

# The ELASHER

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## COLLEAGUES HONOURED

AT the time of going to press we learn with pleasure that two of our colleagues and several others who have served well the cause of forestry have been honoured by Her Majesty the Queen in the Birthday List.

Mr. GEORGE BATTERS, Conservator, North East England, is appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.). His service, which covers 37 years, has been mostly in the north east, where he has been largely responsible for the large-scale afforestation programmes and has seen the great Kielder forest, for example, grow to its present impressive stature. He has promoted excellent relations with private woodland owners and the many public bodies with whom the Commission is associated.

Mr. JOHN BLANE, Mechanical Engineer in the Scottish Directorate, becomes a Member of the same Order. The substantial advances made in the technique of drainage before planting are due in considerable measure to his work.

Mr. BRYAN LATHAM, until recently one of our Commissioners, becomes a Commander of the Order (C.B.E.); Mr. N. D. G. JAMES, President of the Royal Forestry Society, and Mr. W. J. RIDDOCH, the well known timber merchant who is a member of the East Scotland R.A.C. and of the Home Grown Timber Advisory Committee, are both appointed O.B.E.s.

Mr. WILLIAM CLARK, of Parkgate Smithy, Dumfries, receives the British Empire Medal, largely for his help to forestry by designing and manufacturing forestry equipment.

To all these gentlemen we offer our warm congratulations and regret that space will not permit our paying a more deserving tribute to them.

**\*\*DEATH OF FORESTER T. J. R. REES** WE deeply regret to record the sudden death of Mr. T. J. R. REES, Forester at Walcot in the North West England Conservancy. Mr. Rees joined the Commission in 1927 as a Forest Worker at Rheola and from there he went to the Dean School where he remained from 1929 to 1931. He was then posted to Thetford and in 1935 was transferred to Mortimer Forest. In 1940 he took over Walcot Forest, where he was in charge until the time of his death.

The funeral took place in the picturesque village of Clun and where many of Mr. Rees' colleagues assembled for this sad occasion. The bearers were Messrs. K. ELDERWICK, F. A. SHARP (Shobdon Repair Depot), and Foresters E. J. TUCKER and J. STOKOE.

**\*\*FORESTER BECOMES LORD PROVOST** FORESTER JAMES ALLAN was one of the first (if not the first) Commission Foresters to be granted permission (in 1945) to take up local government work as a County Councillor for the Kemnay and Monymusk Division of Aberdeen County Council. Now he may well be the first to become the Lord Provost of a Town Council, for he has recently been elected to this high office at Ladybank in Fife.

## \*\*THE INVASION OF KIELDER

LAST month a convoy of lorries, heavy equipment and troop carriers escorted by motor cycles wended its way grimly over the road from Bellingham to Kielder with the task ahead clearly etched in each man's mind.

Not an attack on enemy positions, writes Mr. T. A. MURDOCH, Conservancy Engineer, North East England, but the construction, by two field squadrons of 38 Corps Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers, of a new bridge over the River Tyne at Bakethin, Northumberland. The bridge is of reinforced concrete design with central piers of tubular steel piles and mass concrete abutments. The deck is being constructed of pre-cast concrete units cast by the Conservancy Engineering Staff and a handsome tubular steel handrail is to be fitted to the parapet sill.

Some 60 officers and men will be engaged for a period of eight weeks on the job and a tented camp has been established on the old Plashetts railway station precincts, complete with officers', sergeants' and sappers' messes - and the inevitable N.A.A.F.I.

Arrangements for the construction were evolved over a period of several years during which a squadron from the Royal Engineers has been engaged on some major civil engineering work each summer in the Kielder area. Generally the exercise has comprised bridge-building but the erection of a fire tower or the demolition of a large obsolete structure have also been undertaken.

The design and planning of the works is done by Conservancy Engineering staff, who also exercise a benevolent control over the constructional work through the Site Officer or Sergeant Major, particularly in regard to such aspects of the job as levels, concrete quality control, reinforcement placing, etc. Much of the work of the Commission's Engineer and Superintendent of Works is in restraining the enthusiasm of the Sapper who almost invariably, when faced with an obstacle to progress, tends to put his hand in his back trouser pocket and pull out a pound of high explosive!

It must be quite apparent that a great deal of meticulous planning has to go into exercises of this scale and among the particulars asked for on these occasions are the addresses of the nearest doctor, dentist and magistrate, for obvious reasons.

Honorary membership of the Kielder Working Men's Club is extended to the Sappers while on this latest venture and it is fully expected that bar profits will soar to a new record. Parties of ten will be detailed for showers in the Lewisburn caravan site ablutions but this should not cause any inconvenience to the general public.

Over the last three or four years a close and useful liaison has been established with Northern Command and it is hoped that many more undertakings such as this year's "Operation Scots Pine" will materialize.

How much does all this cost? The Commission meets the cost of design, planning and the supply of all materials - the Army the cost of all transport, labour and mechanical plant. What do we get out of it? A brand new, first class bridge for about a quarter of the actual cost. What do the Army get out of it? A first class civil engineering exercise which is not normally in their scope, a chance to use all their latest mechanical equipment and radio apparatus and the opportunity to test the Quartermaster's organisation under canvas. The troops love it, of course, because it means being away from Headquarters at Ripon and conditions, as far as possible, resemble active service. So everybody is happy with the arrangements - and isn't that a pleasant change?

No one yet knows what havoc will be created by the presence of 60 or so young strangers among unmarried daughters in the sylvan quiet of Kielder, but the results are sure to be interesting.

**\*\*T.R.I.G. -- CREDIT GOES TO COMMISSION COLLEAGUES** who took part in the first big management game contest, held at Olympia, brought considerable credit to the Commission. This type of tournament was developed for the Times Review of Industry and Technology, which accounts at least in part for the contraction T.R.I.G.

Competing were some crack commercial teams and several Civil Service sides and the outcome was that Mr. W. M. CORMACK, our Controller of Finance, and Mr. JACK LENMAN made such an excellent partnership that their effort put the Commission ahead of all Government Departments.

It seems that each team or pair, was asked to run a small factory with £60,000 capital, 10 per cent of it in cash. Efficiency, not surprisingly, was judged on the profit made, in our colleague's case, we understand, £4,438. We asked Mr. Cormack for a few comments:

"It all started", he said, "when EDDIE BROWN (more formally known as the Training Officer) asked Jack Lenman and myself whether we would like to take part. We readily agreed, thinking it was a matter of indoor golf or darts or bridge - in other words something matching our ability. But it turned out that we were required to run the small factory for nine weeks and make a profit within the limits set by the conditions attaching to the exercise. Something like this - Week 1. Buy materials for five components; 2. Allocate to five machines; 3. Manufacture five components; 4. Assemble the five components into two products; 5. Sell the products; alter production and stocks in light of actual sales as compared with budgetted sales; 6. - 9. repeat five. Different quantities of materials were needed for the various components; the five machines varied as to output, depending on which components were made; the machines cost varying amounts per hour; and charges were made for storeholding, overheads, etc. Then when we had worked out (almost) the costs of the finished articles in a rising market the organiser bought some, but not necessarily all, we had to offer in week five and we had to re-organise the production so that stocks would not be out of balance. Our biggest problem was time and I had to sell the output about ten minutes before Jack Lenman had worked out the costs. This I believe is known as management decision based on incomplete information. Sounds familiar, but give me standing sales every time.

"We were at Olympia about two and a half hours and we enjoyed it all so much we have not charged the 3s. it cost us in bus fares."

\*\*OPENING A CODE

"YOU will find it", said the Forester ... "in Section C of the Produce Code...Long term Contract Para. I." I reached for the Code, brushed off the dust and turned to the appropriate page.

"Para I...of g...Para 2...tion...Para 3...and ion...Para 4ii...re ree es...Para 5b...rest".... I put on my spectacles.

"What is all this about", I enquired, "And tell me who amended this page?".

"It hasn't been amended....yet...", the Forester replied, "But if you want to read it I'll get a screwdriver!" I felt uneasy... "A screwdriver?" I said "To read the Produce Code? You're nuts!"

"Oh no", he said, "I thought you knew...the headings to those paragraphs are concealed between two brass screws... It's a wonderful invention...originated with the Secret Service...you see the most important words are gripped tight in the edge of the cover...crafty, isn't it...you have to take the Code to pieces and the book apart if you want to read it!"

I sighed and momentarily released my hold on the book, whereupon the cardboard covers snapped smartly together.

"This thing tried to bite me", I said, "Lay it down on the desk and open it so that we can both see it!" He gave me a pained look... "I'm afraid it won't stay open of it's own accord", he said, "unless you nail the covers to the table...or chisel a deep groove underneath it and countersink the screws and cover backs into the top of the desk".

I looked hard at him..."Are you telling me", I said, "that we have been issued with a book of instructions that require a screwdriver to read and that will not remain open on the table under my nose...do I have to join the Amalgamated Engineers Union?"

"Well"...he went on..."it's not quite as bad as that...you aren't compelled to use a screwdriver...you can undo the screws with a coin."

"In that case," I said, "lend me a penny." "I can't", said the Forester, looking down to the ground. "It's the end of the month!"

"That Forester is now going about with his arm in a sling and with a decided limp. He broke his thumbnail trying to twist the brass screws around and then finished up by dropping the Code on to his foot. Does any reader of the Slasher know who really did invent the Codes with brass screws? It certainly couldn't have been the chap who wanted to read Codes. They're all the same anyway.... Fire Protection Code....Maps Code....Produce Code....Working Plans Code.... I can't think of anything quite as difficult to read.... oh! Wait a moment though.... I was forgetting....there are the Dead Sea Scrolls.... I put down the Produce Code and took out the book of A.69's .... I'm going to order a lectern!"

Note: Headquarters O. and M. point out they appreciated the difficulty a long time ago; appropriate equipment was bought and the most recent Code -- Finance -- was produced in the new style, as others will be.

**\*\*DOWN IN THE FOREST SOMETHING....** FORESTER J. A. MARSHALL, Hamsterley, North England Conservancy, was returning home at dusk one evening when he noticed moving lights in a young plantation on a rig about a mile away. All Commission personnel were out of the forest, and this section was four miles from the nearest public highway. It was also off any of the Commission roads which crossed the rig. The great train robbery hunt was in full swing at the time and the Forester knew that a search was being conducted at least as far north as Berwick-on-Tweed. It was just conceivable ....!!

After a dash to the spot and a quick look round in the twilight, car tracks were found but the lights and the intruders had disappeared. Some freshly turned earth, about the size and shape of a grave was discovered at the end of the vehicle tracks. The missing man from the yacht Christine? .... It was now almost dark. Forester Marshall motored out of the forest to the village to post some urgent mail and mentioned the incident to the village "bobby". "Don't do anything", said the officer, "but stand by for the flying squad". The officer had obviously been warned of something but was as tight as a clam when questioned.

A County Police squad of about 30 men arrived and our Forester lead the sleuths to the area concerned. Lights were set up, guards posted and a gang of highly skilled policemen began exhuming what had been skilfully though hurriedly hidden. In a heathery ride, miles from anywhere, the perfect scene for a crime - except for the Commission's eagle eye. It took all of 45 minutes of delicate, careful excavation to uncover the 'swag'. Nothing could be left to chance. Each shovelful was examined and any unusual clues recorded ....

Then the loot was found - about half a trailer-full of household rubbish and tins.

**\*\*PERSONAL** At a presentation at Rendlesham, Mr. J. N. KENNEDY, District Officer for Suffolk for nearly 10 years, received the gift of carpentry tools to mark his departure to the Management Section, in Edinburgh. The ceremony was performed by Mrs. E. PATCH, the District Office Clerk.

Mr. JOHN LESLIE, for four years District Officer in the New Forest, has left for the North East England Conservancy (Durham area). There was a farewell dance at Northerwood House, and in the Verderers' Hall at Lyndhurst Mr. W. A. CADMAN, Deputy Surveyor, on behalf of colleagues, presented Mr. Leslie with a silver tea service.

**\*\*SEE HOW THEY RUN" ON TOUR** AFTER the successful London production of this merry farce by the Inforesta Drama Group, the play was taken on tour by the nine members of the cast, the producer and two of the stage management staff. These twelve innocents set off for the North and West by workabus and car on Thursday 28th May. The tour consisted of two performances at Kielder village on the Friday and Saturday nights and one performance at Llandulas village on the Monday night, with interim overnight stops at York and Shrewsbury on the Thursday and Sunday respectively. It is impossible to recount all the happenings of this venture into the far corners of Commission country in this short space; let it only be said that the tour was somewhat exhausting, sometimes unnerving, always hilarious and without doubt gratifying. The sincere thanks of the Group go to the Kielder and Llandulas audiences for their generous laughter and applause which ensured the success of the productions, to the people of both communities for their open-hearted hospitality and friendliness, to the staff of the York office and to Mr. and Mrs. HAMPSON and members of the Shrewsbury Office Social Club for their generous hospitality and entertainment. In all, a never-to-be-forgotten experience for the Group, who only hope that they have proved worthy diplomats from Headquarters.