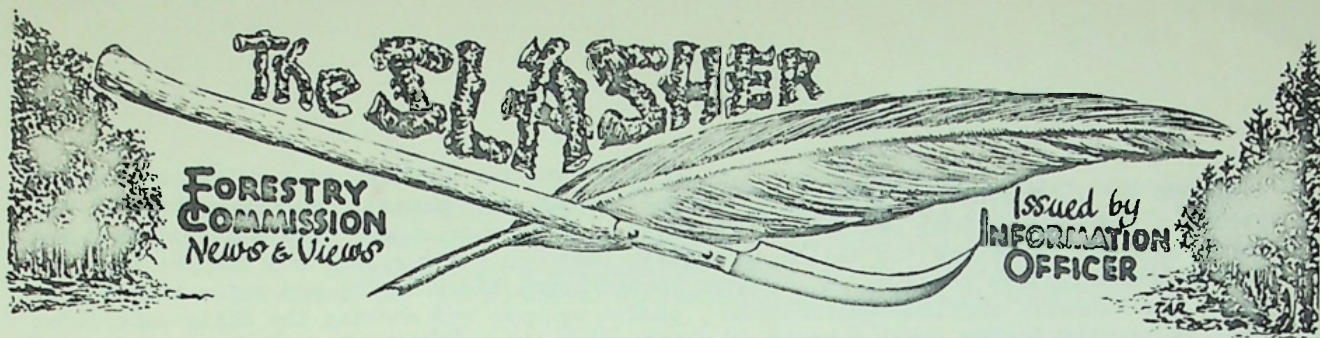




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ROYAL VISIT TO GRIZEDALE

DURING his tour of the Lake District National Park last month H.R.H. the DUKE OF EDINBURGH spent a short while at Grizedale Forest, where he was shown the deer museum, the start of the Ridding Wood Nature Trail, and the "Treetops" observation tower. Weather conditions were perfect and Prince Philip and the party were taken through the forest in open landrovers.

His Royal Highness showed particular interest in the subject of deer stalking under licence, and in a display of articles made from deer skin by members of Grizedale Forest Handcrafts. He remarked on the prosperous appearance of the valley farms and was appreciative of the fact that the forest roads were open to walkers and closed to motor traffic. He enquired into the retention of native deciduous woodland and the scope of the nest box recording schemes. On arrival at Treetops most of this year's rearing of grey lag geese were seen on the tarn and Prince Philip discussed at some length the development of wild fowl conservation, and the prospects of duck shooting under licence. He suggested that the Commission should take the initiative with species other than mallard, and recommended teal as an important woodland breeder which it had not yet proved possible to increase artificially. He also enquired into the local status of black game and the possibility of introducing capercaillie.

Prior to his arrival at Grizedale, Prince Philip had opened the new Claife Heights footpath, which for the greater part of its length traverses Commission ground on the west side of Windermere. Credit was given to the Commission for co-operation in agreeing the route, aligned partly to follow forest roads, and in leaving view points unplanted.

After leaving Grizedale, His Royal Highness went on to see a new Field Study Centre at Esthwaite Lodge Youth Hostel. This hostel was sold by the Commission to the Y.H.A. in 1943 and close liaison has been maintained locally ever since. Finally Prince Philip visited the National Council of Y.M.C.A.'s Lakeside Training Centre, from which many parties come to Grizedale.

Mr. J. S. R. CHARD, Conservator, North West England, tells us that despite the shortness of the visit, it is felt that the programme enabled His Royal Highness to obtain a very good picture of the Commission's contribution to the development of the National Park, particularly in matters of recreation, amenity and conservation.

**STEEP RISE IN SALES

SALES of Commission publications through the medium of our agricultural show exhibits

have risen steeply in the last few years. There are, of course, good reasons for this leap; for one thing there was greater opportunity for the show team to display its excellent salesmanship, since the Commission exhibited this year at the popular Wild Life Exhibition at Alexandra Palace. But as most of the sales throughout the show season were predominantly to the public, a steadily increasing interest by the man in the street in the Commission's work must surely be implied; and it must be conceded that our publications in themselves are of very high standard. Consider, for example, the recent booklet on fallow deer, of which the author is Mr. W. A. CADMAN, Deputy Surveyor, New Forest. This is appealing to the public, for it contains a great diversity of information, much of it "off-beat" but nonetheless intriguing.

Do you know, for example, that fallow were introduced by the Romans? That Oliver Cromwell helped substantially to augment the wild stock in the countryside, because he destroyed so many parklands? How many non-foresters among us could recognise the fallow on sight? Here is a tip - look out for the tail, the most distinctive feature; it is nine inches long, black on top and white underneath. It is occasionally carried squirrel-like, curled upwards and showing the white underside; this is usually during first moments of alarm, when the animal bounces three or four times on stiff legs, to give warning to other deer. In summer fallow may be various shades of chestnut with prominent creamy-white spots, while in winter the coat is darker and the spots not so easily seen. This is about all space will permit on the subject of fallow but since the management of wild life is featuring ever more prominently in the Commission's work, get hold of a copy of the booklet if you possibly can.

More reading matter, also selling well, is Miss Sylvia Crowe's booklet "Forestry and the Landscape", in which she summarises the advice she has given the Commission on how best forestry can scenically enrich the countryside. Miss Crowe, a past President of the Institute of Landscape Architects, was appointed our landscape consultant early in 1964 and has travelled widely to Commission forests to study our planting procedures, past and present, and her report is one which should be carefully read by members of the staff.

The Annual Report

The Commissioners' Annual Report for the Forest Year 1965 was published at the beginning of this month. Points from this are: Most of the land acquired during the year was in Scotland; in England acquisitions were negligible and in Wales disappointing; just over 48,000 acres were planted and more than 5,500 acres were re-stocked, involving in all the use of some 99 million trees; output from thinnings and fellings rose by over 8 per cent to a total of 28.4 million hoppus feet (about one million tons); our forests continue to play an increasingly important part in improving the landscape and in providing opportunities for open-air recreation and during the year, which was by no means good, weather-wise, nearly 600,000 people stayed overnight at our major camping and caravan sites.

Of the private sector, the Report records that woodland owners planted 31,200 acres under our various grant schemes and an estimated 1,700 acres without grants; all this was continuing evidence of the private landowners' confidence in the future prospects of forestry.

The Report is worth studying for it contains facts and figures that are often needed in the normal course of one's work.

****PROMOTIONS : PASTURES NEW**

THE following promotions to Assistant Conservator were made recently: Mr. R. CHARD, who moves from New Forest to South Scotland, to take the place of Mr. G. G. STEWART, now Acting Conservator at Glasgow; Mr. D. R. JOHNSON, who moves from the Planning and Economics Branch to Cambridge to succeed Mr. S. R. PAYNE, who has resigned; Mr. J. A. SPENCER, Forest and Estate Management, who follows Mr. Johnson; and Mr. D. T. SEAL, hitherto in East Scotland, who becomes Silviculturist, North following the retirement on health grounds of Mr. M. V. EDWARDS.

Recent transfers also include: District Officers O. N. BLATCHFORD from Woking to Alice Holt, Research; D. H. WALLACE, Aberystwyth to Dolgellau; J. PEAL from Dolgellau to Aberystwyth; G. J. HAMILTON from Dingwall, N.(S) to Dornoch N.(S). Foresters M. M. SHERWOOD from St. Gwynno, S.(W) to Chepstow, S.(W); I. POLLOCK from Port Augustus to Ae, S.(S). Executive Officer Miss E. J. JOHNSON from Woking to Basingstoke. Clerical Officer A. TOWNEND from Edinburgh to York. L/CEA from Dolgellau to Newtown, N.(W).

****BAN THE BEAVER**

REFERENCE in a recent issue to the proposals by Mr. Brunson Yapp, senior lecturer in zoology at Birmingham University, that the bear, the wolf and the lynx be re-introduced into Britain was (not surprisingly) noted by a number of readers with an appropriate scepticism. Any prospects of a "follow-up" suggestion becoming reality, however, would fill our foresters with alarm and despondency - the latest thought, propounded by Turnstone in "Wild Life", is that beavers might well be re-introduced. The beaver, says the writer, is "quite harmless, except for its habit of damming streams and causing a bit of local flooding". Local flooding, indeed!

"The whole biology of the beaver", points out Mr. PETER GARTHWAITE, our Wild Life Officer, "is to create dams and lakes and in doing so this creature not only feeds on the sap of trees but fells them in its efforts to create a natural habitat. Beavers could cause absolute havoc in our woodlands by blocking the forest drainage systems and then, of course, could follow large-scale windblow".

From the Commission's point of view, then, the beaver is seemingly a non-starter. It is, however, interesting to note that this mammal was last heard of in Britain on the Teifi in Wales in the 12th century and that it probably remained until later in Scotland. Turnstone points out that in Snowdonia there are still places named after beavers, including Llyn-y-Afanc, which means beaver's pool.

On Catching a Chipmunk

Some of our readers may have heard of the Japanese chipmunks that are imported as pets. Enquiries have been made of the Commission into their habits and life history, in case any escape and become pests of British woodlands. After translating a learned Russian book on mammals we are now able to tell you how to emulate the natives of the Upper Ob Forest District in catching these agile little animals.

All you need is a spent cartridge case, a fishing rod and a loop of string. With the cartridge case you make a "gurgling sound" resembling the mating call of the female chipmunk. Any male within earshot then hurries to the spot where you are standing. Finding no female chipmunk there, it stands up to look around for one. At this point you "cast" with your fishing rod, dropping the loop of string neatly over the standing chipmunk, pull the loop tight, and - hey presto, the chipmunk's yours!

**WHEN IT RAINS, IT RAINS

IT seems characteristic that when it rains in the south-west, it rains hard.

The evening of 10th June was but another example, writes Mr. R. M. BROWN, District Officer, Taunton. The centre of the storm was variously located as Bridgwater, Somerset, and Clatworthy Reservoir, some 12 miles from Taunton. A few figures are worth tabulating for the area:-

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Rainfall in 24 hours</u> <u>Ending 0700 or 0900 hours</u>	<u>Short Term Falls</u>
Cannington (just west of Bridgwater)	2.04"	1.52" in 75 minutes
Clatworthy Reservoir	2.09"	-
Brendon Forest	1.79" (about 4 hours)	-
Quantock Forest		1.23" in 50 minutes
Neroche Forest	1.73"	-

It is interesting to record that while Bridgwater was in flood, Quantock Forest Trail was fit to receive visitors the next day in comparative arid conditions, thus providing an excellent illustration of the value of woodland in catchment areas. Not even forest areas are safe from flood in this area, however, as is shown by the following report from Mr. STRAWBRIDGE, Forester-in-charge of Brendon Forest. I see no mention in this report of the nearby landowner who telephoned Mr. Strawbridge late that evening, in the middle of the storm, to ask his advice about a Douglas fir which had been struck by lightning and was burning 60 feet up! The storm was, in many places, intensely electric with tremendous flashes illuminating the sky about every three seconds. A tragedy resulted from this, for six cattle were killed near Clatworthy reservoir.

I could quote numerous examples to support my opening paragraph but it is sufficient, I think, to remind readers of the Lynton/Lynmouth disaster on 15th August, 1952, when 10 inches of rain fell in 24 hours.

Writes Mr. Strawbridge: Luxborough is the village and centre of Brendon Forest, with the main concentration of houses and folk, numbering about 120, in the Luxborough valley. This is a "hidden" valley in that the surrounding hills obscure the habitations and the traveller can easily pass on the

higher ground without discovering the village. These sheltering hills are a watershed, turning the annual average of 50" rainfall into five streams which join up closely as the combs meet in Luxborough. Storms are to be expected in any month, these being of devastating proportions if the rainfall is high in a short period.

December, 1965, was a very wet month which culminated in falls of 1.62" and 1.71" on the 18th and 19th. The introduction of this amount of water into the constricted Luxborough valley from five streams resulted in flooding throughout the village and the County Council road which runs at stream side became part of the water course. Some of our plantations flank the streams and the road, which was undermined. The ravages of this flood were almost repaired, and the road was being prepared for opening, when a fall of 1.79" of rain in four hours on 10th June caused more damage. There were several instances of serious erosion in that night's storm but the scene in the forest must have been spectacular. A field at 1,000 feet and adjoining our plantations had been ploughed and drilled during a warm dry spell in the first week of June. This runs down hill to the road and stream. The force of water falling swept soil and all in a wave across the field and over a 5 foot high stone bank and on through the plantations, where the noise must have been deafening. Stones between the tree roots were "gulleyed" out and finally the mass spouted out 18 feet above the road and into the river.

No one saw the event but evidence is visible on a telegraph pole which has a "tide mark" at a height of 18 feet.

****THE BALFOUR-BROWNE DEER TROPHY** THIS trophy, presented to the Commission by Miss G. M. C. Balfour-Browne in memory of her brother, the famous deer artist, for annual award "to the person who has done most to promote the proper conservation and control of deer", has been won by Mr. W. N. GIBSON, lately Assistant Conservator in South Scotland and now with Tilhill Forestry (Scotland) Limited.

Mr. Gibson's interest in deer is well known and in receiving the award he follows two previous recipients, Mr. KEN MacARTHUR of Dumfries and Mr. KENNY CLARKE, of Greskine Forest, South Scotland. Mr. Gibson took great pains to help correct misunderstandings regarding deer control by the Commission in Scotland and in particular demonstrated our enlightened methods to naturalists and journalists. He is a member of the Council for Scotland of the British Deer Society and will undoubtedly continue to support and encourage the proper management of deer on the many private estates which he is now concerned.

The trophy is a beautiful silver replica of the bronze by Balfour-Browne - The Challenger - and is to be presented to Mr. Gibson in Dumfries shortly by SIR WILLIAM STRANG STEEL.

****PERSONAL** CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. ANDY GALLACHER and Miss ANNA TRAYNOR, both of the Glasgow office, on their marriage. The groom is an Executive Officer and the bride a Clerical Officer; they received the gift of a standard lamp from office colleagues.

Best wishes, also, to Mr. RON ELLIOTT, O. & M., Headquarters, and Miss SHIRLEY FOWLER, of the Secretariat, on their wedding. Both are Executive Officers. The event was made even more a Commission affair by the fact that the best man was Mr. ALAN CHAPMAN, of O. & M. The couple received a cheque from colleagues at Headquarters and Basingstoke.

We are pleased to record the appointment of Mrs. G. E. REYNOLDS as Supervisor of the typing pool at Headquarters.

****HELP WANTED** THE Commission has given considerable support to the publishers of Timber Trades Journal in producing the six-monthly supplement entitled Forestry and Home Grown Timber. The value of this becomes obvious when one considers that the supplement is the only one of its kind dealing exclusively with the home forest and timber industries.

If you can help by submitting a "filler" or two as some "off-beat" subject, your assistance will be welcomed. But please remember - it is not anecdotes we require, but short factual items related to forestry and timber, not more than 200 words in length.