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PRESENTATIONS

DURING their tour in South Scotland in June the Commissioners gave a farewell dinner to MR. G. B. RYLE and MR. H. A. TURNER. MR. RYLE, hitherto our Deputy Director General, is to retire later this year and Mr. TURNER, who was Secretary to the Commission for 15 years, left us last month for the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources. Each received a cheque from the Commissioners and LORD WALDEGRAVE, the Chairman, paid tribute to both.

MR. F. SELLERS reminded the gathering that Lord Waldegrave had himself that week attended his last meeting and referred to our late Chairman's outstanding work for forestry.

Lord Waldegrave proposed that Mr. Ryle should write a history of the Commission and this the latter undertook to do. Consequently we are asked by Mr. Ryle to say that he hopes in due course to be in touch with colleagues, past and present, in order to collect information and, no doubt, some anecdotes!

Later in the same week, at Headquarters, a presentation from colleagues was made to Mr. Turner. This took the form of a cheque, which was handed over by Mr. W. A. CORMACK, Controller of Finance. The latter paraphrased the Aberdeen Minister at the harvest thanksgiving service: "We offer thanks for the bounteous harvest provided by Mr. Turner, and its safe in-gathering except for a few fields between here and Stonehaven."

On behalf of the Staff Side, Mr. H. P. WILBRAHAM presented Mr. Turner with two volumes of the Oxford dictionary and a gift was also made to Mrs. Turner, who so often charmingly graced our social functions.

Mr. JACK LENMAN read a goodwill message from SIR HENRY BERESFORD-PEIRSE, our Director General, who was in Scotland.

**PROMOTIONS

OUR congratulations to Mr. JACK LENMAN on his promotion to Senior Chief Executive Officer. With effect from 1st July he became deputy to the Controller of Finance. And to Mr. CALLUM NICOLSON, at present Chief Clerk at Inverness, and Mr. R. COOTE, Chief Clerk at Bristol. Both have been named for promotion as soon as possible to Chief Executive Officers, the former for duties at Edinburgh and the latter at Headquarters.

**DEATH OF DISTRICT OFFICER

WE deeply regret to record the sudden death of Mr. T. S. PRYCE, of the East England Conservancy. Tom Pryce, as he was popularly known, joined the Commission in 1952 as an Acquisition Officer in East England and was promoted to District Officer, Grade I, in 1960. He was keenly interested in all forms of sport, especially Rugby; he was also an enthusiastic ornithologist. His death will be deplored by numerous friends in and out of the Commission, and to his widow and two sons we offer our sympathy.

**FORMER D.O. RETURNS AS RECTOR

THE REVEREND J. G. CURWEN has been Instituted as Rector of Falstone and Kielder, the largest parish in England. Mr. Curwen was formerly District Officer at Kielder and resigned to take Holy Orders.

The Institution was performed by the Lord Bishop of Newcastle and the church at Falstone was filled to capacity for the service, which was followed by a supper in the Church Hall.

****FORESTRY AND WILD LIFE IN FRANCE**

MR. G. B. RYLE writes: While on holiday at Cannes I spent a few days looking at forestry and wild life. Last Summer's great fire which rushed some 20 kilometres in 24 hours through the pine and scrubs of Les Estérels must indeed have been a fearsome sight. Steep rugged country, no water and quite inadequate roads made any systematic fire-fighting quite impossible. A salvage operation to recover the marketable trees for pulpwood is now in progress.

On the delightful little Ile Sainte Marguerite, which is largely owned by the Département des Eaux et Forêts, the local forester admits that the increment of the Aleppo Pine forest is "minime" but that the increment of tourism is "incroyable". It is a bird sanctuary and I was excited to see several Hoopoe and one Golden Oriole among the pine trees and a savage-looking Woodchat Shrike pouncing upon and devouring a lizard. Nightingales were extraordinarily plentiful as well as several other Warblers, but owing probably to the brightness and heat of the sun, they all kept very much hidden in the dense pine or tree-heather foliage. The pretty Sardinian Warbler was more fond of the sunny places. Its song, once heard, made it quickly identifiable even if its black head and red eye-ring could not be seen.

In a semi-tidal pond surrounded by the forest, Ringed Plover and Black Winged Stilts (whose long legs seem to articulate backwards like the Flamingo) kept to their separate flocks while a single Little Egret strutted distainfully between them, showing off its peculiar yellow spats at each step through the shallow water.

Aleppo Pine is a poor tree, slow growing and generally bent and twisted. On much of the island it is over-mature and there has been substantial wind-blow despite the fact that it roots itself deeply into the fissured limestone or the firm well drained soil. Artificial and natural regeneration are both being practiced very much with a view to the public amenities, using Stone Pine, Maritime Pine, Eucalypts, Atlas Cedar and Macrocarpa. The one and only rabbit I saw on the island was in the last stages of myxomatosis. The thousands of visitors to the island - 4 steamers daily from Cannes - behave generally well and little damage is done. Smoking is forbidden, but Oh!, the litter!

The island makes an ideal forest park. One hotel and three restaurants cater well for tourists. There is no motor car problem because the only vehicles are the litter van, the goods delivery van from pier-head to the restaurants and the forester's or warden's van. The island is almost entirely bounded by low limestone cliffs so that there is little scope for the thousands of yachtsmen to come ashore. These selfsame cliffs again make timber extraction difficult and I decided that an N.D.R. calculation would not be a profitable holiday task!

****FAITH IN TIMBER HOUSES**

MR. JACK AARON, of the Marketing Section at Headquarters, sends along an interesting note about timber houses. So much is written about contemporary timber houses, he says, that we sometimes overlook the fact that hundreds now under the jurisdiction of the Greater London Council have been in existence for many years. The actual number of timber houses is 675. All but five of these were erected in the twenties at housing estates at Burnt Oak and Becontree during an acute brick shortage, and the Architect's Department of the G.L.C. report that they are well liked by the tenants and have advantages over brick houses. Firstly, where built on London clay they give less foundation trouble due to their low weight, and secondly they stood up to the effects of bombing during the war better than did the more traditional dwellings. The odd five, by the way, are Canadian houses built at Britwell.

Since the war 850 prefabricated timber houses have been erected, mainly at Langley, Bucks.; St. Paul's Cray, Kent; Debden, Essex; Harold Hill, Essex; St. Helier, Surrey; Boreham, Herts.; and Oxhey, Herts.

****ON BADGER WATCHING**

MR. D. A. MAC CASKILL, Forester at Inverinan, West Scotland, writes: "Your note in the May issue about wild life at Grizedale prompts me to write on our own nature activities on West Loch Aweaside. Here we are doing an intensive study of the badger, in the course of which we hope to find out more about this fascinating animal; to this end

we have formed what we call a Badger Watching Club, all members taking part in the survey. To make our task easier we have built tree hides at various setts: these hides can also be used by interested visitors. A main part of the study is the building up of a photographic record in both colour and black and white; a short cine film is being made with all its attendant difficulties.

"The history of the Badger here is interesting; in the early 1920s the then owner of an estate on our northern boundary imported animals on frequent occasions from his estates in Ireland and the north of England. I have been told that up to this time there had been few if, indeed, any badgers in the area; we appear, therefore, to have an Irish-English hybrid! Badgers are not well liked locally: people sometimes take a dislike to an animal through ignorance of its habits and this is particularly true of the badger, since it is nocturnal. One of our tasks is to prove that its history of poultry raiding is largely a myth. It is certainly a wonderful animal to watch in its natural environment and well repays any discomfort of sitting up in a tree at all hours!"

**A STONE IN SHROPSHIRE

ACROSS the high windswept hilltop of Kerry Forest in Shropshire, writes Head Forester R. J. JENNINGS, runs an ancient track. From the Anchor Inn where England meets Wales it winds its way east towards the old market town of Bishop Castle. Not far from this track, on the desolate moorland where mountain ponies and Clun Forest sheep graze, a carved stone cross stands out against the skyline and firmly embedded in the ground at its base is a rough stone slab.

In the nineteen-forties the writer was in charge of this forest in North Wales and while replanting an old shelter belt known as the Long plantation, was asked by the local authority to put a new fence around the stone to prevent its being damaged by cattle; and being by nature curious I wondered who erected a memorial in so wild and uninhabited a part of the countryside and for what purpose. After a few enquiries I learned the facts, which seemed to me to be worth recording.

On a bleak winter night in the year 1691 an itinerant hawker named William Cantlin was battling his way through a blizzard along this lonely road. A few yards south of its highest point at 1,585 feet he fell exhausted and died.

No parish being eager to go to the expense of burying a penniless stranger and after some dispute as to where the responsibility lay, for landmarks are few, and Cantlin collapsed almost on the county boundary, the villagers of Bettws y Crwyn in Salop laid him in their churchyard five miles distant, high up on the isolated heathery slopes of Black Mountain,

Had it not been for the Clun Forest Enclosure Act of 1875 this good deed of the parishioners of Bettws would long since have been forgotten, but in burying his remains in their churchyard and recording it by roughly engraving a stone where they found his frozen body they did better than they knew, for this enabled their successors to claim several hundred additional acres of land for the parish of Bettws y Crwyn.

On a recent journey to Kerry Forest I visited the solitary spot where the pedlar died and made out the inscription on the stone crudely chipped by a yeoman hand nearly three centuries ago "W. C. decsd. here buried 1691 at Bettws". The carved cross was erected in the late nineteenth century by a one time Member of Parliament for Ludlow and is known locally as the Cantlin Stone.

**THE BLACK FOX AGAIN

WE recently described how Mr. B. E. SUTTON, Forester at Witley, South East England, had encountered a large black fox. Mr. FRED COURTIER, Game Warden, writes from the New Forest to say that he read the following letter in the April issue of The Gamekeeper and Countryside Journal:

Black Fox in Surrey. Sir - In January I caught a black fox near here. I cannot trace a black fox having been in our part of the country before. Has any reader a record of such a colour hereabouts? -- L. Edwards, Haslemere.

****ACROSS THE FOOTLIGHTS**

THE talented Inforesta Drama Group provided enjoyable entertainment with their latest presentation "On Monday Next", a comedy by Phillip King.

The story is about a small repertory company rehearsing their play for presentation 'On Monday Next' at the Theatre Royal, Drossmouth. It is a tribute to the skill of the drama group that, despite the somewhat flimsy material, they kept the audience laughing most of the time.

The star of the show was, of course, ALAN CHAPMAN. As the conceited, egoistical producer, Harry Blacker, Alan was magnificent. He snarled, blustered and swaggered his way through the part with incredible arrogance. The role was an arduous one but Alan never once faltered.

Playing the character parts, JOHN ALP gave a superb performance as a doddering old carpenter and KEN WINTER in the role of the harassed little author of the play scored a big hit. After too long an absence, EDITH NOLAN made a welcome return to the footlights, providing the melodrama with BRIAN HOLLAND as her supercilious husband. EDNA TEBBITT gave her usual polished performance in a rather less acid role than she usually gets and SHIRLEY FOWLER as Daphne Wray was the nice girl with the nice shoulder to cry on! MAURICE GUBBY proved once again what a good actor he really is with his portrayal of Jackson Harley - almost the only rational character in the cast.

KEN BEESON made an impressive debut, playing the romantic lead opposite a very lachrymose DOROTHY LLOYD, and another newcomer was VALERIE NEWELL who took the part of Mary Manners. Other members of the cast were ERIC CUERDEN, KEN BALDWIN and DAVID PERKINS.

Alan and his company were invited to undertake an extensive tour, taking in Kielder, Shrewsbury, Llandulas, Llaneglwys and Dean Forest, and ending with two shows in London. Eight performances in all; a worthy official acknowledgement of the appeal of these good companions.

The play was produced by Ken Winter, designed by Alan Chapman and most efficiently stage managed by David Perkins. Finally, the group wish to thank all (including the York office staff) for the wonderful hospitality afforded them during the tour.

****SUCCESS IN PHOTOGRAPHY**

THE last meeting of the Keyasham Photographic Society's season was marked by the presentation to Mr. J. W. DAVIES, Clerical Assistant, Bristol, of the new Mills and Mills cup. This trophy, provided by a well known local firm of chemists, is to be awarded each year to the member securing the highest number of points from the five colour slide competitions held every season by the Society. Mr. Davies was the outright winner of two of these competitions and runner up in a third and his winning entry in the final competition of the season, entitled "Safe Port at Sunset", was described by the judges as one of the finest transparencies they had ever seen. Our congratulations to Mr. Davies, who obviously has an eye for a good photograph.

****ARTITHMETICAL ERROR**

FROM an earlier issue, headed "Many a Mickle Makes a Muckle": The average price for standing coniferous timber was, in 1963, 1s. 2½d. per hoppus foot; the average price in 1964 was 1s. 3½d. A difference of 1d. per hoppus foot may not look very much. But multiply it by the 12,917,798 hoppus feet sold in 1964 and the difference amounts to £53,828. 12s. 6d.

Not so. A correspondent - Mr. T. W. BROOKES, writing from Kennington Nursery, states that we were underestimating by £4. 9s. 4d.

****ADVENTURE AHEAD!**

DAVID GOWLER, formerly an Executive Officer at Headquarters, and aged 20, has left us to hitch-hike and work his way round the world.

Travelling with a friend, he hopes his route will take in Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey, pass through Syria, Iraq and Kuwait on to Pakistan and India, Ceylon, Burma and Malaya. He wants, too, to visit Australis, New Zealand, South America and the West Indies. He estimates his journey will take five years.