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THE TORREY CANYON

WHEN the great oil tanker TORREY CANYON first piled herself on the rocks off the Scillies, few of us would have thought of a developing link between this seafaring tragedy and the Commission. But events have shown just how wide nowadays are our interests and responsibilities, for as the oil menace to the beaches became obvious, so did the Commission act swiftly with offers of help to the various authorities in South, south west and south east England and Wales. The operation was commenced with Mr. C. A. CONNELL, Conservator, South West England as co-ordinator, it being made known that the Commission was prepared to assist with men and machines. At the time of writing we are unaware of the extent to which the Commission have become involved; but it is known that a number of authorities have asked for tractors to draw supplies of detergents to the beaches and that portable sprays normally required for fire control were to be sought from us.

However things work out, it is clear that this willingness to assist in times of national calamity - as, for example, at Aberfan - is in itself a first class exercise in public relations.

**DEATH OF DISTRICT OFFICER

District Officer in the East Scotland Conservancy.

WE deeply regret to record the death recently, in Stracatho Hospital, of MR. JAMES CHRYSTALL,

Mr. Chrystall, who lived at Montrose, was in charge of a number of forests in Angus and Kincardineshire. An Aberdeenshire man, he had been with the Commission all his working life except for the period when, as a Territorial, he was called for service with the Gordon Highlanders, later serving in the Far East with the Royal Corps of Signals and the Parachute Regiment. Mr. Chrystall was 53 and leaves a widow and three daughters, to whom we offer our sincere sympathies.

**UNIQUE CEREMONY ON SKYE

remote crofting village of Claigan on the Island of Skye - a few miles north of the well known Dunvegan Castle, home of Dame Flora MacLeod, Chief of the Clan MacLeod.

CONSERVATOR, North Scotland, Mr. HAMISH MAXWELL, recently took part in a unique ceremony at the

The ceremony was to mark the beginning of a scheme which, it is hoped, will result in more croft land becoming available for forestry and it was devised by the Chairman of the Crofters Commission in close association with the Forestry Commission. In essence it is an arrangement whereby we may purchase parts of common grazings, paying market value for vacant possession, but part of the price normally paid to the owner will be transferred to a Development Fund administered by the Crofters Commission. This Fund will be used for improvements on the township which gave up the land.

The crofters of the Claigan township in Skye were the first to avail themselves of the scheme and it was thought appropriate to mark the occasion by a formal handing over of a cheque for some £400 to the Crofters Commission. The ceremony took place in the crowded sitting room of a small croft house in Claigan. It began with Mr. Maxwell making a brief speech in which he congratulated the Claigan crofters on their initiative and expressed the hope that their example would be followed by many other townships both on the Islands and the mainland. If full advantage were taken of this imaginative scheme, he said, he was sure that substantial benefits would result to crofting, agriculture and to forestry. The cheque was then handed over by Mr. Maxwell to Mr. DONALD MACKENZIE, who is the Local Assessor for the Crofters Commission and himself a crofter - but a crofter with strong forestry connections, for he

is the older brother of Mr. GEORGE MACKENZIE, our Conservator for East Scotland. After Mr. Mackenzie had suitably acknowledged the cheque, recordings were made for the B.B.C., first in English and then in Gaelic; as Mr. Maxwell is no Gaelic speaker, his speech was ably translated by the Chief Forester of Skye Forest - Mr. W. J. NICOLSON.

After a Sitka spruce had been planted by the Township Clerk to mark the occasion the guests, numbering about a dozen people, were entertained with true Highland hospitality.

****AU REVOIR, CHARLEY ADAMS**

SENIOR Officer for Wales, Mr. John ZEHETMAYR, and some 60 wellwishers and friends from both field and Conservancy office staff, writes a correspondent, said goodbye at Llangynwyd to Forester CHARLEY ADAMS, an old and loyal servant, a first class forester and one absolutely devoted to his duty and dedicated to the cause of forestry. Presenting a cheque from colleagues and friends, Mr. J. D. CAMERON, Forest Officer for the Neath District, recalled some of Charley's exploits and wished him all happiness in his retirement.

Expertly organised by Chief Forester DANNY MORGAN of Cymmer, the function was a resounding success, and the opportunity was taken to make it a double send-off, for the gathering also said farewell to Mr. GORDON DAVIS, Land Agent, on his transfer to West Scotland. The presentation - of a handsome projector - was made in this case by Mr. Zehetmayr.

Turning again to Charley - and who can forget him? - Mr. Morgan writes:

"I suppose it was no more than a week after we entered the Dean Forestry School at Parkend in 1930 that our class learned about the 'Adams Family' - a forester in the Dean whose sons were all foresters. During my student days I worked with one of them and heard a lot about the rest, in particular one Charley Adams, who would never refuse a challenge, be it felling (with his 7 lb axe), cards, skittles, darts, or drinking pints of cider; Charley would always 'have a go'. Over the years and over the bush telegraph would come news from time to time of Charley's exploits; but it was only once, briefly at a forestry excursion to Tair Onen Nursery, that I met him - that is, until 1961. It was then that with a great deal of circumspection I received the news that Charley Adams was being transferred from North Wales to be my assistant at Margam.

"I thought that to be saddled with this vitrolic character would result in difficulties; an extra burden on my shoulders and another problem on my hands. But that is not how things turned out to be. From the very first day I took him around the forest we seemed to 'hit it off', and from then to the time I left Margam we never had a cross word. Charley's cheerfulness and good humour and his common sense and practical ability made the job go with a swing. He would throw himself wholeheartedly into any task that was given him and would bring it to a successful conclusion. Charley was indeed a most loyal colleague and friend."

****LEAVES BERE AFTER 43 YEARS**

BERE FOREST recently bid farewell to Forester R. F. LAWES who has retired after serving the Commission faithfully for a period of 43 years. All this time, except for a matter of weeks, was spent at Bere.

Mr. Lawes joined the Commission in 1924 when, in his own words "a rise of a penny a day was something to take home". Promoted to Forester in 1943, he was responsible for the fire precautions necessary in view of the many incendiary bomb raids in the area. There is one story of the occasion during a raid when, a stick of bombs having fallen, he went one way and his tin helmet the other. And another of the night when Bere's "pond" appeared - a huge bomb crater. He will not lack memories of his stewardship.

The entire forest staff attended the presentation to Mr. Lawes, among them being Mr. P. PEARCE, Mr. E. MELLISH and Mr. W. LAWES who served with and under him for many years. Their farewell gift took the form of an electric clock, given to Mr. Lawes by Mr. L. W. ATKINS, a retired Ganger, who had worked with the former for a long while. Mrs. R. Lawes, who was present, also received a gift.

The staff side was represented by the Conservator, Mr. C. A. J. BARRINGTON; the District Officer, Mr. E. S. V. BURTON and Head Forester F. C. WATTS and Forester F. USHER from Havant. Mr. Burton paid tribute to the work done by Mr. Lawes over the years. Gifts from the staff side were in the form of a pressure garden sprayer, a set of cuff-links and tie-pin and a pewter pot. These were presented by Mr. Barrington, who also donated a further gift to Mrs. Lawes.

****COMMISSION AIDS EXPORT DRIVE**

BIRCH poles grown at Bedgebury Forest, Kent and Brightling Forest, Sussex are now helping African housewives. Some 70-80 acres of standing birch was sold to Kent Woodware Ltd. of Hawkhurst, and at least half the poles obtained were exported to Malta, where they were made into brushes for sale in North Africa.

****THOSE WILD CATTLE**

THERE is a further comment on the wild cattle of Lochgoilhead, about which we wrote last month. Our Forester correspondent goes on:

"We all know that a 'wood' stag is a superior animal to that of the open deer forest and so it must have been with these wild cattle, for each Spring their condition outshone their inwintered neighbours. Perhaps a balanced diet of withered sprits, sitka and seaweed would be a worthy study subject for a balanced cattle ration. Some Winters, however, the death rate was high when the seaweed became fouled with oil, which poisoned the cattle. Nature did not respond by supplying vultures or the like and more than once I saw a shepherd's collie pop out from inside a carcass.

"A subtle difference could in fact be detected in the taste of the flesh of these animals. When cooked it could pass for venison and just as the tang of the peat is discernable in a good dram, one could almost imagine in the paler texture meat an essence of heather and sitka."

Mr. W. A. J. JOHNSON, Land Agent, West Scotland, writes: "An interesting postscript to the story is the dilemma of the Ministry of Agriculture's veterinary officer. In the early fifties nearly all cattle in Argyll had been cleared for tuberculosis but the county could not be declared fully attested because of the free-ranging cattle. The owner of the original stock was ordered to produce the cattle for testing but admitted his inability to do so, especially because many of them were not on his land. The veterinary officer then served a notice on the Commission as occupiers of the land to produce them: naturally this was resisted as invalid but it did trigger off the attempt to dispose of the animals."

****CARING FOR THE HORSES**

A "horseback forest patrol" has been introduced by the R.S.P.C.A. by arrangement with the North Wales Conservancy, following complaints alleging the maltreatment of horses engaged on timber hauling. The patrols are carried out at irregular intervals in one part of the Conservancy by Inspectors of the Society, one of whom is reported as saying that large areas can now be covered in a short time and the horses examined at their work. The Inspectors' horses were conveyed to given spots at short notice "with the full co-operation of the Forestry Commission, who are only too happy to know of this surveillance. Grapevine whispers alone have good effect and assure the success of this type of exercise."

It is understood that not only are these patrols preventing maltreatment of horses but many hauliers are gaining useful information about animal care and welfare. There is a possibility that the scheme may be extended to cover the whole of the Conservancy.

****SPRINGTAIL TAILPIECE**

FROM Slebech Nursery, South Wales, Head Forester E. G. HOLLOWELL writes: "The December issue of the Slasher contained an article 'Enter the Springtail'. This implied that Springtail damage to conifer seedlings was being recorded for the first time anywhere in the world.

"The Springtail first entered my life in the spring of 1960, when in conjunction with a plague of 'flea-beetles' they began a massive attack on H.L. and N.F. seedlings. The larger of the two insects (the flea-beetle) was at first thought to be the main source of trouble but when they had

been eliminated with D.D.T. sprays the damage continued. After many hours of patient observation by Ganger BILL ROBLIN, Forester L. S. TAYLER and myself we were able to spot the minute movement of the Springtail; to catch him was another matter entirely. It was the patience of Bill Roblin in driving these minute insects on to some sticky-backed polythene tape that finally enabled us to send some specimens to the Entomologist at Alice Holt. Incidentally it was the survival of the Springtail, after applications of D.D.T. against the flea-beetle, that led us to the use of Malathion for, as it is now widely known, Springtails are immune to D.D.T.

"Can any reader record a Springtail attack being identified before 1960?"

****CALLING EX-BENMORE STUDENTS**

A RE-UNION is planned for all 1962-64 Benmore Forester Training School students, to be held during the week ending 1st - 2nd July this year, in Northumberland and at a venue to be decided upon between those able to attend. Anyone requiring further details is asked to contact Mr. D. J. WHITMARSH, Gwydyr Uchaf, Llanrwst, Denbs., or Mr. M. J. DAY, Work Study, Forestry Commission, Boughrood House, Brecon.

****BASINGSTOKE LEAD THE WAY**

After only nine months at Basingstoke, the Sports and Social Club of the new Headquarters office has already made a name for itself in the sporting life of the area. Sylvatica (the name of the club) entered two teams in the district table tennis league and finished the season by seeing the second team gaining promotion from the fourth to the third division, and the first team winning the championship of the second division. 'A' team, R. E. CHAPPELL, P. J. BIRKETT, N. T. HALL; 'B' team, A. S. LEE, D. J. GODDARD, I. S. HATTON.

To crown a more than successful year of table tennis, R. E. CHAPPELL, the Sylvatica team captain, overcame all opposition to take the intermediate singles trophy in the closed championships of the Basingstoke and District table tennis league.

Well done, Basingstoke!

****THE SHOW PROGRAMME**

READERS planning a holiday at home, or those who like to take the odd day off as annual leave, may wish to note the dates of the various agricultural shows at which we shall be exhibiting this year. Where one asterisk occurs, this indicates a joint display by the travelling exhibit, under Head Forester TOM WILKINSON, and the appropriate Conservancy; two asterisks denote a Conservancy display only; and where there is no asterisk, the travelling exhibit will be "going it alone".

Some of our show "fans" may care to know that the Royal Counties Society amalgamated at short notice with the Sussex and South Eastern Counties societies, between them to stage the new South of England show at Ardingly, Sussex.

<u>England</u>	*	Shropshire and West Midland, Shrewsbury, 17th-18th May;
	**	Devon County, Exeter, 18th - 20th May;
	*	Staffordshire, Stafford, 24th-25th May;
	*	Bath and West, Shepton Mallet, 31st May - 3rd June;
		Great Cheshire, Wirral, 7th - 8th June;
	**	South of England, Ardingly, 8th - 10th June;
	*	Three Counties, Malvern, 13th - 15th June;
		Lincolnshire, Lincoln, 21st - 22nd June;
	*	Royal Norfolk, Norwich, 28th - 29th June;
	*	Royal, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, 4th - 7th July;
	*	Great Yorkshire, Harrogate, 11th - 13th July;
	**	Kent County, Maidstone, 12th - 13th July;
		Peterborough, 18th - 20th July;
	**	Durham County, Chester-le-Street, 4th - 5th August.
<u>Scotland</u>	**	Royal Highland, Edinburgh, 20th - 23rd June;
	**	Northern Counties, Inverness 20th - 21st July.
<u>Wales</u>	*	Royal Welsh, Builth Wells, 25th - 27th July.

Additionally, a number of smaller shows, notably in Wales and England, will be provided with small-scale exhibits. The Country Landowners' Association Game Fair, this year at Bowood, Calne, Wiltshire, on 28th - 29th July, will again be supported with a sizeable display.