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SCHOOL STUDENTS KILLED

TWO Fijian second-year students at the Dean Forester Training School died in a recent road crash; a third was seriously injured. The men were returning to the school when their car was in head-on collision with another, driven by a Mr. Parry, of Newbury, who was also killed.

The two dead students were KITIONE VUNISASARI and SERUPEPELI TURUVA. Both were regular players with the Bream Rugby Football Club and Seru was regarded as one of the best centres in Forest rugby for many years. He was buried at Parkend but the body of his erstwhile colleague was flown home.

The injured student is MAT VUNIBAKA; it is understood that he is making a good recovery.

*****"KEY NURSERYMAN" RETIRES**

THERE was a large gathering at Kennington Nursery to say farewell to Head Forester W. G. GRAY who, writes a correspondent, "became the Commission's key nurseryman and gained the respect and affection of all who worked with him".

Bill Gray joined the Research Branch in 1922 after attending the Forest Apprentices schools at Burley and Chopwell. From that year to 1924 he worked as a Ganger in Bushfield and Rapley nurseries near Bagshot and moved to Kennington in 1925, where he had remained for more than 40 years. His outstanding horticultural skill, combined with great patience and a capacity for hard work, quickly made Kennington notable for the perfection of techniques and the quality of plants. In addition to his nursery work, Bill Gray laid down many of our early forest experiments, between 1928 and 1932, at Buriton, Radnor and Thetford.

The party at Kennington comprised many forestry personalities, Commission and otherwise, and included Mr. J. R. THOM, Director Research. Farewell gifts to Bill Gray included a cheque from Commission friends, pewter tankards from the Commonwealth Forestry Institute and a beautifully prepared illustrated booklet to remind him of his long association with the Rothamsted staff.

Our correspondent goes on: "One of Bill Gray's outstanding qualities is his friendliness and helpfulness to all who seek his advice and, over the years, colleagues of all ranks have had reason to be grateful to him. We wish him a long and happy retirement."

****OUR JUBILEE YEAR:
SUGGESTIONS WANTED**

ALTHOUGH no details have yet been officially announced it is well known that the Commission hopes to celebrate its Jubilee Year - 1969 - in a fitting way, not least by the arrangement of a forestry exhibition on the lines of that held at Bramshill in 1964. This will be taking place in the June of Jubilee Year on the Bush Estate at Edinburgh, since it is in Scotland that a million and a half acres of our estate are situated and a high proportion of our planting is being carried out.

It is never too soon to start planning an exhibition and suggestions are invited from readers who may feel that some particular aspect or other of our work, purpose and aims should be included in the Edinburgh display. Let us be frank - we have decided that the show will be as comprehensive

as possible and maybe your idea or ideas will have already been considered. But you never know; past experience has shown that members of our staff may well come up with something that had been overlooked. If you have any proposals, therefore, do send them along - to the Secretary, 1969 Committee, Forestry Commission, 25 Drumsheugh Gardens. At the same time you may have some thoughts about other events which could take place in Jubilee Year and these, too, will be carefully considered.

Incidentally, the last forestry exhibition in Scotland was held in 1884, remained open for three and a half months, included exhibits from many parts of the world, and attracted half a million visitors. Our Jubilee exhibition will be for three days only, so that we cannot hope to emulate the attendance of the show of 80 years and more ago; but we do intend it to be something that will be quite outstanding and leave an indelible impression with public and foresters alike of the importance of the forest industry.

**UNIQUE TRIBUTE

IN a recent issue we quoted a rewarding passage from Garth Christian's latest book which gave high praise to the Forestry Commission as enlightened land managers. An even more generous tribute has now appeared in print, for Norah Burke's latest book, "The Midnight Forest", has the following dedication:

"To the Forestry Commission, all its officers and men, who are not only adding to the nation's wealth, but have saved some of our countryside from new towns and other building, planted beautiful forests for the future, and thus provided a habitat for our remaining wildlife".

Norah Burke's father was a distinguished Conservator in the Indian Forest Service and she spent much of her childhood on tour with him in the jungle. She has written many books, mainly about travel and wildlife, which have been published and broadcast all over the world. She now lives near Bury St. Edmunds and the story she tells in "The Midnight Forest" is the result of many hours of patient study of the animals and birds living in the King's Forest in Thetford Chase. She has taken as her theme the effects on the wildlife of the winter of 1962-63, the most severe ever recorded in the British Isles, which hit East Anglia with particular ferocity. Her method is to describe the lives of particular families of badgers, roe, and other animals that she observed at such close quarters that she knew them as individuals; all this is backed by the wealth of knowledge that comes only from a life-time of personal study. This integrity of observation, free from sentimentality, gives the book an authority which adds lustre to the unique tribute of its dedication. It is published by Jarrolds at 30s.

**THE LATE ARTHUR BEARD

WE reported briefly last month the sudden death of Mr. ARTHUR BEARD, Head Forester at Dymock Forest, South West England. Mr. M. J. PENISTAN, Assistant Conservator, writes: "We had known for a time that Arthur Beard was not fit but we were all looking forward to meeting him in his retirement, going round the forest which he had loved and cared for all his life.

"Arthur Beard came from a farming family. His early days were spent as a horseman in the district and then as a timber feller with local merchants, helping to fell big oak in Dymock. In 1934 he joined the forest squad and his skill and pride of work was quickly recognised. In 1940 he was made Foreman and, within a year, he was Foreman in charge. In 1946 he was promoted Forester and, in the recent promotions, Head Forester. He had a strong sense of community - in his youth as a keen footballer and cricketer, later as chairman of the Parish Council, a manager of Gorsley School, treasurer of Gorsley Horticultural Society and a leading local gardener.

"Arthur was a natural forester who managed his charge with understanding and skill. One of the last of those stalwart foresters who came to the top by sheer spirit and devotion to duty, his trees came first, with the result that his forest was always a delight to visit, and there are few foresters who did not go there as students from the Dean School. When management was under discussion he always made sound, practical and telling contributions. We shall all miss him sorely."

****THE LATE VERNON COLLINS**

WE referred in our previous issue to the sudden death of VERNON COLLINS, H.E.O. in the Estate Management Division, Basingstoke.

"Although Vernon had not been in very good health for some years," writes a colleague, "none of us had been given an inkling of the seriousness of his complaint. He was a most co-operative colleague, always willing to go out of his way to help. Friendly, cheerful and good natured, despite his anxieties, he had a deep interest in music and photography and many of us can trace our own interest in the latter to Vernon's enthusiasm and encouragement. He leaves a widow and two children, to whom we express our deepest sympathy."

Vernon Collins served in the RAF as a Navigator in the last war and then joined the Admiralty, coming to the Commission in 1949, when he went to Inverness as an E.O. In 1959 he was posted to the then office of Director, England, and became an H.E.O. in 1963, soon after the Director's office had moved to Savile Row.

****RETURN TO THE FOLD**

DAVID GOWLER, a young E.O. who left us in June 1965, to travel round the world is back at Savile Row with his objective unreachd but memories galore.

Let him tell his own story: "It was my intention," he reports, "to go round the world, or at least as far as Australia, with a starting capital of £40 and a rucksack. I had heard there was work in plenty in West Germany and it was the intention of myself and a friend to make that country our first base. We arrived there by way of Belgium and Holland and made our way to Darmstadt, near Frankfurt, where we lived with an acquaintance. Jobs were easy to find and we soon became part of the labour force of a printing works. Unfortunately, this employment lasted for only a week on account of a poisoned foot I sustained while camping for a weekend on the banks of the Rhine. On recovering, I managed to find work with the U.S. Army as a transportation clerk; I stayed with the Americans for about two months, during which time I saved enough money to buy a boat ticket from Trieste to Bombay.

"I left Trieste by way of Venice, Brindisi, Port Said, Suez and Aden to Bombay, where my first priority was to find somewhere to stay; the YMCA was closed and the only other cheap place was the Salvation Army. I did not have much choice about lodgings because I had landed with only £20 and, although I increased the value of this money by changing it into rupees, it was hardly likely to last very long. However, the hostel was comfortable, with three meals a day and afternoon tea, for the equivalent of about 10s. I tried to find work but soon realised that this would be impossible and decided to try and return to London. In this I was fortunate. This was the time of the Indo-Pakistan war and the Indian Government had chartered a British boat to evacuate the Indian Embassy staff in Karachi. This ship, the Devonian, brought the staff to Bombay and, rather than it should return empty to Europe, cheap passages were offered. Admittedly, it meant sleeping 20 to a dormitory cabin, but this was no hardship. I had managed to scrape up the fare by exhausting my bank account in London and duly reached Genoa, penniless, and was forced to ask my parents to send me money to get from Genoa to London, where I eventually arrived without a penny to my name."

****FORESTER'S "HEART OF OAK"**

OUR Foresters are known for their diversity of hobbies and Head Forester JACK WILSON, who looks after our woods in South Warwickshire, has a local reputation for the excellence of his carving and woodwork. So much so that the Birmingham Post has described him, in a special "profile", as the "Forester with a heart of oak".

Mr. Wilson has made nearly all the furniture for his home, while his carvings, which he has placed on exhibition in a "one-man" show, are a delight to behold; they range from wildlife to the topical six strap-hanging figures entitled The Commuters. So far as we are aware, oddly enough he has no interest in disposing of his work - "I keep a stack of things under the bed," he says.

Jack Wilson is dedicated to his forestry work, as well as to his carving of wood, and is in demand as a speaker among voluntary organisations interested in silviculture and wild life conservation. The well known Oversley Wood Nature Trail, which is used by all the schools in Warwickshire, is maintained under his watchful eye.

****SECRETS OF THE STONE AGE**

SO many arrowheads and flint tools of the Stone Age have been unearthed by our workers above the Rhondda Valley that a museum may be built to house them. Some of the arrowheads are perfectly formed and other finds have included a lance point, harpoon barbs and a range of tools such as saws and drills used by man some 7000 years ago.

The relics are being looked after by the Forest Clerk at Rhondda, Mr. ARTHUR HAZZARD, until such time as they can be adequately displayed. Mr. GEORGE DEY, District Officer, says that the use of mechanical cultivators in the area has resulted in such a wealth of finds. Certainly the local staff is fast developing an interest in archaeology.

****FREE FALL PARACHUTIST**

AN interesting news sheet issued at Mortimer Forest, South West England, not only enlightens the staff as to the reasons for the variety of work that lies ahead in a Forest Year but contains some "off-beat" information. It was through the medium of this newsletter that we learned of the spare time pursuit of Forester DAVID WATTS. He is a parachutist specialising in the free fall technique and the club to which he belongs is based at Hereford, where students have to complete six hours ground training in falling and packing the parachutes. "Then," he says, "you need a strong pair of boots, £50,000 insurance cover, and you are ready to step into space. The first six jumps are from 1,800 ft. with the parachute opening automatically, when you learn to fall with arms and legs stretched wide to give a stable position for free fall.

"The first free fall is 5 seconds before pulling the rip cord, then 10, then 15, until at 12,000 ft. you can fall for 60 seconds. Above that height oxygen is needed. Locally we don't normally jump at over 8,000 ft. since otherwise the plane would groan and one's lips turn blue. In free fall you reach terminal velocity, 120 m.p.h., after 12 seconds and an experienced man can do loops, turns and rolls before pulling the cord."

****NOT YET OUT OF THE WOOD**

ONE of our Publications staff recently met the manager of a very large publishing firm who said: "Interesting to know that you actually use wood for paper making. Of course all our books are printed on wood-free paper!"

This puzzled our man, for the firm concerned sells its books and journals at keen prices. Could it possibly be using nothing but rags and esparto grass - the alternative raw materials used only for luxury papers? A printing textbook provided the answer. "Wood-free paper" is simply paper that does not contain any raw, unprocessed wood. Nowadays "wood-free" paper is nearly always made from wood, but wood which is chemically treated during the pulping process, to get rid of its lignin content. All the rest of the wood substance remains - to provide the durable and flexible printing medium.

****SAFETY QUIZ SUCCESS**

A road safety "quiz" organised by the local authority at Holsworthy attracted an entry of 20 teams from various firms and organisations and included one from Halwill Forest, South West England, which secured third place. "As we entered in a spirit of 'serious' fun and to keep the Commission end up locally," writes Mr. G. F. BEASLEY, Chief Forester, "we were more than gratified with our placing, especially as the two leading teams were made up of non-manual workers, that is school teachers (who won) and bank officials (who were second). We hope to do better next time." At the meeting the opportunity was taken for the Road Safety Committee Chairman to present a 10-year safe driving medal to Mr. R. KEAST, the Halwill Forest lorry driver.

****OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US !**

QUOTE from a South Wales newspaper report under the heading "Stolen Car Trail in Prisoner Hunt". "He was badly in need of a shave and looked rough," she said. "I thought he was a Forester, but now I am quite convinced it was, the escaped prisoner."