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RETIREMENT OF CHIEF LAND AGENT

WITH the retirement of Mr. J. P. MACKIE-WHYTE this month, the Commission loses yet another of its officers who have served our cause for a very long time, including memorable formative years of State forestry. After serving as a very young man in the first world war, Mr. Mackie-Whyte took his B.Sc. in forestry and joined the Commission in 1926 as a District Officer in South East England. In 1930 he was transferred to Scotland to assist the Land Agent in Edinburgh and subsequently passed the requisite professional examinations of the Surveyors' Institution. After a spell on acquisition work he was promoted to Chief Land Agent for Scotland in September 1939; two years later he was elected a Fellow of the Land Agents' Society. A further promotion to the rank of Conservator followed in 1946 and in the Birthday Honours of 1959 he was appointed an O.B.E.

Jack Mackie Whyte's knowledge of the ownership and use of land in Scotland is unique. His warm and friendly personality made him a much liked and respected colleague, not only within the Commission but in the other Government Departments and Scottish organisations and bodies with whom the Commission comes into daily contact. Essentially a man of modest disposition, he is nevertheless entitled to look back with quiet satisfaction on a job well done. He takes with him the good wishes of a host of friends, not only in Scotland but South of the Border.

As already announced, Mr. Mackie Whyte is to be succeeded by Mr. GEOFFREY FORREST, hitherto Chief Land Agent in Wales.

**THE FORESTRY EXHIBITION

SLOWLY but surely the stage is being set for the forestry exhibition which the Commission is arranging to take place at Blackbushe, near Camberley, on 17th-18th June. Our previous progress report gave a fairly comprehensive picture of what is likely to be seen at this show and it is gratifying to be able to record that, so far as the display of machinery and equipment is concerned, the number of entries has exceeded all expectations. If the weather on the two days follows suit, then the exhibition should surely prove an attraction to a considerable number of people.

Previously we mentioned that there has been no other major exhibition devoted exclusively to forestry since that held in Edinburgh in 1884. At long last we have traced a detailed reference to that particular event -- it appears in "Transactions of the Scottish Arboricultural Society", Volume 11, 1887. From this account it was certainly some exhibition, for it covered 15 acres of the grounds of Donaldson's Hospital and was "easy of access by rail, road and tramway." It had a strong Empire and International flavour, remained open for three and a half months, and was "visited by upwards of half a million people from all parts of the world." Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, Prince Albert and Prince George and the Princesses Louise, Victoria and Maud of Wales, together with Mr. Gladstone, were among the notable visitors.

Britain showed, among other exhibits, produce from the Royal forests on Deeside. Even the Secretary of War had a stake in the display (no pun intended), for he sent along "specimens of the various woods used in the manufacture of Gun-powder...sections of different timbers used in the construction of Gun-Carriages...specimens of Rifle Stocks and Lance Shafts...and a variety of other articles used for purposes of war."

The account makes absorbing reading. There were "Magnificent exhibits from our great Indian Empire" and many other countries; and "the most notable, perhaps, of all the contributions from beyond the seas was the

complete collection of forestry subjects from far-off Japan. This commanded the admiration of all, and clearly demonstrated what rapid progress the Japanese are making in the science and art of forestry."

**WOOD FROM FOREST TO MAN

Mr. BRYAN LATHAM, who was a Forestry Commissioner from 1957 to 1963 is the author of a new book with the compelling title "Wood from Forest to Man". The reader, particularly the layman, cannot fail to be intrigued by such statements as: "You would be surprised if an expert added up for you the percentage of your underclothes, dresses, suits and stockings that originally formed part of a tree growing in some part of the world or other. Then we have turpentine, wood gas, wood alcohol and many other chemicals produced from wood and used in industry." These passages rightly follow a long list of the more traditional uses of timber and the scope of these, of course, is not always sufficiently well appreciated by the public.

But there is much more to Mr. Latham's dissertations than information about the utilisation of wood. The history of forestry in this country is well summarised and includes credit (where credit is undoubtedly due) to the Commission for its role in relatively more recent years. There are chapters on forest research and identification of species; the softwoods and hardwoods of both Europe and North America; the timbers of Australasia and the South West Pacific area; and tropical timbers in general. Then we were interested to read of the development of sawmilling. Did you know, by the way, that the first sawmill erected in Great Britain was built by Charles Dingley at Limehouse in 1761? It was driven by wind vanes and, says Mr. Latham, was almost immediately destroyed by a mob of pit-sawyers who saw their livelihood endangered. After this and many other disturbances no-one dared build a sawmill in this country for many years. Certainly it was not until 1782 that the Royal Society of Arts was able to say that "prejudice was overcome and to the great gratitude and emoluments both of the public and of the particular undertakers, sawmills are firmly established."

"Wood from Forest to Man" is published by

Harrap at 18s.

**KITES IN WALES

AN interesting report on kites in Wales in 1963 is published by the Council for Nature.

On the whole, it is stated, they weathered the hard winter of 1962-63 well. There were two known casualties but at the beginning of the breeding season at least 14 nesting pairs were verified.

The conclusion is that there were probably 39 kites in all to which can be added the four young birds of this breeding season. Of the adults, at least one might be a very old bird, past breeding. There are other single birds and perhaps some non-adult pairs. The number of inexplicable failures can only be regarded as disastrous but at least the gravely disturbing cause is now apparent. One kite which died last winter was found, on analysis, to contain up to 15 p.p.m. of dieldrin in its organs. The Council goes on: Kites in central Wales eat carrion from the many sheep casualties that occur on the mountain grazings; as well as flesh, wool impregnated with dieldrin is ingested by the birds, the roughage normal to birds of prey. There is a very close correlation between the relatively recent introduction and use of dieldrin in sheep-dips and the present steep rise in failure of kites to breed successfully.

In North Wales there were again no reports except from Merioneth, where the three birds seen last year were again present. In Cardiganshire there seemed to be a wider than usual dispersal during the hard weather and kites were seen in marginal areas as well, foraging over and in towns and villages. However, in the spring all except two sites were tenanted. This general area held the only three successful nests this season. At one, possibly only one egg was laid and one young bird flew successfully; across the valley another pair rebuilt an old raven's nest in a large beech and successfully reared two youngsters. In the third nest, of a pair which has now been successful for five years, three eggs were laid, two of which, at any rate, hatched about 10th May but, when the young were nearly half-fledged, one disappeared; the survivor flew in the first days of July. Two other pairs started nesting but both failed, one pair moving a short distance, where they remained for the rest of the season, but the other pair disappeared.

In the Towy and adjacent valleys the traditional and other regular or alternative sites were occupied, except one which has been regularly successful until 1962 but failed last year. In all there were five nests but none succeeded, as was the case in Breconshire where there were two pairs nesting. A new pair may have re-occupied a very ancient site in this county, though with no evidence as yet of successful breeding. There were no reports from Radnorshire.

The Ospreys Return

A pair of ospreys has returned to the Loch Garten area of Strathspey and are now incubating eggs in the nest they have used on several occasions in the past few years. The cock arrived on 6th April, and the hen on the 7th. A second pair has begun to build an eyrie on a new site on Speyside. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has appealed for 75 volunteers to help keep day-and-night watch over these rarest of British breeding birds.

****MORE NATURAL HISTORY**

SID ATKINSON, Warrener at Hambleton Forest, N.E. England, is quite an expert in the rearing and training of fox subs. They must, he says, be taken before their eyes open, say in the first three weeks of their life. Some can be raised on the bottle - cow's milk and a spoonful of treacle. Some may be suckled by the cat. Later they graduate to beef, rabbit and toffees! They are especially fond of licorice allsorts. They run about the house quite happily with the dogs and cat, and even live in harmony with chickens.

They are as mischievous (and as destructive) as kittens when young but later can be trained to go out shooting in the evening and retrieve pigeons, etc. They usually settle down to a routine of wandering off for most of the time but returning night and morning for food (like the cat). They have to be shut up when the hunt is in the district, though some are eventually shot while running free.

****ALICE IN WANDERLAND**

THERE is a horse with a history working at Blengdale, North West England - one with a homing instinct and her full share of equine perception.

Forester R. B. HARDY, who is in charge of Blengdale, writes: "Alice and her owner, Miles Blundell, were working on extraction of timber at Grizedale, on the other side of the main mountain massif of the Lake District, before coming to Blengdale. Some time ago, however, while working at Blengdale on the remote Scalderskew area, Alice was put to graze outside working hours in a field adjoining Stockdale Moor. But company is limited in such parts and, no doubt spurred by thoughts of sweets and apples received from the farmer's daughter at Grizedale, Alice decided one weekend to wander. So on the Monday there was pulpwood to despatch hot from the saw but no horse to help. Visions of Bowaters grinding to a standstill spurred on the searchers all that day and on Tuesday; and after much rumour and counter-rumour it was established that Alice had made her way on sheep trods to Seatallan and shared some sandwiches in the company of fell-walkers on Pillar Mountain before making for as far away as Red Pike.

"And so Alice displayed a double-action homing instinct. In the first place there seems little doubt that she left us with the idea of reaching delicacies and youthful company at Grizedale; secondly she may have tired and decided that Blengdale was not so bad after all, for at dawn on the Wednesday she was back in the Scalderskew pasture, perhaps having the good horse sense to realise the important part she was playing in timber production."

****THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN**

SURPRISING indeed are the things that happen in our forests from time to time. Consider the following, for example. The staff of the Roudham Beat of Thetford Forest, East England, have several times had their work enlivened by activities of the military on adjacent heathland. The latest incident was the dropping of "supplies" by parachute. One four-ton container landed on the main Ely-Norwich railway line, which passes through the forest. Prompt telephoning by Assistant Forester NICOLSON, however, made it possible for the next train to be warned in time. The rails were badly bent, so that the train had to reverse several miles in order to be diverted on to the other track.

Other parachutes landed in the plantations and the nursery; but fortunately no heavy containers fell on to the new seedbeds, otherwise Roudham's reputation for high yields of seedlings might well have been lost.

**TRANSFERS

THE following transfers have been notified to Headquarters in the last two or three months:

District Officers J. N. KENNEDY from Ipswich, E(E) to Edinburgh; L. C. TROUP from Barnstaple, SW(E) to Alice Holt, Work Study; A. A. ROWAN from Rothbury, NE(E) to S. Laggan, Work Study; A. W. L. GUILLE from Bangor, N(W) to Aberystwyth; D. M. B. YORKE from Dolgellau, N(W) to Lyndhurst, NEW; N. S. MUNRO from Ringwood, NEW, to Northampton, E(E); J. T. WILDASH from Northampton to Ringwood; D. F. C. FORBES from Glentress, S(S) to Dalbeattie, S(S). Foresters J. A. PARKER from Mortimer to Kershope, NW(E); R. P. C. WOOLLARD from Bawtry to Sherwood, BW(E); A. T. LIDDELL from Elibank to Cardrona S(S); H. McKAY from Kershope to Greystoke, NW(E); W. GRANT from Greystoke to Grizedale, NW(E); G. J. SOUTHGATE from Elvedon, E(E) to Lavenham, E(E); J. B. WHITE from Lavenham to Aldewood, E(E).

Assistant Foresters G. G. MITCHELL from Dymock, SW(E) to Cotswold SW(E); A. A. WARD from Sherwood to Matlock, NW(E); F. C. BIRCH from Matlock to Sherwood; N. MACKELL from Glenbranter, W(S) to Benmore W(S); G. BRUCE from Working Plans, D(W) to Working Plans, D(E); G. N. KEARNS from Bodmin, SW(E) to Wark NE(E); B. F. EDWARDS from Ceiriog, N(W) to Ag. Show Unit, H.Q.; I. C. EMBRY from Brightling, SE(E) to Ag. Show Unit; E. B. JURY from Kershope to Kesteven; J. CARTER from Sleetbeck to Dean. Superintendent of Works J. H. DARGIE from Nevis, N(S) to Fort Augustus, N(S). Higher Executive Officer P. A. MERKA from Cambridge to Aberystwyth. Executive Officers W. D. GORDON from H.Q. to Dumfries; J. MILLAR from Chapelhall, D(S) to Glasgow; A. OSWALD from Inverness to Chapelhall; R. PALMER from York to H.Q.; R. PRICE from Shrewsbury to York. Clerical Officers MISS D. LLOYD from Aberystwyth to H.Q.; MISS G. R. NORTON from Education to Woking, SE(E); A. D. MARSHALL from London to New.

**GOLF NEWS FROM EDINBURGH

A bogey competition was held at Glencorse and 13 players took part. The winner was the Club captain J. T. BISSET (H.E.O.) who finished "all square". Second was H. M. BROWN (E.O.) and third J. W. BLANE (Mech. Engineer).

The spring outing took place to Longniddry, when 26 members and friends, including SIR ARTHUR GOSLING (President) and LADY GOSLING were present. Unfortunately gale conditions again prevailed and this was reflected in the higher than usual scores. There was one exception to this; Mr. J. INNES from the South Conservancy, a newcomer to the outings, who was playing from scratch, succeeded in mastering the conditions for a 74 and won the Sutherland Cup and the scratch prize - a most meritorious round. Second place and the Guest Cup went to J. B. STENT (C.O. Edinburgh), with a net 76. Third equal with 81 were Messrs. A. L. RAE and D. YOUNG and Mr. Rae also won the second scratch prize. The section winners were (A) Mr. H. M. BROWN with 82; (B) Mr. J. OUTERSON with 84 and (C) Messrs. J. CAMELON and A. COWAN with 87. The lucky winners in the Sweepstake were Mr. J. T. BISSEY and Mr. F. OLIVER.

**SEND-OFF FOR IAN MacIVER

Mr. I. F. MacIVER, District Officer, was entertained at a dinner by his friends and colleagues on the eve of his departure to North Devon. Not only were Foresters and Forest Officers present, but private woodland owners and their foresters, consultant foresters and timber merchants were well represented. Ian MacIver had spent some 12 years in Worcestershire and Herefordshire and his kilted figure became almost a notable part of the scenery. In flannels, his batting was respected on many village cricket grounds. In recent years he was elected a Conservator of the Malvern Hills for the parish in which he lived and the same enthusiasm that he devoted to the woodlands in his district was generously given to matters concerning the administration of the much frequented hill commons. He will be greatly missed.

Mr. A. T. G. GUNTER, Head Forester, on behalf of wellwishers, presented Ian MacIver with a dinner trolley and photographic equipment. And the latter's successor, Mr. D. CAMPBELL, was welcomed.

**HEADQUARTERS ENGAGEMENT

WE have much pleasure in recording the recent engagement of Miss PRIEST and Mr. "BOB" AFFLECK, both of Savile Row. Miss Priest's more recent service has been with the Education Branch while Mr. Affleck is a Senior Executive Officer in the Finance Branch - he was previously stationed at Cambridge and Woking.

IF YOU DO SOMETHING, SEE SOMETHING, OR HEAR SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY, TELL YOUR SLASHER CORRESPONDENT. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE.