

September 1995

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with considerable pleasure that I put hands to keyboard to report on six months of intense activity within the Institute. Our major product is education and advances have been made at course, Branch and conference levels. It is also clear that the timber industry recognises that the IWSc is an influential body and we are being asked to shape policy on issues such as the structure of the industry, R&D, training and the environment.

The year began with consultation between the RIBA and the IWSc on a series of regional lectures which will be incorporated as a roadshow in our 1995/96 Branch programme. Alan Twitchett, Director of the Wood Panel Products Federation, and Malcolm Cowley of Medite of Europe Ltd. will be speaking to audiences in Knutsford, Bath, Birmingham, Sheffield and London on OSB and MDF, two reconstituted board products which are of considerable interest to architects.

Activities of my own Western Counties Branch are reported within this Newsletter but I have also been able to visit other Branches. The Liverpool and District Branch kindly invited me to give a speech at their excellent Annual Dinner at Haydock Park. Bob Tomlinson, President of the North West Timber Trade Association, was also a speaker at this dinner and I was able to accept his kind invitation to attend the superb NWTTA dinner at Manchester in March. The potential to expand our membership is considerable. There were 700 guests at the NWTTA dinner and 900 guests at the excellent TTF dinner at Grosvenor House and they could all benefit from our Branch programme. It is the Institute's intention to step up active promotional work in the near future.

The Scottish Branch made me very welcome at their AGM in Stirling in May and afterwards we were treated to a fascinating presentation by Bill Reid on modern timber domes. I had already spent a very full day with John Anderson of Norbord Industries UK, our major sponsor for the 1996 Annual Conference, vetting four hotels in central Edinburgh, together with Alasdair McGregor of James Donaldson and Sons who is our local co-ordinator. There is no doubt that our selection, the George Inter-Continental in the centre of Edinburgh, will be a superb conference venue during the period 12-14 April 1996 and we have no

shortage of quality speakers, exhibitors and secondary sponsors.

This brings me to the 1995 conference, held at the Swallow Hotel in Bristol, which was acclaimed by Audrey Dixon, Editor of the Timber Trades Journal, as "a huge success" in her editorial on 6 May which she entitled "IWSc is ship-shape in Bristol fashion"! The TTJ also devoted four pages to conference coverage which I urge you to read. The main conference sponsors were Canadian organisations, namely BPIB, COFI and the Canadian High Commission and David Woodbridge has written a report in this Newsletter. However I must emphasise the central role that Steven Orley of BPIB and his colleagues played in organizing the conference. Steven spent countless hours corresponding with speakers, exhibitors and the printers and he was an excellent coordinator and Master of Ceremonies during the Conference. Our IWSc Secretariat also worked hard before and during the Conference and Freda Robinson sacrificed her visit to the Harveys Wine Cellars.



The President addressing the 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner

A direct spin off from the conference was an invitation from Michael Clark, First Secretary for Forestry at the Canadian High Commission to visit Canada on a ten day forestry tour. The group included four academics concerned with forestry, the environment and forest products, two members of the paper and pulp industry and a journalist. The tour began in Nova Scotia and finished on Vancouver Island and we made numerous visits to

forests and received informed comment from local experts. A report on this exceptionally useful tour appears in this Newsletter.

Council has considered a number of important matters at their last two meetings. On the education front the Certificate work books are being reviewed and retyped on disk and the Director has redesigned the front cover, incorporating our new logo. A Yard and Warehouse Planning and Management module is planned for the Associateship course. The success of the new East Anglian Branch and the relaunching of the Yorkshire Branch has been noted with pleasure. The Continuing Professional Development scheme (see David Woodbridge's article) is close to being launched at the end of the year and the CPD record and instructions will be housed in an IWSc personal organiser (filofax). Branch details will also be published in this form in future. An IWSc gold pin and, eventually, a new tie will also be designed.

What else has your President been up to? Several contributions have been made to the TTJ including an article on wood properties (18 March) and a two page interview about the Institute (8/15 April). Four letters were sent to construction journals including New Builder (7/14 July) promoting the merits of timber following extensive publicity for steel frames in domestic housing. Back at base at the University of Bath the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council has awarded me a substantial three year grant for work on the advancement of structural connection techniques for timber buildings in conjunction with TRADA Technology Ltd. Finally I have represented the IWSc at an inaugural meeting of a Timber Trade Alliance which aims to improve the focus and competitiveness of the UK Timber Industry. On the following day TRADA held their Annual Luncheon where Ian Taylor MP urged British trade groups to consolidate for strength.

A glance at the TTJ will inform you that the fortunes of the timber industry in the UK are mixed. Involvement with the Branches, attendance at the annual Conference and registration on IWSc courses will keep you informed and improve your chances of survival in a difficult world. I wish you a profitable conclusion to 1995.

Martin Ansell FIWSc

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The Council of Management wishes to record its thanks to those listed below for their support as Corporate Members

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40th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

SUCCESSFUL ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE The Swallow Royal Hotel, Bristol

The venue selection was indeed excellent. From the moment of arrival at the imposing hotel one was aware of a high standard of customer service, comfort and discreet but highly professional management. For both the conference organizers and the delegates these are essential ingredients for a successful event.

The conference, with the much valued sponsorship from the Canadian High Commission, BPIB, COFI, AHEC, the TTJ, Norbord and the Bristol Port Authority, presented an imposing platform of speakers. Although there was no specific theme all the papers were concerned with significant developments and initiatives in, or related to, the timber industry. These ranged from the forest resource (Professor Hamish Kimmins), the impact of current and forthcoming European and UK standards (John Haynes and John Park), the development and future of one of the most significant panel products to emerge on the market in recent years (John Anderson) and the environmental challenges facing surface coatings for timber (Peter Coventry).



The Speakers face questions at the Conference Forum

It was interesting to learn of the progress that has been made in the education field for engineering students through the publication of the first volume of the STEP project of design exercises and case studies (Andrew Abbott and Luke Whale). And finally to be entertained at the conference dinner by a wide range of experiences and yarns (often on subjects very remote from timber!) given by one of the senior members of the Eastern Canadian timber industry (Douglas Smith).

But what else attracts members (and some non-members too) to the Conference? Firstly it is unlikely that at any other time of the year in the UK is there a gathering that represents such a profound body of knowledge on timber. Secondly, the Conference provides a unique opportunity for the sharing of opinion and the acquisition or updating of knowledge. Thirdly, one must not overlook its value as a social event. Many acquaintances are renewed and new friendships made. At times when so much seems to threaten the applications and opportunities for timber as a material and the corporate effort of those engaged in the timber trade, the Conference can be viewed as an important and influential annual event.

Ultimately though the success of the weekend is down to the people who attended. I am certain that the unforced way in which our President, Dr Martin Ansell, hosted the event did not go unnoticed. Even when not directly concerned with chairing a session he was never far away and always

seemed to glide into view and with some apt comment provide a continuity to the proceedings just when it was needed. Equally the planning and presentation of a conference for over a hundred delegates, many with partners, requires an enormous commitment. The Institute is indebted to Steve Orley, and the able support from the whole of the BPIB team, for the administration.

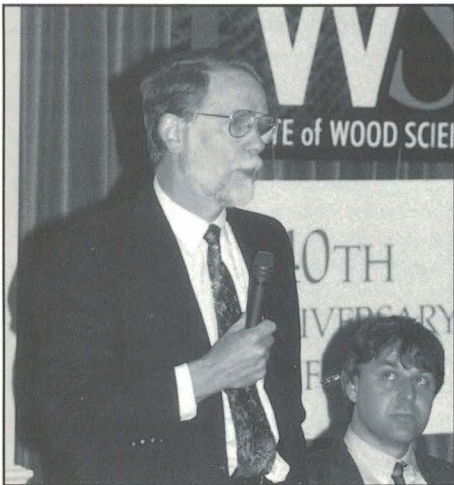
Those who missed the opportunity of attending are the losers! They also missed out on the fringe events, notably the highly enjoyable and instructive visit to the historical wine cellars of John Harvey and the tasting of sherries for which the company is justly famed.

The IWSc Conference has gone from strength to strength over the last few years. It is now a "shop window" for the Institute of which its members should be justly proud. The Institute was founded in 1955. I think one can say without fear of contradiction that the 1995 Bristol Conference was totally worthy of the Institutes' 40th anniversary year.

Those in the north of the country who may not have ventured to the south west will get their chance next year when the location will be in Edinburgh.

Bound copies of all the conference papers are available from H.O.

David Woodbridge FIWSc



Dr. Hamish Kimmins, (Professor of Forest Ecology, University of British Columbia) addressing the conference.

THE INSTITUTE WILL SOON HAVE ITS OWN CPD SCHEME

CPD, or to give it its full description, Continuing Professional Development, is a feature of membership of many professional institutions. Our own Institute is preparing the way for the launch of a CPD framework in 1996.

What, you may ask, is the scheme about, how will it affect membership and what will one get out of it?

CPD is all to do with keeping up to date with the technological developments within one's field of work. Equally, being up to date on regulations or legislation can be classed as CPD. Gone are the days when one, having received a diploma or degree, closed the door on "education". To keep abreast with, or better still ahead of, the field one must continue to learn. Often we do this as a matter of course and in an unrecorded and unstructured way. A CPD framework allows one to record one's own on-going professional development. This may be as a result of attending IWSc branch meetings, courses, seminars or maybe studying new legislation.

So what? we hear you say. The scheme will be voluntary but recognition will be given in as much as it is intended that CPD will provide at least some of the evidence to enable one to seek a rise in the status of one's membership category.

As with any new initiative, there are ground rules to thrash out; however by the end of the year it is the intention that an outline of the scheme and its objectives will be published and circulated. This will include details on what qualifies as CPD, how to record it and guidance on how to plan a work related self study programme.

The Institute hopes that the opportunity to clock-up recordable CPD points will encourage more members to attend their branch meetings!

Other benefits will include recognition by employers of the Institute's CPD initiative as a goal directed incentive for staff to improve their job knowledge and professionalism. It is also hoped that the launch will increase the awareness of the value of the Institute's courses and awards to those entering the Industry.

If you have any views on the topic or would like more information, please let us know.

David Woodbridge FIWSc, CPD Officer

DEVELOPMENT OF SCOTLAND'S SOFTWOOD

By Sandy Brownlie (Chairman of BSW Timber Plc)

The history of forests in Britain, from the time of the signing of the Magna Carta, is one of steady woodland destruction continuing right into the eighteenth century. Not a little of this neglect may be attributed to the widening horizons that coincided with the period of the country's steady expansion in population and wealth.

The extension of the building trades which accompanied this prosperity resulted in increasing shortage of home grown timber, oak particularly, and it was the Baltic states which provided large quantities of cheap and easily accessible timber. A sawmill had been erected at Leith as far back as 1695 to deal with imported oak.

There was a sawmill at Rothiemurchus in 1680. Rannoch had two sawmills by 1741. They were described as "perhaps the most Gothic thing of their kind in the world, with saws three quarters of an inch thick." By 1790, timber floating was highly organised on the larger Scottish rivers.

With the industrial revolution there was a major demand for the first time for industrial softwood, for example mining timber. With the coming of the railways there were requirements for oak for carriage and wagon building, and later for pine and other timbers for sleepers.

Up to the end of the 18th century the most common type of mill was driven by water. Steam was introduced around the turn of the century. In 1805 a sawmill was erected at Grangemouth to deal with imports. A mill at Falkirk was worked by three steam engines of 18, 20 and 40 horse power. It had both upright gang-type and circular saws. By the middle of the 19th century the most common sawmill was the steam driven portable mill.

The general practice then was for the mill to go to the wood, rather than, as today, for the wood to go to the mill. It was the custom of the timber merchant to erect one or more mills in the area of his purchase where they remained for as long as necessary to convert the timber. The woodcutters and sawyers built timber houses in which to live. These houses had double walls with a layer of sawdust between them.

In the beginning, the timber had been removed mainly by horse and cart. Later janker carts and pole wagons were introduced. Traction engines for road haulage came into use from 1865. Wooden wheels were replaced by iron shod wheels. Rubber tyres began to be used from about 1860.

By now there were over 100 sawmills engaged mainly in the conversion of home grown timber. The sawmills provided a source of rural employment and also met local demands for timber.

Disinterest in home forestry, particularly in government circles, continued into the 20th century as the Empire and cheap overseas timber supplied the needs of the nation. It took World War One to bring home the importance of timber as a raw material, and the dangers of undue reliance upon imported supplies. British forests were plundered for the war effort.

A Scottish Home Timber Merchants' Association had been set up in 1897. By 1914 it was estimated that there were about 200 sawmills in Scotland, mostly portable types.

In 1916 a government committee was set up to consider postwar forestry policy. Despite objections from the Treasury on the grounds of cost, the government accepted the recommendations of the Ackland Report, which served as the backbone of British forestry policy for almost half a century. A massive afforestation programme was prescribed. The Forestry Act 1919 established the Forestry Commission.

In the immediate desert after the war there was no profit to be made from sawmilling and companies hung on by their fingernails. Those that survived until the middle 1930s were then able to develop, still with the same major consumers of British Timber, the mines and the railways. There had been some modernisation. With World War Two, Britain's forests were once again ravaged. Almost all the state forests were under 20 years of age, with little produce of merchantable size.

With the end of the war there had been an urgent demand for housing, and softwood usage rocketed. Home grown timber could not meet the exacting requirements of the construction industry and in the early years this timber was largely supplied by imports from Canada, Scandinavia and Russia.

Then the old coal and rail markets began a long decline, to be replaced by new industries, pulp and paper: Bowaters for example, and in the early 1960s the ill-fated Wiggins Teape mill at Fort William, and St Annes' in Bristol.

Forests planted between the wars began to come into production and sawmillers improved their techniques to compete in the construction market. With the aid of visual and mechanical stress grading, home-grown timber began to be acceptable to the house-builders. This was a major breakthrough.

In the late 70s-early 80s, several Swedish-type sawmills were built in Scotland and Wales and they have been able to produce accurately sawn construction timber. There have been major investments in kiln-drying facilities to complement stress-grading.

THE BSW INVOLVEMENT

The Brownlie family first became involved in sawmilling as A & R Brownlie in 1848 - Alexander and his brother Robert. They were sons of a farming family and started work in Newmains, Lanarkshire, supplying mining timber, mainly pitprops, to Bairds of Dalmellington, and other coalmine owners in the area. In the 1850s railway lines were being put in through the Borders and in 1856 the Brownlie sawmillers and their families came east to Earlston in Berwickshire, where the head office of BSW Timber plc is today. They brought the first power-driven circular saws to the district.

The first bandsaw was installed in Earlston in 1930, a second-hand Belgian machine called the Danckaert. In 1956 the business had 13 mobile mills and two fixed mills.



Sandy Brownlie at their Carlisle sawmill and logyard

SCOTLAND'S SOFTWOOD CONTINUED

In 1981 the company acquired Western Softwood Ltd, a subsidiary of the Imperial Group. Western had just commissioned a new Swedish-type chipper canter bandmill combination mill, and this was the door through which knowledge was gained of modern sawmilling techniques. This was the first successful Swedish-type carcassing producing sawmill in Britain.

Thos Smith and Company (Kirkoswald) Ltd was a family company run by two brothers, Tom and Jim Smith. Their father had set up the company in 1919, and was heavily into the production of mining timber. Jim Smith was probably the first British sawmiller to have substantial knowledge of the techniques of visual and mechanical stress grading, and was very involved in these developments. The Smiths had operated two sawmills, one at Kirkoswald in Ayrshire, the other at Benmore in Argyll. In 1985, with the demise of Riddoch of Rothiemay, they acquired from the receiver the sawmill at Kilmallie, Fort William.

On 4 July 1988 there was a merger of the Brownlie and Smith sawmilling interests which resulted in the formation of BSW Timber Plc - Brownlie, Smith and Western. There are now five softwood sawmills in the group: at Senghenydd and Newbridge on Wye in Wales; Kilmallie and Boat of Garten in Scotland; and of course, the brand new-state-of-the-art sawmill at Carlisle which was commissioned in 1991. There is also a small timber importing operation outside Edinburgh, DW Beattie & Co Ltd; a small hardwood mill in East Lothian; and a pallet-making plant at Linlithgow.

Group turnover in the past year was £88 million. Log consumption in the sawmills was 700,000 cubic metres in total, and the company's harvesting operation in standing timber to feed the sawmills, plus supplying pulp mills and particle board plants, was 900,000 cubic metres of standing trees.

THE WAY FORWARD

The British sawmilling industry today is taking as big a share as it is able to take of the construction market, some 10 per cent in volume terms. The future growth of British forests will double, at least, over the next twenty-five years. Technical advances in the actual production process have been a major feature in the trade's ability to compete.

The industry as everyone knows is very cyclical and it is impossible to predict when the next downward cycle will be. There was a serious recession in 1980 which resulted in sawmills having to take a 25 per cent cut in selling prices. There was another downturn in 1990 from which the industry, from the merchanting end, has not yet fully recovered, although the sawmilling business has been in a better situation, largely due to the devaluation of the pound in October 1993.

Many well known names in the industry in Scotland have not been able to survive these recessions. Pre-1979 there were over 80 sawmill companies. Today there are around 30 members of the Sawmillers Association. Of these only about 15 bona fide sawmills remain in Scotland.

There is no doubt that the raw material availability for sawlogs from our forests is looking very healthy in quantity terms and is expected to rise from 3.4 million cubic metres today to 5.6 million cubic metres in ten years time, and 8.2 million cubic metres by 2020. The industry will grow with the output of the forests, as will the residue-consuming industries.

A.J. Brownlie MIWSc

SIDE LINES

The following is an abstract from a letter received at H.O. From the Health & Safety Executive who would be grateful for any help we might be able to give them.

LOW OXYGEN INCIDENT INVOLVING THE STORAGE OF WOOD.

An incident occurred in August 1994 in which two men died when entering the hold of a ship, to unload a cargo of timber. The men were overcome by raised levels of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide in the ship's hold. The timber was from birch, aspen and alder trees and the bark was intact. The cargo was imported from Estonia.

I have been asked by a colleague to trace details of any similar incidents involving the transport of timber in a confined space and also to find reports which might discuss the potential health risks associated with exposure to wood stored in such conditions. However despite an extensive search of online databases I have been unable to find any information. I have also contacted the Timber Research and Development Association and the Building Research Establishment's Timber Department without success.

Signed Jill Gregory, Search Service Manager, HSE Information Centre.

Both Robert Carlile and Dick McRae have resigned from the Council of Management. They have both made outstanding contributions to the affairs of the IWSc and we are greatly indebted to them.

In previous issues space has been given to publicise the HMCA Medical Plus Plan & Member Select for Household & Motor Insurance. The editor would be pleased to receive any observations you would like to make - for better or worse.

A question in the "Short Answers" section of the Institute's December 1994 Certificate examination asked:

What is meant by Caveat Emptor, and what is its significance?

One candidate answered "Caveat Emptor means empty cells - the timber has reached fibre saturation point"

Well, you can see what he's getting at! J.D.B.

Pat Pilgrim tell us that she is no longer with Crosby Sarek where she was timber buyer. She can be contacted through H.O.

Dave Carney AIWSc reports that he is working with Jeanette Baker at Sheffield Hallam University preparing a paper to be presented at the IWSc Edinburgh Conference next April entitled "Attitudes and Perceptions - The Challenge of Reality for the Forest Industries"

He says the aim of the project is to identify for the first time in the forest based industries, what different types of people and groups believe, why they have the actual attitudes and perceptions that they have and by so doing, better understand the real issues that the forest based industries have to address.

He would be pleased to learn of support for the project by means of practical or financial assistance that might extend the project even further.

DATES OF YOUR DIARY

1995		
Sept	22	IWSc Associate & Certificate Examinations
	26	IWSc AGM, TTF Offices
Oct	25-26	Building Products Show, Hammersmith
	26-27	CSRT Examination BRE, Garston
Dec	7	IWSc Council Meeting, TTF Offices
1996		
Jan	21-22	DIY & Home Improvement Trade Show, Olympia
Feb	8-11	Daily Telegraph Period Homes, Olympia
Feb	27-29	Safety & Health at Work Exhibition, Olympia
April	12-14	IWSc Conference, Edinburgh
Sept	24	IWSc AGM, TTF Offices

OBITUARY

Jim Coulson reports that Jim Ellison FIWSc passed away earlier this year. Jim who was in his seventies was a founder member & past Chairman of the Tyne-Tees Branch. He was a man of great energy, and an outstanding wood scientist: he will be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues.

FORESTRY TOUR OF CANADA

The Canadian Forestry Service invites the President to a Forestry Tour of Canada

Part 1 Nova Scotia (Part 2 will be in the next issue of the Newsletter)

It is not every day that a letter arrives in your pigeon hole inviting you to join a ten day, trans-continental forestry tour. However when it happens, in this case courtesy of the Canadian Forestry Service, timetables are rearranged, appointments cancelled and apologies for absence offered to enable the great escape to be made.

The 20th June arrived and all of the participants assembled at Heathrow. Michael Clark, First Secretary (Forestry) at the Canadian High Commission in London, was the tour leader and organizer, aided by his colleague Gil Martin. Michael is a keen supporter of the IWSc and the CHC was one of the main sponsors of this year's conference at Bristol. Other participants included Prof. Alan Petty of the Department of Forestry at the University of Aberdeen, Prof. Adrian McDonald, Director of the Environment Centre of Leeds University, Tom Jenkins, Lecturer in the School of Agricultural and Forest Sciences at the University of Wales, Bangor, David Alder, Marketing Development Director of the Brand Paper Company, David Pryke, Director General of the National Association of Paper Merchants and Fraser Allen, Editor of Newspaper Focus.



Ansell, Martin, Jenkins, Petty, Allen, McDonald, Clark, Calow, Alder and Pryke at journey's end in Vancouver

Canadian forestry is currently under heavy pressure from environmental groups, particularly in British Columbia, where cutting of ancient temperate rainforest, clearcutting policy and damage to watercourses from logging are criticised. Canada has been dubbed the "Brazil of the North" although there is a clear and important difference between deforestation, practised in South America, and sustained forestry, practised in Canada. A further problem relates to the collapse of Canada's export market of green timber to Europe due to plant health worries, namely transmission of the pinewood nematode, described in detail in the Timber Trades Journal of 1 April 1995. However the pulp and paper export market is still buoyant. The tour allowed our group to obtain a clear view of Canadian forestry from the Atlantic to the Pacific and to form our own opinions on environmental issues.

Canada is now the biggest country in the world, occupying six time zones but with a population of less than 30 million people. As you fly towards Halifax across the province of Nova Scotia the first thing that strikes you is that there are an awful lot of trees down there and very few centres of population. Despite being about 375 miles long and 100 miles wide Nova Scotia has a population of less than one million. As its name suggests, settlers from Scotland have left their mark and indeed Scottish place and family names abound across all twelve Canadian provinces or territories. Nova Scotia is an acadian forest region and the principal species are red spruce, balsam fir, maple and yellow birch. About 73% of the land area is forested and unusually almost 70% of this land is privately owned. Over 68% of the tree stock is over 40 years old and 60% of trees are softwoods.

We were met by Peter MacQuarrie of the Department of Natural Resources and Warren Calow of the Canadian Forestry Service and proceeded by bus to Shubenacadie Fire Control Centre where the use of a helicopter and underslung "bambi bucket" was demonstrated for fighting forest fires. Nova Scotia has a network of fire towers which allow fires to be located rapidly by triangulation. Fire frequently has a devastating effect on Canadian forests. During our visit fires were blazing across much of northern Canada according to the Globe and Mail, a Canadian national newspaper. Stora Forest Industries were later to show us an area of forest where over 14,000 hectares of trees were destroyed by fire in 1976 (a hectare is 10,000 square metres or 2.47 acres). This area is now a mature well managed forest representing some of the 100 million trees that Stora had planted in Nova Scotia since 1960.

Accommodation for the next two days was in a hunting lodge and on the first morning we enjoyed an excellent series of presentations from members of the Renewable Resources Branch of the NS Department of Natural Resources. We examined the forest resource, forest industries, land tenure, management, parks and protected areas, flora and fauna and the environmental perspective. In the afternoon we hit the trail and over the next 24 hours followed miles of roads and dusty forest trails to visit nine field tour locations none of which was first growth forest. Our image of plantations in the UK is of serried ranks of carefully organised trees whereas in Nova Scotia the picture is quite different. Trees are quite disorganised, although spacing is approximately even, and second growth forest is frequently naturally regenerated. Small trees on the forest floor, stunted by the canopy, may be many years old, but their growth rate will accelerate following harvest of the mature growth.

It is impossible here to describe all the sites we visited but the first at Dryden Lake is an interesting example of modified harvesting techniques which ensures natural regeneration. White spruce is clear cut but bands and islands of shelterwood are left to allow seed to be scattered in the harvested regions and to form wildlife corridors. Trees are also left on either side of water courses (riparian zones) to protect wildlife and water quality. A potential problem is windblow which can bring down the newly exposed shelterwood so riparian zones need to be at least 30 meters wide. A newly harvested region is a chaotic sight with tree stumps, small diameter debris and crushed undergrowth in evidence. The same site viewed five to ten years on presents a completely different picture with an even coverage of young trees often thinned to maintain growth rates. Where species are mixed, for example balsam fir and red spruce, one species is often the faster grower. In this case balsam fir is the faster grower and reaches a peak annual growth rate after 40 years. If the forest is thinned at this stage the growth of the red spruce will then accelerate.

We went on to visit a Christmas tree plantation, the fascinating tree breeding centre at Debert and a typical privately owned woodlot where a small sawmill was in operation. In general the size of trees in Nova Scotia is relatively small and we were to see a progressive increase in average tree size as we travelled to the west. Care for the environment in Nova Scotia is a major concern and it is clear that agencies such as the NS Naturalists Society are working hand in hand with foresters to protect forest ecosystems. The forester has a highly complex task of management. As well as fire, disease and insect attack can cause devastating damage, for example the eastern spruce budworm which attacks white spruce and balsam fir. In the next instalment I will move on to Alberta, the Rocky Mountains and inland British Columbia.

Martin Ansell, FIWSc.

BRANCH LINES

LIVERPOOL

The success of the IWSc, as with so many similar organisations, hinges primarily on the efforts of its voluntary members. Here in Liverpool we have a strong and healthy Branch, with a keen, dedicated committee, most of whom have been working and contributing for some time, some for more than twenty years, and getting new members on to the Committee has proved difficult.

We have decided that we need to be more pro-active in "catching" potential new members and get more members interested in running the Institute of Wood Science, rather than just being in membership. Only this way can we ensure that our Branch remains in the best of health, and continues to put on a programme of interesting and attractive meetings.

Talking of which, we are presently finalising our programme for the 1995/96 season, provisional details of which are included with this newsletter. We have no fewer than six top-class events planned plus our Branch AGM, and we are confident that there will be something to interest everyone in the programme. Members with a particularly keen eye will note that our famous and celebrated Annual Dinner is missing from the list. This is not because there is no dinner, but simply that we have decided to move the event from its traditional February spot, where we were in direct competition with several other major Trade functions. The 38th Annual Dinner will now take place in October 1996, and if successful, thereafter in October of each year.

Paul G. Davies AIWSc, (Chairman)

EAST ANGLIA

Since formation, in January of this year, under the "Stewardship" of Graham Skillen (Chairman), Glenn Read (Vice-Chairman) and Peter Garbett (Secretary), two successful events have been held with circa twenty members participating in each.

On Wednesday, 15 March, a presentation on the harvesting/production of Parana Pine was held at Churchill College, Cambridge, which was sponsored by Gearbulk (UK/UCM Timber), and was followed, on Wednesday, 21 June, by a visit to the Port of Felixstowe.

A visit to Suffolk College, Ipswich, has been arranged on Wednesday, 18 October, to view their Machine Woodworking training facilities and a review of the training/development activities on offer.

Also, on Wednesday, 13 December, a joint meeting has been tentatively arranged with the Institute of Logistics.

It is hoped that a limited number of tickets will be available to members for the East Anglia Timber Trade Association's first Annual Dinner. This will be held at King's College, Cambridge, on Wednesday, 27 September.

Peter Garbett, MIWSc (Secretary)

SCOTLAND

The Scotland Branch continues to provide a vibrant forum for members in Scotland and is well supported.

We have continued a varied and interesting programme of Branch meetings, with recent highlights including an excellent presentation on the subject of modern timber domes. Examples of some magnificent structures were shown, regrettably none of them within the United Kingdom.

We were very pleased to welcome the IWSc President to our AGM and were very interested to hear his comments on the Institute and the forthcoming National Conference, scheduled to be held in Edinburgh during April 1996. At the AGM, David Sulman (TRADA Technology Ltd, Stirling), John Palfreyman (University of Abertay, Dundee) and Eric Wyllie (Timber Engineer, Edinburgh), were confirmed as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary respectively, for the period 1995/96.

A group of members recently enjoyed a visit to the Scottish Maritime Museum at Irvine, Ayrshire, where they saw several restoration and conservation projects, including the Carrick, a former clipper, which had been a popular landmark on the River Clyde in Glasgow.

A presentation by Frances Sullivan of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, on the subject of the Forest Stewardship Council, attracted a large audience and provoked considerable discussion and debate. We shall be continuing this debate in our new season of events.

David Sulman, AIWSc (Chairman)

The High Wycombe Branch is no more. It has ceased to be. It is an ex-branch.

Do not despair, we are not a dead parrot, merely a metamorphosing one. We have changed our name to the "Thames Valley and Chilterns Branch". Although this seems a little bit of a mouthful we feel it more accurately represents the distribution of our membership and we hope it will make more of our members feel part of the branch.

The forthcoming season will see the new Branch "out on the road" again with a total of nine meetings including joint meetings with the Institute of Biology and the Oil and Colour Chemists Association. December sees us studying the maturation of whisky in oak barrels which should set us all up for a good Christmas.

Dr Vic Kearley AIWSc (Chairman)

WESTERN COUNTIES

The Branch has enjoyed an excellent series of meetings in the 1994/95 season and attendances have been good. Our first outside venue for the year was the SS Great Britain.

In October the Joinery Managers Association joined us for a comprehensive presentation on wood adhesives expertly delivered by Trevor Mynott of Dynochem.

At our last meeting before Christmas Malcom Cowley from Medite gave a comprehensive presentation on medium density fibreboard (MDF).

Steven Orley invited the Branch to the delightful, wood-lined BPIB showrooms in February and he extolled the virtues of softwoods and hardwoods from Eastern Canada. Returning to Clarks Wood in March we enjoyed an excellent talk by St. John Hollis from bespoke joinery manufacturers Shapland and Petter, based in Barnstaple.

Our final destination was a visit to the Stourhead Gardens in Wiltshire where we enjoyed a guided tour of the National Trust property. Overall, Western Counties has had a very worthwhile series of meetings and if the enthusiastic turn out at the May AGM is anything to go by, the 1995/96 season should be equally compelling.

Dr. Martin Ansell, FIWSc (Vice-Chairman)

Editor Maurice Holloway AIWSc. Institute of Wood Science, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe.