

## History mystery

On a pier in New Quay, Wales, stands a heavy wooden post mounted on a cairn and bearing two plaques.

One reads: "In proud remembrance of the fallen of two world wars; 1914-18; 1939-1945. Let light perpetual shine upon them."

The other reads: "This post was presented by the staff of the Forestry Commission in Cardiganshire."

Can any readers tell Slasher more about how and when this memorial came about? Contact details are on the back page.

Slasher is grateful to Kevin Harding, a native of New Quay now working in Silvan House, for uncovering this little corner of Commission history.



## Czech-out volunteer

Volunteering can be a fantastic way to use up accumulated annual leave, or to enjoy a whole different holiday experience.

That's what Grace Ford found when she volunteered for 10 days' conservation work in the Czech Republic.

The New Forest admin officer joined a project run by the European Conservation Action Network (EUCAN) project, which was set up by The Kingcombe Trust to establish conservation exchanges between the UK and other European Union countries. Grace said:

"This is a brilliant scheme. I joined 15 other volunteers on a mission to save Butterfly Paradise, which is 18 hectares of former communal pasture in Zdanice. It's heavily invaded by false acacia, blackthorn, dogrose, hawthorn and other emerging scrub, but the experience of the team complemented the task and we yielded loppers, bowsaws, brushcutters and chainsaws in a rather stunning valley.

"Needless to say, it's not all about working: we were well hosted by the local community and enjoyed a number of cultural events."

Anyone interested in joining a EUCAN project should visit

[www.kingcombecentre.org.uk](http://www.kingcombecentre.org.uk), contact [nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk) or call Nigel on 01963 23559 or 07891 776767.

**GETTING STUCK IN:** Grace gets down to work in the Czech Republic.



## Rory's lord of a literary manor

When you've spent much of your life in the quirky world of the landed gentry, you're bound to collect plenty of amusing anecdotes to fill a session at the pub.

Or fill a book.

And that's exactly what Rory Clark, West Midlands land agent (pictured), has done. Three books, in fact.

Rory used to help manage great estates such as Badminton and Althorp before joining the Commission. And he's used his experiences, like James Herriot of "Vet" books fame, as the basis of a series of amusing books about country life.

The star of the books is James Aden, a fictional land agent of the fictional Frampton estate under the mismanagement of an elderly owner.

Rory admits: "I suppose to a certain extent James is based on me. It's fair to say that I've picked up stories and experiences that have made their way into the books. I've always kept personal diaries, and thought I'd use them to write a book, and that's how the first one started."

He also admits that some of his current colleagues might just recognise traces of themselves in the latest book, "but I always change the names!"

He hopes James will make it on to television: a script writer has already drafted a TV script for the first book and is trying to do something with it.

The books, published by Good Life Press, are entitled *You've Done What, My Lord?* (published in 2000), *An English Country Manner* (2002), and *Style and Manors* (2008).

## Dornoch kids get back to nature



**BACK TO NATURE:** Stephen keeps a watchful eye as Cubs cook over a campfire they made without matches.

Scouts in the Far North of Scotland reckon their local foresters are real bright sparks. They've been learning survival skills in Rumster Forest with the Dornoch Forest District team - and safe and responsible fire lighting was one of the first skills they learned.

They even learned how to do it without matches!

Other activities have included bushcraft, orienteering, map reading, camp-fire songs and bird box construction, as well as demonstrations from Assynt Mountain Rescue Team and Wick Karate Club. Stephen Fraser, Dornoch forester, explained:

"The local Scout group camped in the forest from Friday to Sunday, so we organised some bushcraft activities for them.

"There were 70 young people here, and we showed them basic fire-lighting skills.

They started by collecting small-diameter grasses and gradually built the fire up with big grasses, twigs and, eventually, bigger branches and small logs."

No matches were used; instead, the Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts learned how to use a fire steel to make a spark and set the grasses alight. Stephen added:

"The camp was a fantastic success. The kids loved it and are keen to come back and learn more bushcraft skills, so we're hoping to hold four events next year."

## Shelter from the storm...

The Royal Hunting Forest of Rockingham has become home to what might be England's first woodland log shelters.

Northants forest management staff were intrigued when Danish visitors told them about these cosy alternatives to tents, which are popular in Denmark's forests.

So European Leader+ funds were secured to pay for a Danish craftsman to come over and show staff and volunteers how to build the turf-roof shelters using timber growing around them. Cheryl Joyce, community ranger, said:

"We've built six shelters, each sleeping eight people, at two sites in Fineshade and Fermyn Woods. Each shelter site has a compost toilet and a purpose-built fire site. We used all our own timber and were supported by volunteers, so it's been a very sustainable project.

"The shelters are aimed at young people, although anyone can use them. We've had lots of interest from the Duke

of Edinburgh Awards, Scouts, Guides and Rotary Clubs.

"We have the design guidelines and are happy to share our new skills with other Commission staff. It would be great to see a network of shelters springing up around the country." In fact, they've already spread to the New Forest.

The European funding also paid for a trip to Denmark for Rockingham staff to see Scandinavian shelters in use there.

For more information, visit [www.heltude.dk](http://www.heltude.dk) or the UK Shelter Network at [www.forestry.gov.uk/rockingham](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/rockingham).

**GIMME SHELTER!** The builders take a well earned break in front of their new woodland shelters. From left to right they are Phil Aldous, Clive Solesbury, Steven Cross (forest craftsmen), Richard Eckton (wildlife ranger), Tim Aldous (forest craftsman) and Robert Shelton (volunteer).

