

Bart and Anne Venner

Time	Topic / Event
0.00	Setting up equipment
0.16	<i>Asked about family – from Isle of Wight?</i> Father worked in shipyard during war on Isle of Wight – produced destroyers, minesweepers. Uncle joined Polish navy 3 rd Sept 1939 – as Hitler about to advance on Poland. He didn't have a job before this – possibly played in a dance band. <i>(Your Polish uncle?)</i> Yes – he fought in the Atlantic convoys. By end of war was married to mother's younger sister. Became carers in posh houses. Lived in a variety of these. Both died in and buried on Isle of Wight.
1.57	Grandmother and grandfather, didn't know him – he worked in coke factory. Grandmother had four daughters – she was four foot (AV – 'ten') – give an inch or two - 'my arm longer than her reach!' She kept piece of metal pipe – in case a German paratrooper came to the door – quite vicious! They lived in Cowes - BV born there. Bombed in 1942 in air raid. Street above wasn't there anymore. Brick wall to dockyard, house was very close, and so were lucky the bombs went along the road above.
3.38	Moved to a farm. The milkman offered them to go there. Father then walked to the shipyard to work. Family stayed at the farm until able to go back to school, four weeks later. No more real trouble with wartime until V1s were around. Sat with mother under a tree and watched doodlebugs go by – ok as long as made 'rrrrr' noise – once it stopped only 9 seconds until it came down. Aimed at Southampton – a lot of boats there.
5.06	<i>(You saw that?)</i> Yes, when they show it on TV I think 'I can remember that!' We cheered at things that happened. <i>(Do you remember end of war?)</i> VE day – yes! Think there was a party – was 11 years old so didn't like parties – or girls! Mother made good food so didn't go to the street party. Roads not made up in that part pf town. Think parties were down in the tarmacked areas of town.
6.38	<i>Asked about early schooling.</i> Walked up to George Street school. Took 11 plus, went by train to grammar school. Left at 15 and went into RAF for National Service at 18 years and 3 weeks. Hair cut short. Spent first few weeks at training place in Lancashire then moved on to (pause) what is now a forest, had been a camp in WW1, reopened as camp in / after WW2, for 9 weeks training and square bashing. Wanted to do air sea rescue, and live at home – but told no!!
9.21	Suggested BV join the Snowdrops - military police - as an officer cadet. Didn't want to be an officer cadet, wanted to be an ordinary clerk. Had a job with forestry commission (on completing National Service) so wanted to understand working in an office. Was in office for nearly two years, ending up in charge of sending 5000+ people abroad every week. They trained at the station, and then got pushed off wherever they were to go. Knew where they would be sent before they did!
10.28	<i>You alluded to knowing you were going to work for the Forestry Commission. Had you done this before (going to National Service)?</i> Yes. Spoke to headmaster before leaving school - first head was ex-army, second was from RAF – didn't want to stay on to do A levels. Didn't take maths, but passed several exams. Told Head he wanted to do forestry. Had a job lined up at Parkhurst Forest. Told Head 'you get paid for coming here, I don't!' Was head of house/ skipper of teams at this time. Head agreed so left that same day.

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12.32	Went to job in Forest. <i>(How was the job lined up for you?)</i> Some years before had wanted a rowing boat, so went there. A man who worked there offered a boat for £8. Got a fortnight's job while on holiday (from school) – got £10 for a fortnight's work. Paid man, gave mother £2. Had boat at a place called Shelfleet. Rowed the boat with a friend. Not a calm day, took most of the day to get into Cowes harbour. Friend's father was a manager at gas works – used a mooring there. Used the boat for fishing. Went into forestry, until called up to RAF and went straight back after leaving RAF.
14.20	<i>Sounds as though you were capable...what attracted you to the forestry?</i> Pay was last thing on your mind – it was £4 a week! Liked to work with trees in fresh air. (AV – 'you were a forestry student') yes. After the RAF had already been selected to go to Parkend Forestry School. Took exam at Queen's House in Lyndhurst. O level grades were also good enough to get in. <i>(what year was that?)</i> 1955. Came to Parkend in September. Boat from Isle of Wight, train from Southampton, picked up from Lydney. 'Load of blokes like me'. Trees right down to road edge – had been used to small forests. Did a winter and summer there, then went on an exchange course. Went to Faskally. While there, told wouldn't be going back to Parkend school because a school in East Anglia was closing, so had to put some students in there to keep staff employed. Six students went straight to Parkend from Faskally then were taken the next day to Linford Hall in East Anglia. Spent next year there.
17.49	Asked at school where would want to be posted on qualifying – chose Forest of Dean, as felt there was much to learn in the area. Posted in December 1957 (Brief chat with wife AV re the date) – to Soudley. Worked for nearly two years with someone known from the Isle of Wight. Then moved near to Dilke Hospital with Jack Lave – worked for some time until he moved, then with Jack Wade - with him planted 260,000 conifers - met him recently – he was BV's boss. Mentioned a Faulkner, and Jeff Carter who looked after Woodlands from Lydbrook to Chepstow.
20.25	Was doing work on wildlife side, trying to get rid of squirrels e.g. through poisoning them. Then did four years of work talking to school groups and other groups. Then became first forester to look after campsites – first place to take in one million pounds income. Then went into woodland side – again first to make one million quid – the boy with the golden touch!
21.21	In (19)81 became private woodlands forester for the whole county – stayed there until retirement.
21.39	<i>Can is ask you some questions about that....You mentioned meeting your wife around 1959. Met her before that – married in 1959. (When did you meet?)</i> (AV – laughed) She lived near Dilke Hospital – saw this vision float down the road! (AV - 'on my way to the hospital') asked baker, Blewitt, member of cycle club, who she and her friends were. Trying to recall what he said! Met her – wrote first of all. (AV – still got the letter) . Went to pictures in Cinderford. (Discussion with wife re the film)
23.10	<i>Where did you get married?</i> (At St John's Church, Cinderford) then lived in Anne's house (referred to a painting on wall) – lived there but no electric or running water, so Commission said must move.. <i>(This was a house near the Dilke?)</i> (AV - yes just three houses) ... to Churchill Lodge. Said, there is no running water there either – did possibly have a telephone and electricity - so still no good to a family man. Then offered to live at Cannop – cottages related to Cannop Mine, built by Crown. Moved into colliery manager's house by railway line bridge <i>(query location in relation to Cannop Villas?)</i> Villas are first, then the cottages. It was two cottages into one. Top corridor 43 feet long. Four bedrooms, bathroom and toilet, a Rayburn (illegal – not

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	close enough to the fire to heat water). When given chance to move opted to come to present home – bought it. Amazed allowed to do it – had electricity. Didn't have a telephone, but got one via a man from cycle club who worked for BT – in exchange for 8 Christmas trees (got for nothing from Forestry). Bartering!
26.15	<i>That was in the 1960s? Yes (You had two children?)</i> By the time we moved we had three. (AV - Yes – Cannop was a big house. Catherine was about five when we moved here – she thought it was like a dolls' house! Been here 47 years now).
27.10	<i>Q to AV – you were born in Forest?</i> At Foxes Bridge. Father was colliery manager at Foxes Bridge Colliery but died when AV was three – don't remember him. Mother had been widowed before – had three children. Grandpa lived with the family, and uncle and two step brothers from mother's prior marriage. (Husband - aside re the house at Foxes Bridge) Yes, it was the end house – demolished now. Uncle was single – a widower.
28.40	When moved to present house, mum had cottage in Cinderford, died aged 94 - just before 94 th birthday. For last six months lived with AV's niece in Newent.
29.20	<i>Q – Was it a struggle after loss of father?</i> It was, AV was three, and brother born after father died. She was stoic and just got on with it. (aside from husband – short discussion re mother working / Anne's work)
30.22	<i>Q - Re Schooling.</i> Went to Bilson School, and then Severn View School. Left school at 15. (There were remarkable graduates of Bilson School – Leonard Clark was a teacher?) Remember him. After leaving school went to Wallsworth Hall (had a photo) - owned by De Winton family. Wonderful house, had a nursery for children 0 – 5 years. Did a two year nursery nurse course there. Then worked at the Dilke for 15 years then worked for Marie Curie. Always had caring jobs.
31.57	<i>Q - Which work did you prefer?</i> Loved both – Marie Curie work was 1:1 – sad as they all died, but enjoyed doing it. (Aside from husband leading to a discussion re a Welsh man who died from TB – a BBC producer. Tried to recall name, son was called Alec)
33.32	<i>Q – Did you work through having children?</i> Yes. After leaving the Dilke, children were still small so did various other jobs. Alison went to university at 18, Katherine didn't go to university, but did voluntary work as wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She was eldest at 18 of group of 10-12 people. One young man fell, and she dealt with it – contacted ambulanced, police, his parents – after this she went in for nursing and has done it for 30 years. Trained in Bristol, worked at American Airbase, then in New York specialising in cardiac care.
35.30	<i>Q – Do you have grandchildren?</i> Yes, two there and two grandsons live in Monmouth. Son died eight years ago, has Japanese wife – Lewis is 22 and Alex is 19 and doing astrophysics. Lewis has health issues (epilepsy) – discovered when they were living in Tokyo when Lewis was three. Went out there for ten weeks. Alex was only two months old at the time. Had been before, different when on own – could be difficult. Lindsay was a language teacher and mother stayed in hospital with Lewis – in for four weeks before they operated. Used to take the baby to large cemeteries two or three times a day. Alex was a tiny baby when Anne arrived, five months old on her return. The Japanese people were very courteous, would bow. One lady crossed road to speak to them in English. Two years later, visited again and again met this lady. Couldn't even speak to Keiko's mother. (The boys are in Monmouth now?) Yes, Keiko has a good job.
39.59	<i>Q – Do you remember the second world war?</i> Yes. The German prisoners of war were near Foxes Bridge, the Italians, and Americans were also there. Never seen so much food! Lived in woods – delivered shale for roads by Speech House.

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	<i>(Impressions of POWs?)</i> They were ok – mum made dinners for them and they gave her coffee.
41.05	The Americans – had trestle tables with so much food – in the war! Several married local people. The Americans just went back home. Americans took self and brother in a jeep to and from school from Foxes Bridge.
41.55	Used to play in the woods. No dangers of getting hurt. Recall picking up a hand grenade and taking to mum – about ten then. Took it to police station. Told to put it gently on the table. It was live- still had the pin in. <i>(Comment from interviewer)</i> The policeman had a daughter Ann – he was an inspector.
43.24	<i>Q – Do you remember rationing?</i> Yes – when a student at Wallsworth Hall had 4 ounces sugar, four ounces butter and so much tea to have a meal. As there were children had a room with huge cans of milk – delivered every day or every few days. Had a walled garden with grapes, and fruit. <i>(Were the children unwell?)</i> No. Think they were being fostered /not wanted. They were up for adoption. One, Bobby, had club feet – he was adopted. A friend’s mother fostered two boys.
45.14	The house is still there – Nature in Art.
45.35	<i>Q – What doctors were at the Dilke at that time?</i> Surgeon was Doctor Tandy – worked with him for a long time – an amazing man. Arthur Hooper was the anaesthetist. Lovely hospital – not too big. Had 22 beds and maternity of 6 beds and one separate room – it was always busy.
46.16	<i>Q to BV re time at Forestry Schools – what was learnt at these?</i> Five day week – three spent in woods. Thursday was in school which went into evening when studied first aid. This was taught in Cinderford – went by lorry. Learnt a lot – it stuck.
47.13	<i>Q – Was Parkend International?</i> Yes. There were 50 students, two from Kenya, two from (pause) South Africa, and at the end of that year, four from Uganda. They came in summer and had to go to Gloucester, Westgate Street, to buy clothes as Ugandan clothing wasn’t suitable – too cold. They played cricket barefoot, hadn’t seen pads. One of the Kenyans was of German extraction. His family went away for weekend, Kikuyu attacked other farms - but not theirs – drove English out.
49.22	<i>Reflection on Parkend and Q re working role in the forest.</i> Worked as Assistant Forester to the Foresters. At first there were thirteen divisions, each with a Forester in charge. One covered Parkend to Lydney – not very big – Mike Dunn. Ian Faulkener’s patch was from Chepstow to Lydbrook – long thin patch. Ian used to ride horse, at weekends, to see what had been done in the forest. (AV - He was a Scotsman)
50.46	<i>Q- Was there a gang of forest workers?</i> At Soudley Beat had 13 workers, Blakeney Hill had another 13 workers. At Centre in ‘59 had 15 workers. Had different groups in different villages along the Wye Valley. When at Soudley spoke to Forest clerk, Pat Reynolds, to find out from time sheets who was related to who. All interrelated in Soudley and Blakeney Hill.
52.24	When raining would go into wet shed. One man told him that another ‘thick was his uncle’! An invalid from first war – deaf on one ear and had a limp.
53.14	<i>Q – What was it like coming from Isle of Wight to FoD – how did Foresters differ?</i> In Parkhurst Forest had 6 or 7 workers, and small groups elsewhere. Not that many <i>(more in the FoD?)</i> yes – more intensive forestry.
54.13	<i>Q – Were they different types of people?</i> Challenge in both FoD and East Anglia. Woken first morning at Parkend by workers going to – (pause) what’s the name of the colliery – Princess Royal. They were walking down the street talking – couldn’t understand them. Same situation in East Anglia. Had a fellow from Wells Next the Sea, in North Norfolk – couldn’t understand them either. Language was totally

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	different across Norfolk. Intonation meant always sounded as though they were asking a question. In the FoD very quickly learned the Forest lingo – it was very strong in those days – especially Ruardean.
56.20	<i>Q – Your role was very much practical forestry in those days?</i> Had a forest office, in Soudley, so some of work was a desk job. Roof came off one day in a storm. After that a new office was built at Lightmoor Colliery site. This was before it became a saw mill.
57.30	<i>Q – What did job entail?</i> Some was time of year dependent – felling was year round. Tree planting was late winter / early spring. (<i>asked about the species</i>) Most of the oaks had been planted during war with France – 1810 – most had matured. All oak from centre part of forest was cut and used to fence M4 motorway – hundreds of tons of wood. Half a crown a cubic metre – in theory not its value. Some places were replanted with oak, but a lot was with conifer. If you stand on top of New Fancy tip and look towards Cinderford that’s where conifers were planted in 1966, after the severe winter of 65. 260,000 spruce. They grew quickly – a lot have been planted again. Some larch were planted as fire breaks – to quell the flames a bit due to their different texture.
1.00.05	<i>Q – Was the replanting due to storm damage?</i> No – due to the felling of the oak trees. Spruce was planted to fill the gaps in the woodland. Not many places in the Dean where oak grow properly. Cannop and Parkend, can be good. Most are the result of kids planting acorns – the trees the acorns were collected from weren’t going to produce good trees anyway. Had a fit of horrible oak growing all over the place. These were cut in the early 60s to produce the fencing. The land they came from was pretty poor. (<i>That’s why they were horrible oak?</i>) I could show places where there are Douglas Fir, native species, growing where the oak were, places where adders used to lie – had to be careful walking there. Had to carry a stick to hook the adders away. Now a plantation – changed a lot. Planted Admiral oak there to commemorate Battle of Trafalgar. Everyone who planted one of these trees put their name on it – the Venner family has a tree.
1.02.52	<i>Q – What year was that?</i> Fifteen years, maybe longer.
1.03.13	<i>Q – Was this replanting a good strategy?</i> Nice to commemorate Trafalgar. (<i>Thinking about the earlier replanting?</i>) Had to do what we were given to do. On Isle of Wight, were sent conifers, so had to plant them. By ten years later they had been cut down – ‘no damn good’. (<i>Who decided the planting policy?</i>) The boss – the Deputy Surveyor of the Dean. They made the plans and ordered the trees, foresters had to plant them.
1.04.12	<i>Q – Re the jobs that made a million – one was tourism holidays?</i> Took it on in 1981 – no, 70 something. Mike Dunn the Forester was moved to a new job. Had learnt from him, e.g. lectures given in the evenings. Did one in Lydney, after which started doing these lectures alone and running campsites all over the forest. Produced toilet blocks. George Sansom Baker was good at organising and as scout leader saw the need.
1.06.09	First was at Christchurch, then a much bigger one at Bracelands. Both had toilet blocks. County Council had Bracelands House for taking groups of children. Other small sites were dotted all over the forest. (Dialogue with wife to recall name of a ‘big site down the river by the Wye Bridge’). A log cabin was built there – stuff stored in garage and at colliery at Cannop – taken from there to Biblins. This was also done under Mr Sansom Baker who took the money from annual accounts to create campsites.
1.08.09	Used to have three or four car rallies a year. The repairs to the roads was ‘a bit hit and miss.’ Decided to make money from rallying, with a rate per mile. This meant

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	roads could be repaired when rally was finished. (Brief pause / voices over each other). Organised several of the rallies. Person next door was a chief engineer, who had driven incoronation rally. He was in charge of part of Africa (Tanganyika) – he had charge of one area. Used to drive mini cars for various teams. Had to change to mother's maiden name as surname was (Bill) Muddle! Didn't always respond to mother's name! He drove first mini to Tanganyika from England. A brilliant driver, acted as his map reader – gave directions even in middle of night. Never lost a rally in the Dean across a ten year period. Then he had a Lotus Elan, nearly hit a wall on Brecon Beacons and realised he couldn't afford to get car repaired so gave up rallying.
1.11.09	<i>Sounds as though you enjoyed it?</i> He lived next door. Moved to be next door to them as great friends. After two year he was promoted to a job in Sussex. And later he was moved to Scotland, controlling all the road racing. Had great engineering technique – had been aught before the war – mechanical engineering at Oxford University. Spent the war flying Lancasters. One of two men to survive war flying Lancasters had to bail out once, plane flown out over south England, over sea, but drifted back over land to land.
1.13.10	<i>Asked if needed a break – no. Q - Re the successful marketing job?</i> It involved organising felling of mature conifers. Used lorries from Ross, taking timber to Kent to a saw mill for Norway Spruce. Used two drivers every day taking 30-40 tons to a papermaking company. Local timber had gone to coal mines in Dean. But more organisation needed to transport it across the country. We had a market for it, so we moved it – where the money was.
1.14.45	<i>Q – This was after the tourism job?</i> Did four years in tourism then swapped with a mate, to do timber. (<i>Seem to be two competing parts of forest activities?</i>) I enjoyed one more than other, won't say which was which. (Laughter). In tourism meet a variety of people every day. In timber meet the same drivers, taking huge lorries along M4 and round London.
1.16.13	<i>Q – Does the paradox of tourism versus producing timber remain a conflict today?</i> Now it's enhanced more towards tourism. (<i>Is that a good thing?</i>) It brings people in. When Bracelands opened the warden (Bernard) lived in Christchurch and BV lived in current home. Knew would be busy on Bank Holiday weekends – would be full. Had an arrangement with farmer on Symonds Yat road - he would get the money for people taking their caravans there. They would go back to Forest once space was available.
1.17.47	<i>Now, a lot of competition between cycling, riding, running etc. Was it a problem in your time?</i> Had trouble with horse riders first of all, thought they had rights to forest. Boss, Ian Faulkner, rode a horse, he understood campsites as had two, and understood horses as well. He encouraged horse owners to have adequate insurance in case they injured anyone. Cyclists hadn't taken off in those days – started in the 80s – became a mass sport. Now there are 'streams of them'. BV is earliest member of Forest of Dean Cycling Club... (Trying to recall date of joining club)...guess 1957.
1.20.06	<i>Q – Views on wild boar?</i> Would kill the lot. No use in the FoD because of the damage they do e.g. along Valley Road in Cinderford. Don't like them in the woods. Last one was shot over 200 years ago. Came back because of foot and mouth. People realised they couldn't get rid of the boar, had to have a paper trail of where it was born etc. when owners didn't have that.. (Around this time) BV went to Lydbrook, where the bridge was collapsing, saw about 20 boar coming from wood, followed by man with a camera filming them.

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1.22.12	Work role had included looking after deer and controlling squirrels – in charge of the venison for 6-8 years. Two marksmen, one from Symonds Yat, one from Bream. Won rifle contests against other areas. Had a storeroom / slaughterhouse for the meat. Could always sell it. One buyer told BV to put the beast onto a table and left it in this shed – then complained re maggots. Now a nice hotel for a meal.
1.24.57	<i>q- Re squirrel control?</i> Tried to clear an area from Speech House to the Dilke, with traps. Gory disposal. One was to have a sack, and wring its head. Often didn't kill it. Others would swing track on tree, BV stamped on it. (<i>Was it effective?</i>). Not very – spread in again from outside. Mentioned New Zealand's attempted to get rid of certain animals. Danger in poisoning in them – risk to other animals etc.
1.27.23	<i>Q – Re involvement in the management of the arboretum?</i> Trees from China weren't growing properly. Some went to Kew, some to the Dean, some to other arboretums. Hadn't recognised the need for correct soil – without which they may die or grow distorted. There was a grove of trees from China between Soudley and Littledean. They did well with the soil there, but had to come down to allow road to be widened. Still one or two Chinese Wilson's trees in the arboretum – 100 years old. Now trees are being looked after. Given rhododendron – planted and flowered. Then had to fence around it to keep deer out – but they can jump over six feet so needed fence to be 3m high. The rhododendron are now enormous. Believe deer still get in but not causing damage. Now managed / help brought in from outside to cut grass in arboretum – previously could be knee high. Talking to manager of Speech House – who said it should have been called Bart Venner arboretum due to all the work BV did there! (Cyril Hart) just happened to be Head Verderer at the time.
1.31.31	Met Cyril Hart's son recently. (<i>Dud you know Cyril well?</i>) Has copies of his books – signed – valuable. (<i>Hard to get now!</i>) They won't be reprinted – not the need any more.
1.32.30	<i>Q – Re involvement with Nags Head?</i> No, the bird area was run by Forestry students. Made sure nests were ok. It developed with RSPB. In 70s, they took it over, from Forestry. Better as not all students would be interested. That area has some magnificent oak.
1.33.34	At arboretum, walked with ex-forester from Devon. There is a shelter belt of beautiful beech trees – there to protect arboretum from wind blowing off the fields. no branches for 50-60 feet up. (<i>A great legacy</i>).
1.34.47	<i>Q – Re the commission - with a research and training arm – did you have much to do with them?</i> The research arm had a Head Forester and two Foresters. Used our forest labour. Didn't have much to do with them. A lot of their work was the other side of the river, in Wales – trying to make the oak grow.
1.35.35	<i>Q – What about the training arm?</i> After the school closed (<i>did you see that coming?</i>) there were five schools when BV started. Parkend, one in East England, one in North Wales, and two in Scotland. The Commission was getting all the staff it needed. Parkend had two years of students – Juniors and Seniors. They took jobs with Commission on completion of training. East Anglia closed first, then one in Scotland (Faskally), which became a brown trout laboratory area. Would try to supplement food e.g. pheasant in East Anglia, brown trout in Scotland. IN Dean would catch and eat squirrels – the loser legs – very nice. Second one in Scotland closed on West Coast, Benmore, then North Wales closed, so people came to the Dean – then it shut in 71.
1.38.28	Staff wondered what would happen. Government insisted that those who trained foresters be trained as teachers. Two schools were opened, but staff didn't know what they were on about – no forestry 'nouse'!

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1.39.12	Q – re external relations – sheep commoning and freemining. Did you get on with the commoners? A family in Soudley ran a lot of sheep. Not good company. Summer of 76, had a lot of big fires. In charge of fire call out to Staple Edge Bank. Went through Parkend, in van pointing direction of Parkend; a lot of the villagers were forestry workers so followed in their cars. Set man at entrance, with instruction not to let anyone else through. Named man (Dougie Thomas) who BV believed had lit fire, using a jam jar, candle and bracken. The jar would crack, but result in a big fire.
1.41.43	Q - Was this done to clear forest? No – just did it. (Was there a good relationship with others?). With most of them. At Centre Beat men had their own sheep. Once, sheep went into the poplar trees and bent them over so another sheep could eat it!
1.42.23	Q - What about the freeminers? Useful at Highmeadow – can provide coal! Three pits between Christchurch and Symonds Yat. A bloke took over three months opening one mine up – had been worked over 100 years before – only found a pair of old boots. He had dug a new adit in, but no coal at all.
1.43.24	Q – Re move to contractors instead of forestry workers? Got rid of them – pensioned them off. Didn't take new boys on – a shame really. (Are the private contractors as good?) Had one lot of tree fellers working in Soudley who cut down unmarked trees. They found it easier to cut down lovely big trees – sacked them on the spot. After that the contractors tended to be workers from forestry estates – had knowledge of what to do. Use of chain saws has replaced axes
1.45.09	Q - You saw that revolution in technology? It was (a big change). Knuckles bear scars of forestry work.
1.45.27	Interviewer described booklet about forestry from 1967 – passed it to BV to look at.
1.46.08	Public campsites, 64, 65, 66. (Browsed through booklet) Wood used in south west in tanning industry...felling and thinning trees....
1.47.27	Do you want to watch something on TV? No, no. Sorry to take so long. Bowaters, it was sent to Bowaters. That was the big saw mill factory in Kent. Turner - he was in Cinderford. Forwood(?) was Coleford.
1.48.00	You didn't move around the country like some forestry workers did? 'It was decided on my behalf it was worth keeping me here – going into a different patch every couple of years and the two four year slots of campsites and timber'. The bloke who did private woodlands retired – did this from '81 to '94 – then retired. Job involved telling them what they could and could not do.
1.49.00	Upset one belted earl at Cirencester Park, who argued autumn flowers were nothing to do with it being an ancient plantation. He called in Commission staff from Edinburgh, who agreed with BV – 'you can't deny nature by just cutting down trees'. He didn't get the grant he had applied for. What were the flowers? Autumn crocus.
1.50.32	(Reading out names of foresters from the booklet) <i>Were they experienced foresters, that group?</i> Kim Linwood came from South East – his forest was amalgamated, Roger Sidaway was an up and thrusting forester. David More was an estates man, Dick Crowther was district officer, with amazing forestry knowledge. Dick was clerk of works, he died a couple of years ago. Mike Dunn the forest warden died a couple of years ago – took over his job and did work with private estates because of him.
1.51.53	(Reading out from booklet) 'The forest is divided into nine walks, each run by Head Forester with one or two foresters. 180 forest workers employed'. (Continued reading) so you're looking at 500 people? <i>(It is an interesting snapshot isn't it?)</i>
1.52.30	<i>Who are the most interesting people you've come across during your career – most influential? ...</i> You build your career – learnt in each part of the forest from the man

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	in charge. And when in charge, learnt from the outside world. No one person – they all helped. <i>(Do you still meet as a retired group?)</i> Yes.
1.53.37	<i>Going to speak to Keith – involved with charcoal burning.</i> Yes he has – one of the experts. <i>Anyone else you would recommend in terms of forestry</i> Talk to Pete and then Pete and I will get together. Come back if there is anything more you need.
1.54.24	Q - Interested you both knew Doctor Eskell? He was our GP. You know he shot himself? So sad – went in the post office down there, and spoke to him. He lived just down the hill, and within minutes....We heard it. (Q - His first wife was quite a powerful influence?) Yes. They had three children, Simon, a daughter who had a stroke when young. I remember talking to John, who said she was having a baby. He called a spade a spade. If people tried to pull the wool he wouldn't have it. He was a naval officer in the war. He was always on the go, would visit people, sit with them, ask me to sit with them. He was a great doctor, respected in St Briavels and the Dean generally. His wife died, he met another lady, and they lived together for 2 or 3 years. He was a character.
1.57.40	Believe he went to China. Have you read the book about him? Yes – they use it as a model in general practice. Did you think it was like him? Yes I did, having known him and been a patient with him.
1.58.28	Do you enjoy living in St Briavels? Yes. It's very quiet. Can't build a lot here. Two fields towards Bream are being developed. Two Rivers. Yes. 8 houses. (Comment re toilet / pipes). Good surgery and doctors – compared to services in Coleford. We have a pharmacy at the surgery here.
2.00.48	You have the right support for the village? Yes.
2.01.10	Thanks and END

KEY

Normal Italics – interviewer addressing Bart (BV)

Bold Italics – interviewer addressing Anne (AV)

Normal font – response from Bart

Normal font – response from Anne

Any comments / interruptions are (bracketed)

Notes:

Kikuyu Tribe: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kikuyu_people#1945–1963

The tribe was involved in the Mau Mau uprising against British colonialism, setting stage for Kenya's independence in 1963.

Parkhurst Forest: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parkhurst_Forest

Lies to the NW of Newport, Isle of Wight. Owned by the Forestry Commission, with an acreage of around 395 hectares.

Faskally Forestry Training School, Scotland: Faskally was closed in the late 1960s.

Wallsworth Hall and the De Winton Family: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wallsworth_Hall

Bart and Anne Venner

The Hall is located in Twigworth, Gloucester. It was built around 1740. The Hall passed through the Hayward family, who had it built, until William Wilkins, a direct descendent of the original owners, changed the family name to De Winton in 1839.

In 1903 the whole estate of some 655 acres was sold in small lots,

After 1943 the hall itself was used for several years as a residential nursery and training centre for nursery nurses.

The Hall stood mainly empty from 1953 – 1981, when it was purchased by the Nature in Art Trust, and is now open as an art gallery.