



SCOTTISH WOODLAND HISTORY CONFERENCE

Thursday 24th October 2019
Scottish Natural Heritage Centre, Battleby

2019 is the centenary of the Forestry Commission, and although it ceased to exist in Scotland earlier this year, we felt it was a good opportunity to reflect on 100 years of state forestry. The Forestry Commission came into being in 1919, stimulated in large measure by the significant impact of wartime felling on British forests and the need to build a strategic reserve for the future. However, plans for state intervention in forestry had been in the pipeline for at least a decade before the Great War. Once formed, FC had a major influence on how our landscape and forests changed over the course of the 20th century. To mark the occasion, we have gathered together speakers who will present on some key and interesting aspects of the development of state forestry over the last 100 years.

We are delighted that James Miller, author of *The Foresters*, has agreed to speak and take us through the events leading up to the formation of FC and its early years. James Ogilvie, retired head of social and planning policy at FCS, has kindly offered to outline the key developments for the Commission over the course of its history. Charles Warren, senior lecturer in Geography at St Andrews University, has researched and written about managing Scotland's environment, including forestry. He will reflect on the dramatic policy change of 1988, enduringly associated with the Flow Country controversy - what led up to it, and the subsequent transformations in Scottish forestry. We are also privileged to include Andy Neustein on the programme. Andy's long career with FC began in 1953 at a time when forestry was heavily dependent on manual labour – the days of the axe and cross-cut saw. Much of his career was spent in research and he was in the thick of the mechanical and silvicultural revolutions of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. He is going to chart the significant features of this period and give us insight into what it was like to be part of these developments. We are also very pleased that long-standing NWDG member and respected ecologist, Neil MacKenzie, is going to address the impact that 100 years of state forestry had on native woodlands.

Mairi Stewart, author of *Voices of the Forest*, is going to draw on her work on the social history of Scottish forestry, to reflect on how the changing nature of forestry impacted on the people on the ground, by drawing on the oral history testimony gathered for Glenmore forest in Strathspey. Integral to the social history project was the development of a web-based image library – *Forestry Memories* – which, since its creation in 2007, has accumulated well over 4,000 images with accompanying descriptions. Retired forester Norman Davidson has co-ordinated the work on this website for many years and we are delighted that he will present a snapshot of images reflecting 100 years of Scottish forestry.

We hope this year's conference will provide an opportunity for those interested in Scottish forestry history to come along and reflect on the impact of 100 years of state forestry, past, present and future.

For further information about the conference programme, please contact mairi_skye@hotmail.com