Wales put up a temporary bridge in time to hold the first Fat Tyre Festival in Spring 2002.

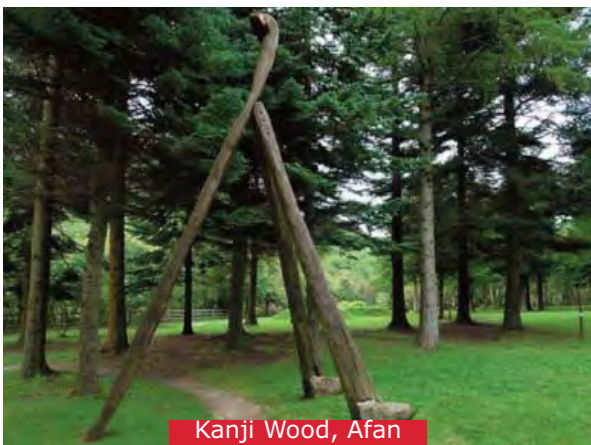
- Phil Shepherd, Forest Craftsman from Coed Morgannwg was presented with a British Archaeological Award in recognition of more than 37 years of amateur archaeology. Phil gained the award for findings of prehistoric artefacts in the woodlands where he worked. He contributed to piecing together the prehistoric past of the Rhondda Valley where he lives. His work was described "as a model for the reporting of finds" by the chairman of the British Archaeological Awards, David Breeze. The bi-annual award was presented by Prince Hassan of Jordan.

2000s

- Using funding from the Rural Recovery Fund following the foot and mouth outbreak, in October 2001 an Autumn Colours Festival at Betws y Coed was a resounding success. Organised by FE Wales, the team was headed by John Browne. The event included falconry, duck herding chainsaw sculpting and pole climbing and was estimated to have attracted up to 10,000 visitors. Similar events were held at Cwmcarn and Garwnant attracting another 4,000 visitors.
- Cydcoed (Woodlands for All) Phase 1 was launched. This was a £4 million, 3-year programme providing support and grants covering up to 100% of costs to community groups in the European Objective 1 region of Wales to help them make use of woodlands for community development. By 2004 it had funded 40 projects.

2002

- Afan Forest Park was officially twinned with the C.W.Nicol Woodland Trust in Kurohime, Japan. At a ceremony involving the Japanese ambassador, the Welsh Culture Minister



Alan Pugh and Clive Nicol MBE, a 'Kanji Wood' was officially opened. The wood was based on three kanji characters used in Japanese writing; human, forest and life, and was landscaped with Japanese trees, shrubs and

sculptures. Clive Nicol was born in Neath but is a Japanese citizen. He is an author and leading environmentalist in Japan who has restored a woodland where he lives into what is now a national park which he named Afan Argoed.

- *Phytophthora ramorum* was first found in the UK on viburnum in a nursery in Sussex.
- £300,000 of EU Objective 1 money was awarded to Forest Enterprise in S Wales to help clear up and prevent the effects of car dumping and fly-tipping. The first phase was to remove the eyesores, improve forest entrances and install preventative measures to stop future vehicle trespass and antisocial activities.

2003

- Building on the success of Phase 1, in January 2003 the £12 million, Cydcoed Phase II was launched. Again funded by the European Union and the Welsh Government the project ran until September 2008. It funded 123 projects - many of which are still developing and benefiting local communities.

- On 1 April Simon Hewitt took up the post of Director Wales. Following devolution responsibilities for forestry which were formerly at a GB level became the responsibility of each of the Country Directors. He was responsible for policy making, grant-aiding, regulation and the management of the public forest estate.

- The Story of the Forest, a 13 month project to record memories of local people who took part in the creation and early days of forestry in Wales came to an end. The Story of the Forest is a collection of taped interviews and photographs which capture

the memories of those whose lives were affected as the rural landscape of Wales changed when the Forestry Commission began creating new woodlands. It focussed on 6 areas – Newborough, Coed y Brenin, Pembrey, Dyfi, Corris and Twyi.

- Using a grant of £675,000 from Cydcoed as part-funding the Glynorrwg Ponds Co-operative, in partnership with the FC in Wales, built 3 new mountain bike trails (Skyline, White's Level, The Wall) in FC woodlands. They have been voted amongst the world's top 10 trails. In all there are now over 100km of trails in the area which are managed by FC Wales. The grant was also used to build Glynorrwg Ponds mountain bike centre and an award-winning café which was opened by Carwyn Jones, the Environment Planning and Countryside



Minister in June 2005. Within three years the centre was attracting 80,000 mountain bikers a year. This project complemented another scheme at Glynorrwg where fishing ponds and a caravan/camping park had been created. This resulted in the regeneration of the Afan Valley and acted as a blueprint for other regeneration schemes across the South Wales valleys.

- An area of woodland due for felling, at Abergwynnegrain in N Wales, was

put on hold when there were concerns about timber wagons travelling through the village, and using a mediaeval bridge with a 16.5 tonne weight restriction. Standing Sales Manager Ricky Morris admitted things looked bleak. Then staff hit on the idea of transporting timber over the bridge and through the village in purpose-built skips on a small lorry which would come within the weight restriction.



John Browne

After trials the previous year the work began in Feb 2003. "Our agreement with the residents was that we'd keep haulage operations to within school hours and avoid busy periods which would conflict with summer visitors who came to see the Aber waterfall," said John Browne, Head of Wales Harvesting & Marketing. Using two small lorries the operation was completed without any problems.

- A new mountain bike route and two new way-marked horse trails opened at Bwlch Nant Yr Arian. These were the result of a successful partnership between FC Wales, Ceredigion CC, BHS and Pentir Pumlumon, who were each instrumental in developing the trails.

2004

- Forest Enterprise and Forestry Commission combined to become Forestry Commission Wales.
- Tim Rollinson took up the role of Director General of FC GB

2000s

- The Woodlands for Learning (WfL) team came into being following the merger of the FE Education team and the FC Forest Education Initiative. Combining their skills the new team undertook direct delivery of woodland related learning opportunities and facilitated and influenced others to use woodlands for learning and understand their value as a learning resource.

By 2013 the WfL team was 20 strong with a split delivery and development function delivering up to 600 woodland visits a year, facilitating 22 FEI cluster groups in Wales, running Forest School Programmes and Training courses, training teachers and education professionals in the use of the outdoors and managing the PLANT! project

- FC Wales was presented with the Access Award from the British Horse Society. The award was accepted by Simon Hewitt, Director Wales from MP Robin Cook. The award was in recognition of the contribution FC Wales had made to equestrian access.
- The Wood Energy Business Scheme 1 (WEBS1) was launched. This was a four-year capital grant scheme managed by FC Wales for Objective 1 and 2 (Powys) areas of Wales. It funded heating schemes in a range of commercial and public sector buildings, from tourism and manufacturing businesses to public sector sites including hospitals and schools. It also funded a range of fuel supply businesses producing wood chips. The scheme resulted in 17,000 tonnes of CO² being saved per year using 33,000 tonnes of clean, sustainable fuel.
- The first survey of sites that were potentially affected by *Phytophthora* was undertaken in Wales. The focus of the survey was rhododendron.

2005

- A £2.2 million project to restore centuries old oak woodlands in both public and private ownership was launched by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas. The Meirionnydd Oakwoods Habitat Management Project focussed on 1,700 ha of Atlantic oakwoods in Meirionnydd which were once part of the natural forest that covered most of the Atlantic fringe of Europe.
- Ian Forshaw was appointed Director FC Wales. He was in Post for only two years before he died suddenly in September 2007. In 2008 the The Ian Forshaw Memorial Medal was introduced. This is presented to the person, group or business which best embodies the qualities of excellence and innovation that Ian brought to forestry in Wales. It was first awarded to John Lewis the recently retired Wildlife Support Officer for FC Wales.
- The new Bwlch Nant yr Arian visitor centre was opened showcasing a locally-sourced timber building and a range of sustainable features exemplifying the growing trend towards green tourism in Wales. It won a number of awards and hit its projected target of 120,000 visitors in the following years. Steven Richards-Price got the funding



Bwlch Nant yr Arian visitor centre

together and kicked off this project and the new Coed y Brenin visitor centre, built the following year, whilst working as the 'Sustainable Tourism Projects Co-ordinator' tapping into WEFO European Funding.

- In July 2005, the Welsh Government (WG) published Technical Advice Note 8: 'Planning for Renewable Energy' which contained a target to deliver 800 megawatt through onshore wind energy developments. WG commissioned a feasibility study which concluded that large scale (over 25 megawatt) onshore developments should be concentrated in 7 Strategic Search Areas (SSAs). Towards the end of the year, the Forestry Commission Wales's Wind Energy Programme led and managed a procurement process for the seven SSAs on the Welsh Government's Woodland Estate. The procurement process ended with the awarding of option agreements with preferred bidders - these were signed in 2008. The option holders were then able to take forward the process of applying for planning permission. Wind energy projects were taken forward in 6 of the 7 SSAs.

- Police Constable Andrew Scourfield joined FC Wales in Coed y Cymoedd FD, initially on a 4 month secondment to tackle the effects of crime and antisocial behaviour in WG woodlands. Crime rates are significantly higher in the District than elsewhere in Wales, costing an estimated £1 million-plus a year. The idea of a secondment was proposed by Kay Williams, the Local Area Manager in the western part of



the District. The following year, Andrew's role became a full-time secondment and he established a Forest Watch scheme which led to numerous arrests and successful prosecutions.

- The Crychan Forest Trails were officially opened in July providing open access for horse riders and carriage drivers. The Crychan Forest Association worked closely with FC Wales to develop the project which was funded by Carmarthenshire County Council and EU Objective 1. The project was awarded a British Horse Society Access award in November 2005 in recognition of the partnership working to provide access.

- FC Wales won two awards for its exhibition at the Royal Welsh Show. The Commission's marquee was voted the best exhibit in the forestry section and the best stand of forestry interest. Under the banner of the 'Natural Health Service' the exhibition sought to open people's eyes to the wealth of opportunities to improve their health in Wales's woodlands. Brian Jones, from Forest Research, who had put the exhibit together accepted the award.

- Iolo Lloyd, Conservation Manager, Coed y Gororau FD, was awarded the Welsh Heritage Assessts Millennial Award for an outstanding contribution to preserving archaeology in Welsh Assembly Woodlands. Iolo was instrumental in introducing rare Prezewalski's horses to graze a Scheduled Ancient Monument to help manage the vegetation and improve the biodiversity of the site. The project is a partnership between FC Wales and the Welsh Mountain Zoo.

- When the World Rally Championship came to Wales in September it featured a special stage in the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. Stephen Buckley,

2000s

FC Wales's motorsports co-ordinator, decided to bring the forest to the rally - and a team from Coed y Cymoedd FD, Forestry Civil Engineering and Wales Harvesting and Marketing put together a display to give spectators a taste of what the Commission was about. Forest Craftsmen from Coed y Cymoedd, Trevor Hughes and Denis Milsom worked with Jonathan Taylor, Dai Evans and others to assemble the display which was a public relations officer's dream.

2006

- At the opening of Radnor Forest Ride, Fil Wills, FC Wales's Horse Tourism and Access Officer was awarded the British Horse Society 'Good Guy' award for her work supporting horse riding in public forests. The award was presented by Carwyn Jones, the Wales Minister for the Environment, Planning and Countryside.



Coed y Brenin Visitor Centre

- The new Coed y Brenin visitor centre opened in the summer of 2006 replacing the old Maesgwm centre. By 2012 it was attracting 150,000 visitors to the area so more space was needed. In 2012 work began to nearly double its size, this work is planned to be completed by June 2013.

- A 6.7km single track mountain bike trail opened in Cwm Rhaeadr. In 2010

Mountain Bike Rider (MBR) magazine described the trail as being one of the best in the UK.

- The Better Woodlands for Wales grant scheme was launched at the Royal Welsh Show. By the time it closed to new applicants in January 2011 more than £8 million had been paid to landowners to create or manage woodland. It was replaced by the Welsh Government's Glastir Woodland Creation grants in October 2010 and Glastir Woodland Management grants in January 2013.

- Robert Griffiths (59), project engineer with FC Wales Forestry Civil Engineering team, became the Welsh orienteering champion in his age group for the second consecutive year.



Robert Griffiths

- Bwlch Nant yr Arian visitor centre won the Sustainable Waste Management in the Public Sector award at the Wales Business Sustainability awards. This significant environmental award reflected the 'green' character of the visitor centre. The centre recycles as much as possible and boasts a number of sustainable features such as collecting rainwater to flush toilets.

- The Theatr Tymaen in Afan Forest won an award in the British Association of Landscape Industries National Landscape Awards. The 200-seat amphitheatre was created in a forest glade and was the brainchild of local forester Dick Williams who sadly died in 2003. The theatre is dedicated to him.



- Richard Gable, Local Area Manager in the Wye Valley, made a strange discovery when he found a hot air balloon dumped in the woods in Monmouthshire. It had been stolen, together with a trailer but an identity tag meant it could be returned to its owner. The balloon was worth £6000 and was found in a place where there were usually burnt-out or stolen cars

- In 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with representatives of Chongqing People's Municipal Government in China outlining plans for co-operation and development. A delegation from China visited Coed y Brenin and were impressed by what they saw. On the first anniversary of the visit, they asked for their own MOU with FC Wales. Ruth Jenkins, Dolgellau FDM went to China in 2007 to seal the partnership. It was hoped that the link would encourage staff exchanges and that Wales and China could learn from each other about the role forests can play in providing solutions to environmental and economic problems. In 2011 a delegation from Chongqing visited Garwnant.

2007

- FC Wales Grants and Licences team was renamed Grants and Regulations to reflect increased emphasis on regulatory duties.
- FC Wales golfers beat the Timber Merchants Association to win the

Bowater Cup. The annual tournament had taken place since 1970 but the FC had only won 14 times to the opposition's 24. Keith Jones, Secretary for the FC side, put the win down to the younger age of the FC team, whilst playing on a hilly golf course.



The winning team: L-R Ricky Morris, James Laing, Tim Harland, Alex Welnischuck, Nick Wythe, Shaun Mather, Roger Nock, Will Jones, Keith Jones and Karl Pugh.

- In December 2007 the Welsh Government launched the Plant! initiative which aimed to plant a tree for every child born or adopted in Wales from 1 January 2008.

The original idea for Plant! came from Cardiff schoolgirl Natalie Vaughan who wrote to her Assembly Member, Sue Essex, suggesting that planting a tree for every child born would be a good way to make young people think about their environment and the role they have in preserving it.

By planting more trees, the Welsh Government aimed to create a Welsh National Forest of native trees which would help fight climate change as the trees would act as a carbon sink. It was anticipated that in the region of 32,000 trees would be planted each year. The initiative is managed by the FC Wales Woodlands for Learning Team, in partnership with Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust).

By March 2013 there were 8 Plant! sites in Wales, Coed y Felin near Amlwch, Coed Ysgubor Wen near Tywyn, Coed Bryn Oer near Tredegar, Cefn Ila near Usk, Caia Park Wrexham, Coed-

2000s

wig y Plant in Cwm Garw near Bridgend, Coed McClaren Syfi in Caerphilly and Llyn Geirionydd in Gwydr. By March 2013, 207,424 trees had been planted.

2008

- FC Wales were runners-up in the Strategic Landscape Planning category at the Landscape Institute Awards. The award was for work over 5 years to redesign 28,000 ha of forests in S Wales. Each design plan considered the needs of local communities plus landscape and conservation issues. The award was presented by news presenter, Krishnan Guru-Murthy and was received by Antony Wallis Coed y Cymoedd FDM and Dafydd Fryer, FC Wales Landscape Architect and Michael Indeka, landscape contractor.



Krishnan Guru-Murthy with Antony Wallis, Dafydd Fryer and Michael Indeka

- Trefor Owen became Director Wales
- Forestry Commission Wales and South Wales Police won the Problem Orientated Partnership Award at the annual South Wales Police Awards. The award recognised the achievements of the partnership of the two organisations since the secondment of PC Andrew Scourfield to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in WG woodlands.
- FC Wales received more than 250 applications for the seven places available on its Foundation Modern Apprentice pilot scheme. Caroline Riches, Alex Thompson, Glenn Williams, Ifan Jones, Darren Thornton, Mark Giddings and Joe Mahoney were

appointed in 2009. They all completed their NVQ level 2 in forestry in 2011.

Caroline became a Woodland Manager in Llandovery and won LANTRA's Lifelong Learner of the year in 2011. Alex became a supervisor with Wales Silvicultural Operations. Glenn, who was runner up in LANTRA's Young Learner of the Year award in 2011, passed a supervisor board in 2012 and Ifan became a WHaM supervisor. Darren is working for FC Wales on contract and Mark and Joe left prior to completing their apprenticeships and are both still working in the forest industry.

- FC Wales received a commendation in the Institute of Civil Engineers Historic Structure Building and Infrastructure Awards for its work in saving the 200-year-old Landetty Bridge which is part of the historic Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal network. The bridge was rerieved when FC Civil Engineers discovered that renovating the historic bridge would be no more expensive than building a new one. The award was received by FC Wales Civil Engineers Gavin Queen and John Griffith.

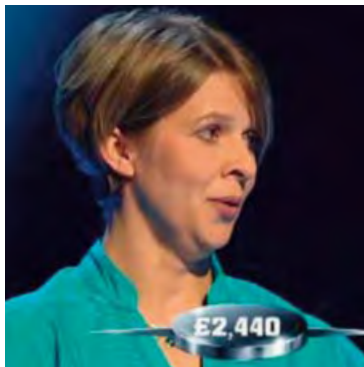
2009

- The updated Woodlands for Wales strategy was published in March.
- Building on the success of the Wood Energy Business Scheme 1 (WEBS 1) WEBS 2 was launched. This four-year project runs between 2009 and 2013. It provides capital grant support to micro-businesses, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and social enterprises to develop the sustainable and renewable wood heat market across Wales. Run by Forestry Commission Wales, it offers capital investment to small and medium enterprises for woodfuel processing

equipment and training to strengthen and support the renewable wood heat market across Wales

- FUTUREforest, an INTERREG IVC EU project looking at how forests can adapt to, and mitigate for, climate change, was project managed by Dr Helen Cariss for FC Wales. This project ran from 2009 - 2011 and was a partnership of experts from across seven regions of Europe. Its Europe-wide final report – The Voice of the Regions - provided recommendations to help protect woodlands from the challenges of climate change. In addition, a series of good practice guides were produced.

- Hannah Mitchell, FC Wales Education Officer based at Llandovery, won TV's



The Weakest Link. Hannah walked away with the £2,440 prize for being the strongest link at the end of the gruelling grilling by Anne Robinson.

She used some of her winnings to buy her third horse.

- *Phytophthora ramorum* was found to be infecting larch in the South West of England.

- Cwm Rhaeadr, in Llanmyddyfri FD won a Gold Award at the Royal Welsh Show. The award was for multi-purpose woodland that had been a previous winner in the years 2005-2007. Cwm Rhaeadr had won in 2007 and winning again in this category meant it could be considered the 'best in Wales.'

- The Forestry Commission pavilion at the Royal Welsh Showground was used for the last time. The following year it

was dismantled and rebuilt a few miles from the showground at Newbridge on Wye. It will be used as the forestry training building for Mid Wales and Marches Assessment Centre (MWMAC) Limited, where foresters of the future will be able to learn their trade. When the pavilion was opened by the Queen in 1983 it was expected to have only a 10-year life span.



The dismantled Forestry Pavilion

- Combating Climate Change - A Role for UK Forests was published. The report was produced by an independent steering group of forestry and climate change experts chaired by Professor David Read. The report was commissioned by the FC to examine the potential of UK's trees and woodlands to mitigate and adapt to our changing climate. Professor Read presented the findings of the report to Welsh Assembly Members in November.

- The first affordable housing development built on land previously managed by FC Wales was completed at Dinas Mawddwy in Gwynedd. This came about as a result of a request from the WG Minister Carwyn Jones in 2004 for FC Wales to investigate the potential for construction of affordable housing on the land FC Wales managed. This development was followed in 2010 by a second at Dolwyddelan.

- In December FC Wales National Office moved from Victoria House to the Welsh Assembly Government building at Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth. Shaun Mather, the office Manager, masterminded the move.

2010s

In January 2010, Jane Davidson, the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Housing issued a statement which set down how the Welsh approach to biodiversity and nature conservation could be taken forward by looking at the environment as a whole. This approach became the Natural Environment Framework – “A Living Wales”.

In January 2012 a Green Paper was launched setting out WG proposals for the Natural Environment Framework. This included the proposal to establish a Single Body consisting of FC Wales, CCW and EA Wales. Public consultation took place and a business case was submitted in May 2012, followed in September by confirmation from WG that the three organisations would join together in Spring 2013.

The beginning of the 2010s saw plant health issues taking their toll on UK forests. The major impact in Wales was the outbreak of *Phytophthora ramorum* which was confirmed in S Wales in 2010. *P ramorum* is a fungus-like pathogen which had mostly been found on plants and shrubs especially Rhododendron until in it was found to infect and kill Japanese larch (JL) trees.



Afan Valley following clearance of larch infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* in May 2012. The Afan Forest Park visitor centre is bottom right

2010

- Gavin Queen, Wales Country Civil Engineer helped raise £50,000 for Help for Heroes by completing a cycle ride from John O'Groats to Land's End with a group of friends. Gavin is a Major in the TA.
- A major outbreak of *Phytophthora ramorum* was confirmed in Japanese Larch (JL) trees in Welsh Government woodlands in the Afan and the Garw Valleys and also in the Vale of Glamorgan at Hensol Forest. During the year, smaller outbreaks were found in both public and private woodlands and by the end of 2010 a total of 876 ha of JL were found to be infected in Wales. Surveys continued in the following years and by the end of 2012 a total area of over 2,300 ha had been identified as being infected since the outbreak was confirmed in Wales. These infected areas were issued with Statutory Plant Health Notices and will have to be felled. This represents more than 10% of the 22,000 ha of larch in Wales. The majority of the infected sites are in WG woodlands managed by FC Wales.
- The Heads of the Valleys Woodland Project, which covers the Heads of the Valleys area of South Wales, was launched to show how woodlands can create jobs, boost tourism and improve health and well-being in the area. A project team led by Forestry Commission Wales, working with local councils and other organisations, identified 13 priority areas where new and existing woodlands can be used to make a real difference to the lives of local people. Following initial planning, work began on the ground with the creation of woodland steering groups (made up of local community groups and stakeholders) to develop projects in each of the priority areas that answer local needs. The project aimed to involve as many businesses, community groups and local people as possible. It was led for FC Wales by Aaron Fortt, Heads of the Valleys Project Manager. FC Wales replicated this process in the adjacent Western Valleys Regeneration area in 2011.
- In June, the Welsh Government announced its target to create 100,000 hectares of new woodland in Wales by 2030, via the Glastir grant scheme. Woodland creation grants were introduced in October 2010. The announcement was in response to recommendations in the report of the Welsh Land Use and Climate Change Group, chaired by Professor Gareth Wyn Jones.
- Garwnant visitor centre was officially reopened following a three-year refurbishment. Facilities now included an education and conference hall, all ability walks and mountain bike trails. The redevelopment was a partnership with both public and private investment including support from the Heads of the



Garwnant Visitor Centre

2010s

Valleys Strategic Regeneration Partnership. Within a few weeks of re-opening it received a Visit Wales – Visitor Attraction Assurance Award.

- The Woodlands for Learning team organised and hosted a conference to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Forest School in Wales.
- After seven years of consultation, in November 2010, the Newborough Forest Management Plan was approved. Newborough Forest lies within a Special Area of Conservation and CCW and the Newborough Liaison Partnership were closely involved in the consultation with FC Wales. The plan provided details for the first 5 years and set out how Newborough will develop over a 50-year period.

Following the approval work began straight away to thin 100ha of woodland which produced 6km³ of timber. This was followed by ground preparation in 35 ha of the newly thinned area to allow tree planting to help restructure areas of the forest. Other environmental improvements to the woodland included ditch blocking to create wet areas, scarification to improve sites for Shore Dock (a red data species) and improvement of habitats for great crested newts.

2011

- The FC Wales 5-year Timber Marketing Strategy was launched, committing FC Wales to maintaining its timber production levels and supporting the forest sector.
- The tallest tree in Wales had to be felled after it was badly damaged by

strong winds and had become a danger to the public. FC Wales Local Area Manager Mike Whitley made the discovery when he was inspecting trees after bad weather. The Douglas fir on land managed by FC Wales on the Lake Vyrnwy Estate, near Llanwddyn, had been declared the joint tallest tree in the UK in 2009 when it was measured and found to be 63.79 metres high. According to the Tree Register of the British Isles, the tree was 124 years old. Shortly after it was felled a new tallest tree in Wales was confirmed close by. It was also a Douglas Fir which measured 60.62 metres. The



BBC's Julia Bradbury with Mike Whitley, FCW's Local Area Manager, and the former tallest tree in Wales

story was featured on TV in Countryfile.

- In March the first batch of timber from stands affected by *Phytophthora ramorum* was sold by FC Wales, via the E-sales system.
- The National Forest Inventory showed that there was around 20,000 ha more woodland in Wales than previously indicated. The total area of 303,500 ha represented 14.3% of the land area of Wales. The increase was partly attributed to improved survey and measuring techniques.
- Wood fuel heating systems were installed at the FC Wales offices in

Resolven and Welshpool. This will result in a carbon saving of 30 tonnes per year in addition to financial savings.

- Dr. Hugh Evans, Head of Forest Research in Wales was awarded an Honorary Professorship by Aberystwyth University. Dr Evans is a distinguished entomologist and research scientist with an international reputation. He has led numerous international research groups as well as leading Forest Research in Wales projects.
- In May, a new mountain bike trail – The MinorTaur - opened at Coed-y-Brenin Forest Park to provide a route for beginners, young children and riders with disabilities. The trail complemented the iconic routes such as The Tarw which are favoured by adrenalin junkies. The new trail made Coed y Brenin Forest Park the first truly inclusive mountain bike destination. Graeme Stringer Recreation Ranger, and Andy Braund, Mountain Bike Ranger described the route as being suited to all abilities which would help encourage more riders to take up the sport. Later in the year, the Snowdonia National Park Authority donated two



Riders using adaptive mountain bikes on the MinorTaur trail in Coed y Brenin

adaptive mountain bikes to the community group Discover Dolgellau for the “Challenge Your Boundaries” project. This enabled disabled people to enjoy the thrill of mountain biking on the MinorTaur trail.

- Armed police joined FC Wales wildlife rangers in an exercise to crack down on deer poachers in South Wales. Vehicle checkpoints were set up on roads adjoining the forest around Port Talbot as part of Operation Antler, a joint initiative between South Wales Police and FC Wales to tackle poaching and its association with the illegal use of guns. It was overseen by Forest Crime Officer Andrew Scourfield. FC Wales Wildlife Ranger Adrian Thomas coached officers on how poachers work and gave tips on what evidence to look for, including the various types of firearms used.
- FC Wales provided locations for the BBC TV series Merlin at Fforest Fawr, near Cardiff. One location in the woodland, known locally as Three Bears Caves, was the focus of filming for several episodes. The wood has featured in a number of TV programmes including the Dr Who spin-off series, Torchwood and the BBC TV series, Prince Caspian Voyage of the Dawn Treader. Later in the year, Gethin Woodland near Merthyr Tydfil featured in the Christmas edition of Dr Who to the delight of Dr Who fan Mike James – FC Wales’s Community Ranger for the area.
- The Forestry Commission report, Wildfires in Wales, was published. It identified reasons why people start grass and forest fires which cost the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service £7m every year. Between 2000 and

2010s

2008 there were over 55,000 grassfires and nearly 550 forest fires recorded in South Wales – eight times more than in other similar areas of the United Kingdom. Written by social scientist Matthew Jollands, it stated that the 20% most deprived areas in of S Wales were nine times more likely to suffer from fires than the 20% least deprived areas, with the Rhondda and Afan Valleys most prone to arson. The reasons for starting fires identified included boredom, socio-economic factors, associated with other crimes



Barbara Spence

and “for fun”.

- The Woodland Carbon Code was launched in July. Produced by FC GB, it provided a consistent approach for potential investors to clarify just what their money should buy them. To comply with the Code, woodland projects must be sustainably managed to national standards, use set methods for estimating the carbon that will be captured and be independently certified to meet criteria and standards. The first woodland to achieve the Carbon Code status in Wales was Cwm Fagor, near Devauden owned by Thorlux



Lighting. The company had acquired Cwm Fagor to minimise the environmental impact of its factory and the effects of the lighting equipment it designs, manufactures and supplies.

- Two woodlands in LLanyyddfri FD won Gold Medals at the Royal Welsh Show. An area at Wentwood forest, planted with Douglas fir supplemented by naturally regenerating broadleaves won for the best new or restocked woodland containing over 60% conifers. The second Gold Medal went to a stand of oak planted in 1940 at the Hendre near Monmouth. This won in the category for woodland with more than 40% broadleaves over 40 years old. It also won the Milford Silver Medal for the best entry in all broadleaf classes.

- FC Wales launched the Woodlands and You (WaY) framework. WaY sets out the process for community groups, individuals and social enterprises to bring forward ideas for events, activities and longer term projects in Welsh Government woodlands. Applicants still receive permits, management agreements and leases etc. but the framework introduced a standard and consistent system for Wales as a whole, making it easier for communities and groups to submit proposals and for staff to assess them.

- The first wedding at an FC Wales venue took place at Garwnant Visitor Centre near Merthyr Tydfil between Katherine Toft and Chris Gerrans on 26 August.

- FC Wales drew up a number of Direct Production contracts where there was a contractual obligation to take on

apprentices. This approach was as a result of the findings of a resource study commissioned by WHaM which identified a growing shortage of contactors able to undertake chainsaw operations and wire rope working. A number of contracts were awarded and apprentices are coming through into the industry. FC Wales will evaluate the success of this initiative and consider extending it wider to include other contracts. Hugh Jones, head of WHaM said that "this was an innovative development which, if successful, would help in increasing skills in the motor-manual area of work and help towards delivering the increasing thinning programmes."

- Two FC Wales centres were voted the best free places to visit with the family



in mid-Wales in a UK-wide poll of mothers. The centres – at Bwlch Nant-yr-Arian near Aberystwyth, and Coed-y-Brenin Forest Park near Dolgellau – together polled half the vote in a survey by Netmums, the UK's online parenting organisation.

- Forestry Commission Wales was recognised for its work to tackle inequality and discrimination. It was named as the runner-up in the public sector category by the charity Diverse

Cymru in its inaugural Excellence in Equality awards. The awards were created to recognise exceptional achievements in Wales in the equalities field and was given to FC Wales as a result of its implementation and promotion of equality over a number of years.

2012

- In February, Chalara dieback of ash was found in a consignment of trees sent from a nursery in the Netherlands to a nursery in Buckinghamshire. It was subsequently found in several locations in GB that had received ash from nurseries within the past 5 years.
- As part of the ongoing mountain bike development in S Wales in 2012 a lease was awarded to Bike Park Wales, a private sector company, to develop a specialist downhill mountain biking centre at Gethin woodland outside Merthyr Tydfil. When the centre opens it will be the first purpose built, dedicated downhill mountain bike centre in Europe. It is planned to be open all year round which is unlike other down-hill locations in Europe where routes are based around ski resorts and are closed in winter. The centre will provide a much-needed economic development for the area and will include a campsite and visitor centre.
- Through Woodlands and You, FC Wales invited proposals for the development of hydro-power schemes in the woodlands it manages, keen to see hydro schemes owned by communities or run with a strong element of community benefit. In all,

2010s

244 expressions of interest were received on 188 different sites. In 2013, priority sites were being taken forward to the next phase to assess their feasibility. Income from sales of electricity and the Government's Feed in Tariff can be used to fund regeneration, environmental projects, or to meet other community needs. FC Wales is working closely with the Energy Saving Trust, Environment Agency Wales and the Countryside Council for Wales on the programme.

- The revised Ancient Woodland Inventory in Wales was launched by Environment Minister John Griffiths. This showed that Wales now has 95,000 hectares of ancient woodland – an increase of more than 50% since the previous Inventory in 2004 which identified 62,000ha. The increase is due to the use of more accurate digital maps and more precise methods which enabled new areas to be identified. The revised inventory was commissioned by FC Wales and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) with support from Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust.

- Forestry Commission Wales showed



it was keeping pace with technological developments when it launched its Cymru ForestXplorer Wales Smartphone app. Steven Richards-

Price, Visitor Experience Manager, worked with developers to create a 'places to go' app to showcase the main recreation sites in Wales, including over 220 trail maps. User feedback has been very positive and thousands of people have downloaded it to their Apple and Android phones.

- In August, the first Wind Energy Development planning application was approved in Pen y Cymoedd (Strategic Search Area F) in Coed y Cymoedd FD in S Wales. Work began in December to fell the trees in advance of construction which is planned to commence in 2014.

- FC Wales was awarded certification to the environmental management system standard, ISO 14001, after carrying out improvements right across



the organisation, ranging from the energy performance of its offices to the way it deals with waste. Forestry Commissioner Jon Owen Jones accepted the prestigious ISO 14001 certificate from David Derrick, Business Centre Manager of LRQA, at the Commission's office in Resolven. (LRQA = Lloyds Register Quality Assurance Ltd).

- Garwnant Visitor Centre won the Welsh Loo of the Year award.

- Work began to deliver the Newborough Forest Recreation



Llyn Ddu, Tywi Forest

Development plan. This will help transform the forest into a major outdoor destination and provide a vital economic boost to Anglesey. Work includes improvements to the car park, the construction of a boardwalk and viewing platform across the sand dunes and the creation of new picnic and BBQ areas. There will also be opportunities for catering, bike hire and pony trekking business concessions. An official re-opening ceremony is planned for Spring 2013.

- In September it was confirmed by the Welsh Government that a new body would be formed by joining together Forestry Commission Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency Wales in spring 2013.

- An assessment of the areas of peat that have been planted with woodland in Wales was completed. This estimated that 18,000 ha of woodlands were on deep peat soils of which 11,000 ha are managed by FC Wales. The potential for restoration of these sites was assessed and priority sites identified. Guidance for restoration and a Field Assessment Tool to evaluate areas of afforested peat were also produced. The report and assessment was completed by Forest Research commissioned by FC Wales with

support from CCW, WG and EAW.

- In October Chalara was found in recently planted (2009) ash trees in a privately owned woodland in Carmarthenshire. At the end of October, Chalara dieback of ash was discovered in the wider natural environment in East Anglia. These woodlands did not appear to have any association with recently supplied nursery stock. As a result a nationwide survey of ash trees was undertaken, led by the Forestry Commission, at the beginning of November.

Following the survey, 5 more newly planted sites in Wales were identified as being infected with Chalara. These included sites in woodlands managed by FC Wales in Wentwood and the Wye Valley. All trees were removed and destroyed.

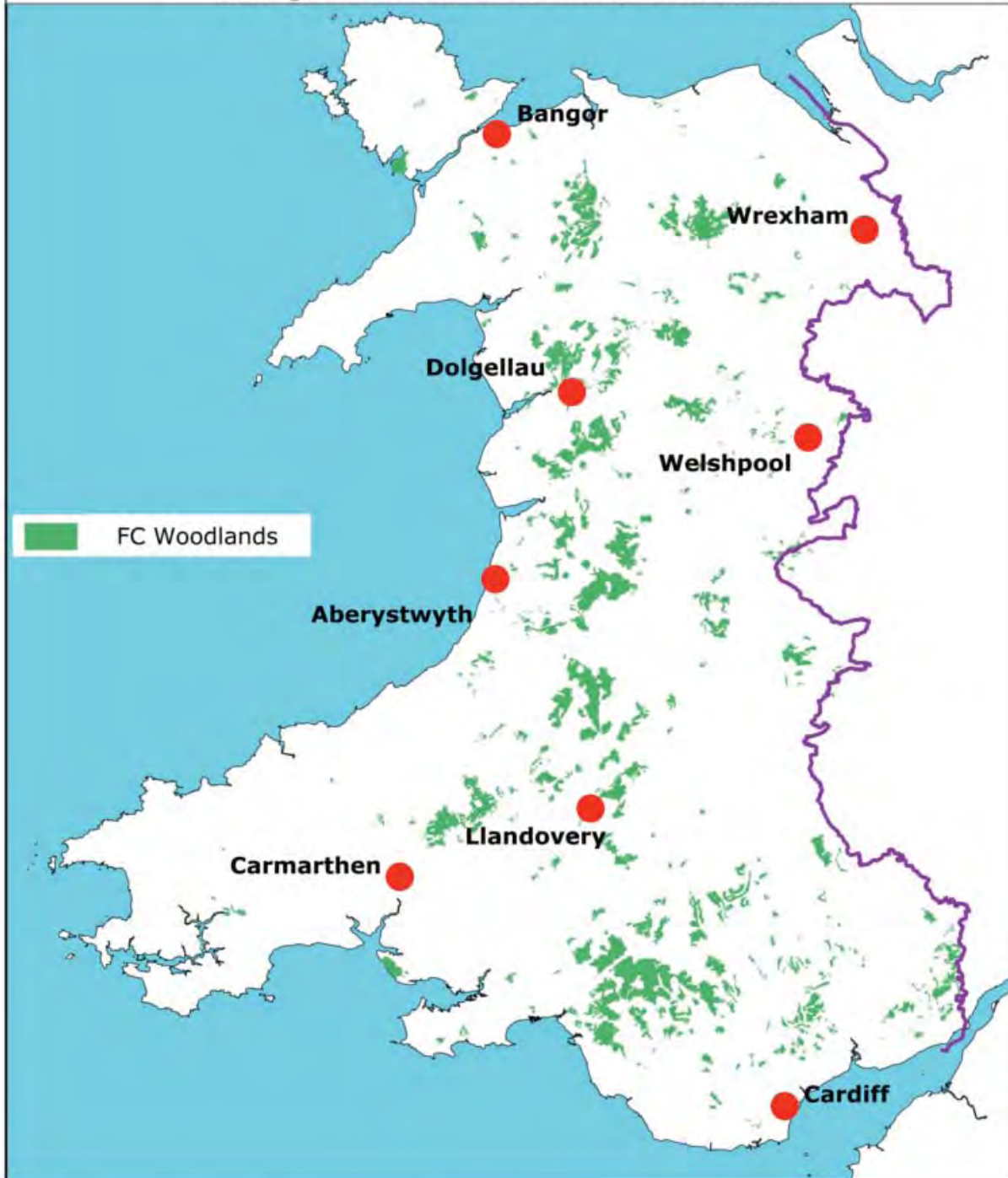


Co-ordinating the Chalara survey at the Llan-doverly 'nerve centre' L-R Chris Botting, Hannah Mitchell, Owen Thurgate, Chris Jones.

Owen Davies

FC Wales woodlands 2013

managed on behalf of the Welsh Government



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Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru
Forestry Commission Wales

On 1 April 2013 FC Wales joins the Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency Wales to become Natural Resources Wales. The contribution it makes to the new organisation includes the following:



- A landholding of 126,700ha of which 113,300 are woodland.
- Woodland managed sustainably to the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) which is certificated to the Forestry Stewardship council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of forest Certification (PEFC).
- 77 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 199 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)
- It markets a forecasted volume of sustainably produced timber each year which in 2013 is over 800,000 m3.

It welcomes an estimated 3.5 million visitors each year and provides the following



- 34 mountain bike trails extending over 550km at 13 separate locations, which are currently (2013) used by 300,000 riders.
- Three visitor centres managed by FC Wales and four visitor centres run by partner organisations which are linked to mountain bike trails in Welsh Government woodlands.
- Nearly 100,000 ha of land designated as 'open access' for walkers.
- 120 (approx) way-marked walking trails extending over 450km.
- In the region of 100,000 ha of land designated as open to the general public for horse riding and cycling.
- 135km of horse riding trails and 40km of designated carriage driving trails
- 75 designated picnic sites with additional facilities such as picnic tables and BBQs
- The Woodlands and You programme - enabling more than 800 groups and 11,000 people a year to take part in events and activities in the woodlands we manage.

Most importantly it brings 450 dedicated staff many of whom can be seen on the following pages:



2010s



Working or based in Coed y Cymoedd: Back l-r: Tim Flatman, Peter Cloke, Jonathan Singleton, Islwyn Jones, James Rosebalde, Andy Wills, Jonathan Price, Howard Sims, Robert Hood, Mike James, Ross Evans, Richard Jenkins Middle row L-R Sally Tansey, Tanya Dykes, Kevin Gore, Matthew Jones, Dave Williams, Sian Jones, Colin Clayton, Claudia MacDonald-Robins. Front row L-R Tina Winstone, Debbie Hamer, Mari Sibley, Sarah Davies, Karen Wills, Menna Evans, Tracey Farley



Living Wales team: Paul Subacchi, Michelle van-Velzen, Lesley Gbel, Shaun Mather



Recreation and Access team: Dave Liddy, Roz Owen, Alison Evans, Steven Richards-Price



Policy and Programmes team: Chris Tucker, Helen Cariss, Patience Eastwood, Paul Finch, Bethan Webber, Carolyn Griffiths, Bill MacDonald, Alex Harris, Dave Johnston, Dafydd Fryer, Sue Ginley, Chris Edwards, Keith Jones, Barbara Spence, Richard Davies, Jane Holloway, Roz Owen.

2010s



Wind Energy Programme team: L-R Jennifer Houghton, Dafydd Davies, Brian Rumble, Charlotte Lewis, Chris Clare, Nathalie Beaurain, Jonathan Baker, Dave Farmery, Stephen Buckley, Dai Rees, Jane Davies, Matthew Park, Kirsty Lees, Enid Carrick, Hannah Mitchell, Joanna Lewis, Glyn Fletcher, James Laing, Steven Pocock, Rory O'Donnell, Karl Pugh. Inset L-R Marc Langley, Kay Williams, Andrew Maberly Jones, Derek Stephen.



HR/Office Services/Contact Centre: L-R Lyn Williams, Kerry Rattray, Liz Cookson, Lynn Spring, Michelle Clarke, Jono Jaques, Liz Harrand.



Finance team: Tracey Davies, Jana Paulova, Karl Pugh, Hazel Griffiths, Huw Evans, Sharin Samuel, Liz Edwards, Krisztina Koslovsky, Jeannette Freeman, Denise Boyd, Barbara Baber, Melanie Rodda, Kevin Jenkins, Alison Subacchi, David Lewis.



Wood Energy Business Scheme (WEBS) team: L-R Mark Lewis, Mike Pitcher, Eiri Stephen, Paul Morgan.

2010s



Working or based in Llanymddfry Forest District (in 2010) : L-R Eifion Davies, Alan Evans, Ieuan Williams, Bob Mayo, Darrell Humber, Mark Giddings, Byron Jones, Arnold Thomas, Mike Kennett, Alex Macleod, James Tinney, Geraint Price, Steve Mather, Mansel Jones, Chris Botting, Brain Hanwell, Hannah Mitchell, Sam Detheridge, Dominic Robertson, Russell Jones, Michele Johnston, Peter Garson, Cennydd Jones, Richard Gable, Dave Ellerby, Jimmy Gittoes, Neil Stoddart, Andy Wills, Paul Dann, Anne Moses, Brenda Evans, Cindy Davies, Lewis Hilliam, Bethan Siddall, Alaw Beynon, Marie George, Gwenllian Young, Kay Williams, Chris Gowan, Andrew Nock, Jeff Evans



Grants and Regulations: Stuart Gray, Gareth Blythin, Peter Jones, Georgia Saxton, Ken Smith, Andy Wright, Nick Fackrell, Lajla Cash, Tim Harland, John Browne, Glen Stewart, Richard Siddons, Rhian Taylor, Yvonne Spencer, Suzanne Davies, Sam Milner, Phil Evans, Tina Muller, Owen Thurgate, Menna Langford, Mary Galliers, Menna Jones, Colin Clayton, Hannah Taylor, Jane Owen, Chris Botting, Andy



Woodlands for Learning team: L-R Haf Leyshon, Carol Travers, Cawryn Hughes, Karen Clarke, Catryn Owen, Cathy Velmans, Leigh Denyer, Sheena O'Leary, Sue Williams, Llinos Richards, Juliette Staples, Peter Morrison, Swyn Spencer, Jo Creasey, Kate Thompson, Aled Hopkin, Amy Phillips, Liz Hopkins (front), Kate Jones, Ffion Hughes



Coed y Brenin Visitor Centre team: L-R Andy Braund, Karen Cartwright, Sandra Elphick, Graeme Stringer, Robert J. Roberts, Hilary Malyon, John H. Taylor

2010s



Gwydyr, Eryri and Mon Local Area teams: Back L-R: Geraint James, Ewan Stevens, Miranda Grant, Front: Nicky Maysmor, Gareth Jones



Working or based in Coed y Gororau: Front L-R Louise Greaves, Glyn Fletcher, Stephen Knight, Gwyneth Jones, Julia Lloyd, Enid Carrick, Sarah Hurford, Becky Hares, Jim Ralph, Steve Cresswell, Irwin Ellis, Middle L-R Medwyn Davies, Mike Martin, David Cross, Hayley Evans, June Moore, Glenn Williams, Lucy Cook, Mike Whitley, Bruce Cochrane, Neil Muir, Peta Heminsley, StJohn Ashworth, Carol Owen, Dai Williams, Hugh Lewis, Back L-R Jonathan Flemming, Nick Whythe, Mel Shaw, Kirsty Lees, Matthew Park, John Williams, John Williams, Andy Wills, Dave Levy, Rhys Jenkins



Management Board: L-R Peter Garson, Steve Burton, Richard Siddons, Trefor Owen (seated), Colin Sobota, Clive Thomas, Debbie Westlake, Martin Veale, Terry O'Keefe



Policy, Grants and Regulations and Communications team members: L-R Barbara Anglezarke, Jeff Evans, Laura Morris, Lowri Owen (seated), Clive Davies

2010s



Wales Harvestinf and Marketing (WHaM): Left to right - Back - Pippa Knight, Marius Urwin, Andrew Sowerby, Craig Sinclair, Terry Davis, Richard Munn, Dave Price, Middle - Claire Evans, Roger Nock MBE, Jerry Pritchard, Front - Diane Atkinson, Hugh Jones, Kyle Williams, Eira Walters



Estates and Planning staff: L-R Steven Wassall, John Davies, Rachel Chamberlain, Tony Egan, Paul Keyworth, Geraint Morgan, Gwen Thomas, Emlyn Jones

Photographs:

Robert Griffiths, Dafydd Fryer, Rob Spence, Aled Thomas, Peter Jones, Richard Carrick.



Photographs:

Barbara Spence, FC Picture library, Peter Jones, Aled Thomas, Tony Egan, Llinos Morgan, Liverpool Daily Post, Helen Cariss.

