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A "SHEET ANCHOR OF SILVICULTURE" AU REVOIR TO MR. R. F. WOOD

with real regret by his many friends and colleagues throughout the Commission. "He has literally been the sheet anchor in the field of silviculture for many years", writes Mr. J. R. THOM, Director, Research.

THE departure on retirement of Mr.

R. F. WOOD from the Research Division, after some 20 years at Alice Holt, will be felt

Service in Scotland on the Borders was the start of his Commission career in 1937, interrupted by the war and secondment to the Timber Production Department with many moves, including those to Nottingham, Chelmsford and even Hampstead Heath!

After the war came a posting to Argyll in 1946, and thus started a love for West Scotland which persists to this day, goes on Mr. Thom. This was a period of great change in the Commission, with the advent of improved ploughs for drainage and cultivation. This experience in West Argyll was to stand Robert Wood in good stead when he was transferred to the Research Branch at Alice Holt in 1947.

At that time Alice Holt had only just been de-requisitioned by the Army and the beginning of a Research Station appeared very largely to be an act of faith. Robert Wood took charge of Silviculture in Southern England and Wales. From those early days he can now look back on a highly efficient Research Section with experimental work in practically all forests through Britain.

In addition to his normal duties, Robert Wood has represented the Research Division on many committees both at home and abroad. In 1952 he was awarded a Nuffield Fellowship and toured Canada for some nine months, resulting in a scholarly Bulletin on "North-West American Forests in relation to Silviculture in Great Britain". In 1963 he was one of the delegates to the Commonwealth Forestry Conference in East Africa. He has been a prolific writer, and latterly his editing of the Research Annual Report has shown his great love for accurate expression and simple clear-cut prose.

During the illness of the late T. R. Peace, Robert Wood acted as Head of the Research Branch and has been the loyal and efficient deputy of the previous and present Directors. His knowledge of forestry matters is vast, his patience and tact in dealing with colleagues has been quite extraordinary, and with it all is his never failing gentle kindness and deep humanity, which have endeared him to so many foresters at home and abroad.

His affection for Argyll is evident in his choice of a house for retirement. At Tighnamara, on the shores of Benderloch, he will be able to indulge in his love of gardens and his love of plants. There, together with Margaret, his charming wife and hostess to so many Research folk, will they start again to transform a garden for their own delight, and doubtless for the pleasure of their many friends. Our good wishes go with them to their new home, and may they have many happy years among the Isles of the Blest.

**SUDDEN DEATH OF HEAD FORESTER

Forester W. F. C. MIDDLETON of Arundel Forest, South East England. He collapsed and died shortly after a meeting of Forester Grades at Buriton and leaves a widow and three daughters, to whom we extend our sympathy.

IT is with deep regret that we have to record the death, which took place suddenly, of Head

Mr. Middleton joined the Forestry Commission as a Forest Worker at Swaffham in 1926. He went to the Dean School in 1931 and on completion of his course he was posted to Buriton in 1933 as a Ganger. He served in various forests in South East and East England until 1949, when he was posted to Arundel Forest as Forester in charge. His knowledge of silviculture and natural history were of a high order and those working with him quickly learnt to respect this. His 18 years at Arundel will show evidence of his skill for a great many years to come.

****DIRECTOR GENERAL ENTERTAINED**

OUR Director General, SIR HENRY BERESFORD-PEIRSE, who is to retire at the end of January, was entertained by the Forestry Commissioners at the Caledonian Club. Mr. FRED SELLERS, a recently retired Commissioner, was also the guest of the Commissioners. Tributes to Sir Henry and Mr. Sellers were paid by our Chairman, Mr. LESLIE JENKINS, and by Mr. GWYNFRYN DAVIES, Commissioner: in turn Sir Henry spoke in appreciation of Mr. JOHN DICKSON, his successor-to-be.

The dinner was also attended by Mr. G. FORREST, Senior Officer, Scotland; Mr. J. ZEHETMAYR, Senior Officer, Wales; Mr. J. R. THOM, Director, Research; and Mr. JOHN SUMMERS.

****MORE RETIREMENTS**

COLLEAGUES and students at the Faskally Forester Training School have said farewell to Mr. W. F. STODDART on his retirement after 43 years' service with the Commission. He worked for various periods as a Field Forester, Private Woodlands Forester and Forester Instructor, and achieved the rank of Head Forester (old style). He completed his service in the post of Instructor at Faskally.

Education Officer Mr. NORMAN TULLOCH expressed regret at parting with an old friend but he thought it was not an occasion for sadness for Mr. Stoddart did not intend to sit back and fade away. He and Mrs. Stoddart were to fly to Australia to join their daughter and son-in-law who emigrated a few months ago. Mr. Tulloch continued that he first met Mr. Stoddart in 1946 and they subsequently worked together at Glentress Forester Training School. They parted in 1957 but after each served a period of exile to the south of the Border they found themselves working together again at Faskally.

Mr. Tulloch then presented a cheque to Mr. Stoddart on behalf of the school staff and colleagues.

Head Forester JIMMY WILSON who trained under Mr. Stoddart at Glentress, spoke on behalf of former students and colleagues. He paid tribute to Mr. Stoddart's keen sense of duty, his never-failing sense of humour, his ability as an instructor and the wide range of his interests; he recalled the many kindnesses to himself and many other former students from Mr. and Mrs. Stoddart and wished them both many more years of happiness.

Mr. H. TAYLOR, for the students, presented Mr. Stoddart with a fountain pen. Mr. Stoddart said he was overwhelmed by the kindness of the speakers and the generosity of the gifts. He had retired, but could look back on many happy years. The advice he would give to young foresters could be expressed in three words: "think, observe, practice".

Mr. E. E. FANCY, B.E.M.

Mr. 'ERNIE' FANCY has retired after a long and exceptional career. He joined the Wareham squad in 1927, was promoted to Ganger in 1927, Foreman in 1945 (on joining Research), Forester in 1946 and Head Forester in 1965. Except for during his war service he has lived near Wareham all his life.

Without the advantage of formal training, he succeeded by native ability and persistence. And this was no mean feat, for the long period during which he had charge of the Sugar Hill Experimental nursery at Wareham was the most active in the history of nursery research in this country. In the early years, he had the late Dr. Margaret Rayner's work in one part of the nursery, and the rapidly growing programme of experimentation directed by the late Dr. E. M. Crowther of Rothamsted (and subsequently by Miss Blanch Benzian) in the remainder. These were two entirely different approaches, and to satisfy both 'masters' called for judgement of a high order. Besides all this, he carried out many forest experiments at Wareham. But undoubtedly his greatest skill was revealed in his work on the Rothamsted-Forestry Commission programme, for this consisted of a very large number of highly sophisticated experiments, new to us in design, and calling for very great precision in technique. An idea of the standard of workmanship is given by the excellent colour plates in Miss Benzian's Bulletin No. 37.

Ernie Fancy's integrity was reflected in his work and his personal relationships. His friendly and helpful approach made Sugar Hill a pleasure to visit. He always seemed unperturbed and unhurried even when coping with an alarming programme of work. Unfortunately, he has not enjoyed the best of health recently, but his many friends will hope that this will improve with some well-earned relaxation.

Mr. W. A. LINGWOOD

SOUTH East England recently bade adieu to Mr. W. A. (BILL) LINGWOOD, Foreman Mechanic, who has retired after 42 years' service with the Commission. At a gathering at Bramshill Forest, Mr. Lingwood was presented with an armchair and shooting stick by Mr. H. W. GULLIVER, A.& F.O. Mrs. Lingwood was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Mrs. D. M. GODFREY, E.O. at Woking.

****BEHIND EVERY NAME A HISTORY**

THE selection of forest names that appeared in our October issue has drawn the following comments from a student of forest history:

Behind every place-name is a history - long or short. In Britain your first task is to find the mother-tongue of the originators - far from easy in an island that has been invaded seven times by people who spoke seven different languages. The oldest names in the list are probably ancient Celtic ones - Welsh or Cornish - for the Rivers Edw (Radnorshire), Plym (Devon) and Goyt (Derbyshire). Wyre is the pre-Roman name for Wyre Forest, after which the Romans named Worcester - wyre castra - hence our modern Worcestershire. Pen in Buckinghamshire is probably Celtic: pen, a headland; while Kerry in Montgomeryshire, is Welsh cerrig, the rocks. Mon is both the ancient, and modern, Welsh name for the Isle of Anglesey.

Angles, Saxons, and possibly Jutes gave us Dean, the forest of denes or wooded valleys in Gloucestershire; Bere, "the barley fields", in Hampshire, and Wigsley, which is simply "Wigga's lea", or grass-field, in Lincolnshire, Alice Holt is the holt or woodland of its first recorded owner, the Saxon Bishop Alfsige of Winchester. Hay in Breconshire is the meadow where hay was grown, and Bucklebury in Berkshire is "Buckla's burgh", or stronghold. Beechwood in Bedfordshire, despite its modern look, is ancient Saxon, while Watermeetings in Lanarkshire may well be an old Anglian name for a steading as well as a modern sheep farm.

The Norse names in the list show how widely Norwegians penetrated, as settlers as well as invaders. Rumster in Caithness comes from rum-saeter, meaning "house-summer-dwelling"; Leapmoor in Renfrewshire may be "Leif's myr" or moorland; Clatteringshaws in Kirkcudbrightshire is scarcely altered from Klettr-eng-skogr, meaning "rocky-meadow-woods". Hope, though far inland in Derbyshire, comes from the Norse hopr, "the valley" and Ae is a Scots form of Norse Aa, meaning "the river".

Fountains in Yorkshire is called after Fountains Abbey, founded in the Middle Ages by Cistercian monks from France. Wark is the Northumbrian form of "work", meaning a castle, and likewise dates from mediaeval times.

The Gaelic names are really the easiest, for that language, though the oldest in Britain, has probably changed least. This makes it hard to guess their age - they may have originated centuries ago or else be quite recent. Rosarie in Banffshire is vos airidh, the "moorland of the sheiling" or summer-farm. Clashindarroch in Aberdeenshire is clachan darroch, "the village of the oakwoods". Moffat Water in Dumfries-shire combines the Norse yath, "river", with the much older Gaelic magh fada - the "long plain" that gives its name to the town in the long dale close by. Achaglachgach in Argyll is (quite obviously!) "the field of the hummocks and hollows". Achnashellech in Wester Ross is ach na seilach, "the field of the willow trees". Inchnacardoch is from innis na ceardaich, the island (possibly dry land within a bog) of the blacksmiths (tinkers, maybe?). Montreathmont, in Angus, is moine traith mont, "the mosslands of the mountain-waste", not a bad description. Tighnabruaich in Argyll is tigh na bruaich, meaning "the house on the braes", and believe it or not we once had a lassie in London (specially imported from the Clyde) who could actually pronounce it!

Sorry, but Poorstock, related to the Dorset town of Powerstock, has all the experts beat; their best guess is "stockade on the River Poor" - old Celtic name for the Mangerton River. Nobody would use a name like that for a seed collection centre! Mildmay in Kent floors them too. Could it be "mild", i.e. "sheltered" "Mea(dow)"? Any better guesses?

Tailpiece: Correct pronunciation of Achaglachgach, as many of you will have guessed, is of course: A'ha'gla'ga' with the stress on the third syllable. Or so our lassie says!

****F.C. HELP AFTER AIR CRASH**

AN appeal by the police for help at the scene of the recent Iberian airliner crash

on the Surrey-Sussex border met a ready response from a number of our colleagues from the nearby Chiddingfold Forest. The Caravelle crashed into the hillside on National Trust land, in darkness, and the police asked for the assistance of men and equipment to join in the clearing of debris and the location of victims - there were, in fact, no survivors.

A tractor and light winch went from Chiddingfold, together with four men - FRANK CHALFONT, ARTHUR NOBES, ERNIE REMNANT and DAN PAINE. With the Head Forester, DICK FRANCIS, they spent six hours at the scene. Their work was appreciated but extremely unpleasant.

****DISSECTED AND REASSEMBLED**

TREES are frequently used for decorative purposes at exhibitions. But the "indignity"

to which one of our oaks was recently subjected for display purposes was to our knowledge unique.

TRADA (Timber Research and Development Association) asked us for an oak for use as a "back-cloth" for their stand at the Compton Building Exhibition at Olympia. The selected tree came from the Ranmore block of Abinger Forest, South East England, the specifications being: diameter 2', clear length of bole 8', and branch spread of 32'. It was felled with extreme care by PETER BUSS and RON SPURGEON; branches were then carefully cut off, as required by TRADA, and the whole transported by crane and lorry to Olympia, where the intention was to put it together again! This was, in fact, done by using fibreglass sleeves, which were virtually invisible.

****50 MPH BY LAND YACHT**

DUNNET Forest, in Caithness, our most northerly unit, is near John O'Groats and is

becoming known for the sport of sand yachting. The forest lies along the shores of Dunnet Bay, with its magnificent two-miles long stretch of sand and the breeze, otherwise a disadvantage to tourists, is helping the yachts to reach speeds of around 50 miles an hour. Dunnet was recently the venue for the Scottish Land Yacht championships.

****OIL LEAKS IN THE DEAN**

BERNARD ELLEY, Cartographic Draughtsman in the Dean, recently had the unhappy experience of running out of oil when driving his car, due, it was thought, to a faulty oil filter.

A few days later he was air-borne in a helicopter of the 16th Parachute Brigade which took off from Parkend football field to search from the air for an area with sufficient cover for a seek and find exercise. Mr. Elley, who has an extensive knowledge of the Dean, says he enjoyed the trip immensely, especially the view from above of bright sunshine on the brilliant autumn colouring of beech and larch. Unfortunately, the helicopter suddenly developed a serious oil leak and had to return quickly to base.

****FLASHES FROM NORTH WALES**

IT is pleasing to note that Mr. P.A. MERKER, H.E.O. at Aberystwyth, has obtained an

external B.Sc. degree in Economics at London University. Rugby fans may be interested to know that Mr. E. E. JOHN, Leading Civil Engineering Asst. at Gwydyr Forest, was a touch judge at the Wales-New Zealand International at Cardiff Arms Park last month.

****CASTLES OF NORTHUMBERLAND**

WITH the Border District forests covering about one-tenth of the county, it is sur-

prising that many visitors should have as their image of Northumberland a county almost exclusively of mining, shipbuilding and heavy industry, at least in the south east corner. For them and for Northumbrians the many antiquities of the county, its castles, fortalices, peles and barmkins, are admirably described by Brian Long in his new book "Castles of Northumberland". A county historian, Brian went to Kielder two years ago as a Forest Worker with the Harvesting Unit, having studied mining engineering at Ashington and art at Newcastle, after earlier years as a collier. He is a member of the Society of Antiquaries, is secretary of the Bellingham and North Tyne Local History Group, and lectures on Northumberland's castles under the WEA scheme.

The book has been illustrated by the author and is priced at 30 shillings.

****NEWCOMER**

OUR congratulations to Mr. JACK WADE, Forester with the Kielder Production Unit,

and SHIELA WADE on the birth of a son, Kelvin.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS