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THE NEW YEAR HONOURS

WE are delighted to learn that SIR RICHARD COTTERELL, of Garnons, Hereford, who served as a Commissioner from the end of the last war until his retirement in July, 1964, has been appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (C.B.E.). Sir Richard's record of public service is outstanding. So far as we are concerned, he played a most important role in developing relations with private forestry interests, and in furthering the Commission's cause in general. Prominent in other spheres, too, he was Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire from 1945 to 1957, and has been a Justice of the Peace since 1938. He served with the Royal Horse Guards from 1927 to 1932 and with the Shropshire Yeomanry in the last war, in which, from 1943-45, he Commanded the 76th. Medium Regt. R.A. in the Middle East and Italy.

Our congratulations, also, to Mr. CHARLES MACDONALD, Head Forester, Skye Forest, who becomes a Member of the Order (M.B.E.). Mr. Macdonald joined the Commission as long ago as 1926, starting as a forest worker at Inchnacardoch. He served at Creag na Eun, Glenshiel and Glenbrittle forests before going to Skye in 1958. During the war he was seconded to the Timber Supply Department. A native of Skye, he has done much to promote community life on the island.

Others who are honoured and are associated with the work of the Forestry Commission include Professor E. G. MOBBS, who holds the Chair of Forestry at Bangor, and who becomes a C.B.E., having been an O.B.E. since 1947; Mr. G. W. SHAW, Deputy Director of Operations, Bowater Paper Corporation, and Mr. S.T. CAMPBELL, Secretary of the Home Timber Merchants' Association of Scotland, both become O.B.E.s.

** RETIREMENTS

IT is with much regret that we report the retirement through ill health of Mr. JOHN MELVILLE, Forester at Selm Muir, Midlothian, in South (Scotland) Conservancy. "Jock" Melville commenced work with the Commission at Dalbeattie Forest early in 1926; he went on to work at Bennan, Glenbranter, Rose Isle and Clashindarroch before returning south to Fleet in 1933. He was promoted to ganger in 1936 and Foreman in 1942; and to Forester in 1948, when at Gientress. He later served at Clachrie, Newcastleton and ultimately at Selm Muir.

He was a first class practical Forester and in his early days his output on all operations was often higher than average. His wide experience and knowledge of the capabilities of workmen was later reflected in the excellent results attained at the forests in his charge.

Thus another "worthy" has unfortunately had to lay down his slasher but in so doing he receives the best wishes of his many friends.

Mr. WILLIAM MACLEOD, Foreman at Lael Forest in the North Scotland Conservancy, has also retired. He started work with the Commission at Lael in 1932, serving all his time at the same forest. To mark his departure the forest staff presented him with a silver pocket watch. Their many friends in the district wish Mr. & Mrs. Macleod many happy years ahead.

At a meeting in the Forest Office, Portree, Skye Forest, staff gathered under the chairmanship of Head Forester Macdonald to say farewell to Ganger R. MACKENZIE, known throughout the district as "Roddy". At this "send off" ceremony Roddy was the recipient of the gift of an electric power drill, and in returning thanks he said he had found unequalled friendship in Skye, during more than 10 years' service with the Commission.

**** NEWS OF MR. R. G. BROWN**

HIS numerous friends in the Commission will be pleased to hear of the success of Mr. R. G. (BOB) BROWN in gaining entry to the Administrative Class. Bob Brown left us some time ago for the Pay Research Unit, in which he served as a Senior Executive Officer. He has now moved to the new Ministry of Land & Natural Resources.

**** ELEMENTARY CONSERVATION**

ALTHOUGH Cannop ponds in the Dean Forest cover some 10-20 acres of water they supported very little wild life for many years, writes Head Forester R. J. JENNINGS. Discharge from a local factory made them unattractive to both fish and wildfowl. When, however, through a change of process the discharge was less toxic the local Angling Society stocked the waters with coarse fish.

The waterfowl population, though, was practically non-existent. With the exception of a half dozen moorhen that skulked in the reeds too scared to show their heads above water lest they be blasted into the next parish by the local sharpshooters, and a lonely swan that led it's melancholy life living on crusts of bread thrown to it by picnickers and tourists, the ponds were almost deserted. The odd mallard that alighted for a rest on its way from the Severn to the Wye seldom lived long enough to pay a second visit, because at this time many "locals" were wandering the woods with shotguns in the guise of squirrel shooters. When one of them shot the swan and it was found dead in the water by a forester, gun permits were withdrawn and shooting near the ponds prohibited. Shortly afterwards some Canada geese were put on the water, with some young mallard to keep them company.

Today, as I passed by, I counted 60 mallard on the ponds. The geese leave the water for long periods but return from time to time and are quite tame.

A few years ago the level of the water in the pond was lowered several feet in order to recover the victim of a drowning fatality and on that occasion I myself saw some monstrous carp flopping around in the resultant shallows.

So, with the minimum of trouble and some elementary conservation we have a stretch of water that not long ago supported no wild life now well stocked with fish, and a wildfowl population getting more numerous each year. The main thing, it seems, is to keep the guns away and put a little food down in hard weather.

We have here at Lightmoor a small pond which is fished regularly by patient locals and dozens of schoolboys with their very simple tackle. Over the past years I have smiled to myself as I passed and considered them super-optimists to expect to catch fish of any size in such an unattractive habitat. How mistaken I was. In the hard frosts of 1962-3, when the ponds were frozen up for weeks and most of the fish were killed, we found during the thaw lots of fish, among them a pike of some 17 pounds and eels up to four pounds. The pond has since been restocked and the schoolboys are angling again with high hopes of record catches.

**** FOR THE NATURALIST, AGAIN**

THE Birmingham Natural History Society has discovered an interesting sand-dune plant community by the main London - Birmingham railway line in Warwickshire. A deep layer of sea sand was dumped in 1958 on an embankment that was on fire, which has now formed an area ten by thirty yards of semi-stable dunes.

Besides the characteristic marram grass, a number of species appear to have been introduced with the sand (which came from Margam, in Glamorgan), including sea rocket, saltwort, sand sedge, sand couch and sand cat's-tail. Most remarkable of all was the presence of Corispermum hyssopifolium, an extremely rare alien. It is a native of the Mediterranean region that occurs as a casual over most of northern Europe.

It comes as something of a surprise to note that the Ministry of Agriculture is warning people to be on their guard against yet another pest - the mink. To our lay minds the very name conjures thought of a sleek, attractive looking animal and this becomes ruminatively associated with elegant blondes, diamonds and who knows what other attractions. But it seems that mink escapees are really a problem.

Until six years ago, says the Ministry, there were few complaints about damage done by mink at large and there were indications of their

breeding in the wild only in one area. Since then evidence has been accumulating that escapees from mink farms or ranches are living and breeding in other parts - notably on the rivers Teign and Avon in Devon, the Stour in Dorset and on the Teifi in West Wales, besides several places in Scotland. "And," says the Ministry, "they could quickly become established over wide areas throughout Britain, as they have already done in Scandinavia."

The less knowledgeable among us will want to know or be reminded that mink - valuable creatures in captivity - are likely when wild to raid poultry houses, pheasantries, fish ponds and rivers for their food. A male specimen in the wild, by the way, will weigh only 3-4 lbs. as against 6 or 7 lb. when on the mink ranch, and to measure 2 ft. from nose to tail tip.

The Ministry point out that occupiers in England and Wales who know that they have mink on their land, other than those which are being kept under licence, have a legal obligation to notify the Ministry, and County Agricultural Executive Committees have delegated powers to destroy such mink without incurring liability for compensation.

One or two more details about mink. A member of the stoat and weasel family, in its wild state it is dark brown, almost black, is about the size of a polecat and has whitish chin patches of variable size. In captivity, mink have been bred in a variety of colours, such as those named "Platinum", "Pearl", "Topaz", "Palomino" and "White".

** FOR SAILORS

Mr. R. C. B. VINES, Assistant Forester at Challock, South East England, is interested in the possibility of raising a team from Commission staff, living within easy reach of London, to compete in the Civil Service Inter-Departmental Team Sailing Championships later this year.

Mr. Vines, having qualified to enter by winning the Menagerie Championship at Fisher's Green the previous weekend, recently won the Civil Service Sailing Association Individual Championship, sailing his Enterprise Class dinghy on the same waters.

Anyone who has the necessary experience and feels like joining Mr. Vines in the forthcoming team event should communicate with him as soon as possible. We haven't his private address, but letters should reach him via the forest office at Challock, near Ashford, Kent.

** FULL MARKS TO DRAMA GROUP

A thoroughly enjoyable performance of "Arsenic and Old Lace" was presented by the Inforesta Drama Group last month, writes a correspondent.

When this play by Joseph Kesselring was first seen around the 1940's, audiences were shocked that such subjects as madness and murder could be played for laughs. However, in 1964, the year of the "theatre of cruelty", the idea is hardly even bizarre. Stars of the show were undoubtedly Abby and Martha Brewster, played with disarming gentleness by LILLY FALLET and EDNA TESBITT respectively. The entire play stood or fell by their performances and they certainly triumphed. These two ladies were magnificent and watching them it seemed incredible that neither had ever had any professional stage experience.

KEN WINTER played the male lead with aplomb. As Mortimer Brewster he displayed a fine sense of comedy and his "double take" on discovering the body in the chest was very funny, as was the scene when he realised that his mother was not in any way related to the Brewsters. Shades of Cary Grant! Romance on the stage is alleged to be difficult to portray but Ken managed all right - probably because the romance was supplied by charming DOROTHY LLOYD, making her first appearance with the Group.

A noticeable improvement on previous productions was the make-up. In the past, Miss X and Mr. Y appeared on the stage looking pretty much like Miss X and Mr. Y, but this time the make-up of all the character parts was first class. When BRIAN HOLLAND lumbered on the stage as Jonathan Brewster the likeness to Boris Karloff was immediately apparent and, as subsequent action disclosed, he was indeed intended to look like "Frankenstein".

MAURICE GUEBY played the zany Teddy (Theodore) Brewster with understanding and sympathy; although one laughed at him, because that is

what the author intended should be done, one also felt compassion for him.

Space does not permit more than to say that the large cast included JOHN WARD and JOHN ALP as two Brooklyn cops with 'tru' Oirish accents, CHRIS KING as the sycophant Dr. Einstein, ALAN MEYER as the garrulous Officer O'Hara and GEOFF SEAL making a welcome return to the group with an electrifying performance as police Lieutenant Rooney. John Alp had to carry out a quick change in order to appear also as Mr. Gibbs, one of the potential beneficiaries of the old ladies' "kindness".

Stage Management was under KEN BALDWIN.

ALAN CHAPMAN truly deserves special mention. He not only played two character parts but he also produced the play. It never ceases to amaze me that Alan is able to undertake the formidable task of licking these productions into shape and acting in them as well. Obviously he is a true enthusiast and, fortunately for us all - it shows.

The Group's next presentation will be Philip King's famous comedy "On Monday Next". Note the dates - May 6th and 7th - well worth a trip to London. The writer is willing to stake a money-back-if-not-satisfied guarantee on it!

** TRANSFERS

THE following transfers have been notified to Headquarters. District Officers: A. G. BRAMWELL from Cairnbean, W(S); to Benmore W(S); A. J. LOW from Inverness N(S) to Cairnbean; J. PEAL from Parkend, Dean to Dolgellau N(W). Foresters: R. O. PRICE from Mynydd Ddu, S(W) to Crychan S(W); J. W. TAYLOR from Wanchope, S(S) to Penninghame S(S). Assistant Foresters: A. BEARDSLEY from Kielder (Planning & Economics) to Copley (Planning & Economics); A. A. BURNS from Aeron, N(W) to Hafren N(W); D. CAMPBELL from Loch Ard (Achray), W(S) to Loch Ard (Main); N. P. DANBY from Bush Nursery, D(R) to Mid Ardress D(R); J. W. HARPIN from Working Plans, D(E) to Sherwood NW(E); W. A. MASON from Glenbranter, W(S) to Garelochhead W(S); G. F. MOYSEY from Goed-y-Brenin, N(W) to Newborough N(W); T. E. T. SEDDON from Bere, S.E.(E) to Abinger SE(E); R. E. STOKES from Hafren to Dovey Bryn N(W); W. THOMSON from Edinburgh to Dalnacallan S(S); D. L. WILLMOTT from Mid Ardress to Bush Nursery. Superintendent of Works G. W. CROSSAN from Glentworth, S(S) to Castle O'er S(S).

** PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS

TO Mr. C. H. BLACKWOOD, Dunnerdale Forest, N.W. England, who took the second and final part (practical) of the Royal Forestry Society's annual examination for the Forester's Certificate, at Huntley Estate, Glos. He gained top marks and was awarded the "C. P. ACKERS" prize.

RICHARD BAKER, 17 years old son of Mr. DAVID BAKER, who was at Alice Holt for 12 years before coming to the Education Branch at Headquarters, has won an exhibition (one of four and two scholarships in natural sciences) to Churchill College, Cambridge. Richard is a student at Farnham Grammar School. Good work!

Best wishes to Mr. D. M. HUGHES, District Officer, North Wales, and Mrs. HUGHES, on the birth of a daughter.

** UNUSUAL FIRE

A fire at Allerston, N.E. England, which made it necessary to fell some good-quality Scots pine, burned underground and undetected in bracken and needle peat for five weeks, severely damaging the roots of the trees.

On two occasions members of the forest staff thought they saw smoke in the locality but thorough searches revealed nothing and neither could any sign of fire be spotted from various vantage points in the forest. There was no smell and the conclusion was eventually reached that what was seen were localised patches of mist peculiar to the area.

When discovered during drain maintenance, the fire was found to be on a shelf more than 100 yards from a road and concealed from observation by configuration of the ground and a dense crop of rough Douglas. The cause was almost certainly a camp fire.

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.