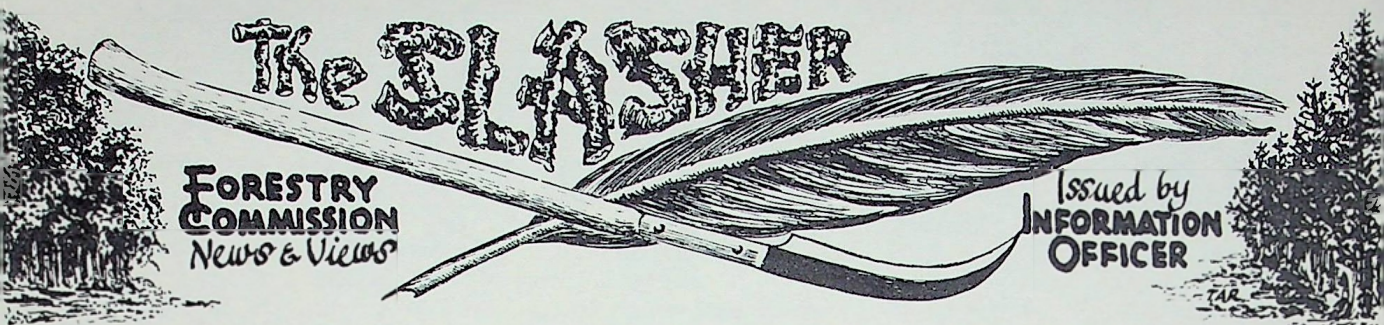




No. 246

June, 1968

M.B.E. FOR CHIEF FORESTER

OUR congratulations to Mr. FRANCIS PARSONS, Chief Forester at Wareham, Dorset, who in the Birthday Honours was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.)

Mr. Parsons started with the Commission in May 1926, as a forest worker and, after training at the Dean School, he became a ganger in 1932, foreman in 1935, and a Grade II Forester in 1937. Following Army service from 1943 to 1946 he was promoted, two years later, to Grade I Forester; he became Head Forester in 1956 and, after about 10 years, he attained his present rank.

Our colleague has had no easy task in managing his forest, for being on dry heathland, it has an almost permanent high fire risk. His outstanding work in fire control, however, has resulted in the development of Wareham into a flourishing and valuable forest of some 8,700 acres.

We were delighted, too, to see the name of another colleague in the same honours list - that of Mr. HENRY STOCKS, Ganger, with the Research Division at Tulliallan, who was awarded the British Empire Medal. He has been with the Commission since 1923, serving first as a forest worker; he took up research work in 1947 and, in the following year, was promoted to Ganger, in which post his devotion to duty and efficiency have been outstanding. His leisure hours are given over to public service in the locality and he has done much good work, particularly in looking after the wellbeing of old people.

**INTRODUCING MALCOLM DUNBAR

NOW in post is Mr. MALCOLM DUNBAR, who has joined the Information Branch as Senior

Information Officer after serving for three years as Command Public Relations Officer, staff of the C.in C., Royal Navy, Portsmouth. Before entering the Government Information Service he had spent most of his working life as a journalist, on newspapers and magazines, broadcasting, and in public relations - for some time he was P.R.O. to the Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society and therefore needs little introduction to agricultural shows, for many of which the Commission provides exhibits.

During the war Malcolm Dunbar served in the R.A.F.V.R., specialising in aerial photography and spending most of his time in the Middle East. Since the war he has spent about eight years working in various African territories, mainly Rhodesia. A Scot, he was born and educated in Edinburgh. In addition to his basic profession as a journalist he is also an experienced general photographer, having once been on the staff of Picture Post magazine. Currently his hobby has been power boating but, he says, he is going to sell his "wee cruiser" owing to difficulties of navigating through trees - furthermore it's made of fibre-glass!

**STAFF MOVES AND PROMOTIONS

THE following moves are to take place in the near future to fill posts of Administration

and Finance Officers. Mr. J. L. REID goes from Basingstoke to Aberdeen with the grade of S.E.O. and an allowance; Mr. J. STEELE from Aberdeen to York as C.E.O.; Mr. L. A. CHAPLIN from York to Chester as S.E.O. and an allowance; Mr. J. W. ELLIOTT from Chester to Aberystwyth as C.E.O.

Mr. P. A. MERKER moves from Aberystwyth to Savile Row as S.E.O. for duties in O. & M. Branch. Mr. K. MAYHEW has decided to resign from his present position at Aberystwyth and will be re-engaged as disestablished H.E.O. in the same office.

Up the ladder. The following are to be promoted from Clerical Officers to Executive Officers as and when opportunities arise: Mr. D. T. BAKER, Alice Holt Lodge; Mr. I. S. T. HATTON, Basingstoke; Mrs. B.F. JOHN, Cardiff; Mr. E. M. KEIR, Cardiff; Mr. S. MacKINTOSH, Inverness; Mr. G. PATTERSON, Chester; Mr. W. H. PITT, York; Mr. K. J. PRATT, Cambridge; Mr. R. W. SOARS, Basingstoke; Mr. G. STONE, Bristol; Mr. R. VARNEY, Aberystwyth.

Promoted from Executive Officers to Higher Executive Officers, again as opportunities arise, are: Mr. D. A. AITKEN, Aberdeen; Mr. R. J. BELL, HQ., Edinburgh; Mr. A. A. BUTT, Bristol; Mr. J. CHAPMAN, York.

****MAURICE NIMMO RETIRES**

MR. MAURICE NIMMO, who to most of us seemed almost an institution at Alice Holt Lodge, is among the latest of our colleagues to retire. An apt tribute is paid to him by Mr. MICHAEL BROWN, who writes:

"I first met Maurice Nimmo in 1931 in the Dean. He had left the School a year before and was working with J. E. MAUND, who had charge, under Mr. W. H. GUILLEBAUD, of the many research experiments in the Dean and in Tintern and Dymock. From that time, until he became District Officer in the Silviculture Section at Alice Holt in 1947, our paths crossed often. I learnt much from him; besides being a good forester he was a first rate naturalist, specially but by no means exclusively, on flowering plants. He had not the advantage of a degree in forestry and the position of responsibility which he held at the Research Station over the past 15 years was gained by merit, unobtrusive hard work and a sound intimate knowledge of all aspects of silvicultural practice. Many colleagues will remember him for his wise counsel.

"Maurice Nimmo's own research work affected so many aspects of silviculture and forest practice that it is not easy to single out projects of greater importance than others. In early years he had much to do with investigations in forest nurseries. Then the special difficulties of establishing plantations on chalk grassland led to a sustained period of experimental work which culminated in the publication of Bulletin 34 in 1962; not less important was the complex network of investigations on the extremely poor podzolic soils of Wareham Heath - work which comprised cultivations, manuring, the use of leguminous and other nurses and close collaboration with the mycorrhizal trials of the late Dr. M. C. Rayner. Collaboration with the late W. R. Day in diagnosis of the troubles of problem areas and advocacy, at a time when they were still too little thought about, of the significance of certain climatic factors, were two more ways in which Maurice Nimmo's work impinged on Silviculture. Even where the techniques which he and his colleagues examined and developed have been superseded by recent technical advances, the insight which those experiments gave into the biology of our forest trees has an enduring value.

"He will be remembered, too, for his personal qualities. A quiet, somewhat reticent exterior hid a readiness to talk freely on almost any subject and in discussion one soon noticed a shrewd assessment of human nature. Many turned to him for help and advice and all had a sympathetic hearing. Everyone liked him.

"This note was drafted before the tragically sudden death of Maurice Nimmo's wife threw a deep shadow across the active happy retirement in Pembrokeshire he had looked forward to. I am sure other readers of The Slasher will join with his Alice Holt colleagues in sympathy with him and his three daughters."

Departure of Mr. J. E. WATTS

at Chester, has retired.

AFTER nearly half a century of Government service Mr. J. E. WATTS, Executive Officer

"It was in 1919 that a very young man presented himself at the Chester Castle to join the Cheshire Regiment," writes Mr. A. M. DeGROOTE. "This was to result in 26 years' service, culminating in the post of R.S.M. of the 1st Battalion. Like many infantry regiments, their first posting just after the first war was to Southern Ireland, and then India. In Jim Watts' case this was for 15 years and names like the Khyber Pass, Landi-Kotal and the North West Frontier were very much a reality. When the last war ended Jim had a brief spell with the Inland Revenue before joining the Commission, and the start of a second career of 21 years. He was one of the "founder members" of the North West England Conservancy and was promoted Executive Officer in 1948. After serving in almost every section of the office, it was in his last six years with Harvesting and Marketing section that he was to make such an impression on both colleagues in the field and members of the timber trade."

Before a large gathering and on their behalf, Mr. J. S. R. CHARD presented Jim Watts with a cheque, and paid tribute to the contribution he had made in the early days to the establishment of the Chester office. Good

wishes from both the field staff and members of the trade were passed on to Jim and his wife. Incidentally, they have two sons, both sergeants in the Regular Army, with 16 and 12 years service respectively to their credit.

Chief Foresters Depart

LAST month saw the retirement of two Chief Foresters in South Scotland Conservancy - Mr. J. WATSON, M.B.E., Dalbeattie Forest, and Mr. R. A. JAMIESON, Forest of Ae.

Jimmy Watson started his career with the Commission in 1921 at Tentsmuir Forest, East Scotland, and served in West Scotland before moving south to Bennan Forest and ultimately to Dalbeattie. Except for a period during the war with the H.G.T.P.D. his service at Dalbeattie has been unbroken since 1932. He was held in high regard by everyone and a gathering of some 80 Conservancy staff and friends took place at the Maxwell Arms Hotel, Dalbeattie, to wish him well for the future and to present him with a cheque as a token of their esteem.

Bobby Jamieson joined the Commission in 1925 - also in East Scotland Conservancy. He served for a long period before the war with the Research Branch, initially at Tentsmuir, East Scotland and then at Fort Augustus, North Scotland. He, too, was with H.G.T.P.D. and it was after the war that he came to South Scotland. His work in the early days of "Private Woodlands" earned him the high praise of many landowners, including the Duke of Buccleuch. From 1960 he was in charge of the Forest of Ae. His presentation also took the form of a cheque and with it he said he hoped to buy an item of furniture for the new house that he is to occupy in Dumfries.

Footnote: In a recent issue we referred to the retirement at 72 of Mr. A. J. SLADE, of Halwill Forest and asked whether readers could recall any departures at an even more advanced age. From Woking comes a reminder that in the South East Conservancy Mr. H. E. FISHENDEN retired from Bedgebury Forest in May last at the age of 75 years and two months. He had been employed at Bedgebury for more than 22 years.

**RENEWED APPEAL

A month or two ago, on behalf of the 1969 Jubilee Year Committee, we asked whether any readers could supply "old tools and equipment used in forestry or woodland crafts, and ancient farming implements or tractors that could have been used in forestry" for possible display at the Commission's Jubilee Exhibition to be held in Edinburgh next June.

Alas, response to this appeal has been disappointing and now the Committee comes along with a cri-de-coeur for help in this matter. If you do not own such equipment or machinery yourself you may know of someone in the Commission, or some private person, who does and even this information would be welcomed by Mr. J. L. FINLAY FERGUSSON, Forestry Commission, 25 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh 3.

**ARE YOUR ROOTS IN THE FOREST?

MOST of us have an urge to go back to the old ancestral home, to discover anew the place where we really "came from". This is strongest in those who have been uprooted and transplanted to the heart of a great city. A colleague in the Savile Row office set out recently to find great-grandfather's farm, which he knew to be situated in the heart of the lush, fertile Midlands. That was all he knew but District Officers are knowledgeable people and "our man in Lincolnshire" was able to put him in touch with a distant relative. Yes - the old farm was still there, she (the distant relative) had known it well as a girl; so the pilgrimage continued, to a plot prophetically known as "Jericho".

Alas! When the spot was reached there was not a cow nor a cornfield in sight - only rows of well tended oak, ash, beech and larch. The farm, on poorer soil than its neighbours, had gone under in an agricultural depression and the land had been afforested. The new owners? Yes, your guess is correct, but at least our colleague can say the old estate is still in the family!

Relating all this to another Forest Officer, our friend was surprised to learn that the former had had exactly the same experience. Knowing that his grandfather owned a croft or small farmstead in Argyll, he had journeyed to Ardrishaig to see how the old family home was faring. He found it at last, carrying acres of flourishing Sitka spruce in one of our west coast forests. It was the same story of the Commission stepping in to establish a productive crop when farming failed.

Can any more of our readers trace the roots of their family tree back to the forests? At one time the Forester grade was recruited very largely from the Forest of Dean and there were well known "dynasties" of

Adamses and Astons, with two or three generations all serving the Commission at the same time! We feel sure that some Slasher readers will be able to contribute fascinating accounts of families born in the New Forest or the Dean who can trace their roots back to William the Conqueror, more or less. William did in fact employ a Forester in the New, in the year 1086, and the Domesday Book gives his name as "Herbert". It is believed that his family later took the surname of "Lyndhurst". That could be a clue to later Lyndhursts in the profession today, if such exist. After all, it was a charcoal burner named Purkess who found the body of the murdered King William Rufus and people called Purkess are still found in Brockenhurst today - though nowadays they bake cakes, not wood.

****GROW YOUR GERANIUMS ON BARK!**

FOR a number of years the Commission has been interested in the possibilities of developing the use of bark in horticulture. Various attempts have been made to compost it but results have been poor compared with those claimed in America. Other trials have shown that bark can be used as a mulch for soft fruits and ornamental shrubs, but for this purpose it is in competition with other low-priced organic residues such as straw, chopped vegetation and hop waste.

New hope, however, has arisen as the result of recent trials in which bark, pulverised by machine, is being used as a substitute for peat. It is thought that in some parts of Britain, remote from the peat bogs, pulverised bark could be made available at a lower price than that normally commanded by either sedge or Sphagnum peat. Ardent gardeners or horticulturalists among our readers may now look around for some bark and the coal hammer as a pre-requisite to pulverising opposition at the local flower show, especially in the classes for geraniums, miniature roses, chrysanthemums and fuschia.

****HYDROSTATIC EXTRACTION!**

AN unusual request was received by the Research Information Section at Alice Holt from a descendant of Joseph Bramah (1748-1814), the inventor of the hydraulic press, some ingenious locks, the water closet, and the beer-pump. Bramah is credited in a recent biography with having pulled out 300 mature oaks from Alice Holt Forest for the Royal Navy in about 1805, and we were asked how he had done it. The Science Museum in South Kensington eventually turned up some records showing that he did in fact use a "hydrostatic press" for uprooting these oaks, and that he also used it for pulling out trees in Hyde Park. One wonders what the press looked like, and how it was braced to exert such pressure. Has anyone any ideas?

****OUR OLD FRIEND BROCK**

THERE is evidence, say the Council for Nature, that in the last few years the number of litters of badgers has declined. If this is true, goes on the Council's statement, a likely reason is that the reproductive process in badgers has been affected as a result of their feeding on earthworms which have absorbed from the land organo-chlorine pesticides. It is important to discover if this decline is a fact and if so whether pesticides are playing a part, and naturalists can help in two ways. Firstly, regular badger watchers can note whether cubs are born at the setts they usually watch in this and subsequent years - the Council ask that Dr. Ernest Neal, Taunton School, Somerset be written to for details. Secondly, if dead badgers in good condition are seen (they are often killed on roads) they could be sent in a sack or tough polythene bag to either Professor R. J. Harrison, Anatomy Department, London Hospital Medical College, Turner Street, London, E 1; Professor R. L. Holmes, Anatomy Department, Leeds University; or to Dr. Neal. Any reasonable cost of transport will be met.

****NEW ARRIVAL**

CONGRATULATIONS to ALAN MEYER, E.O. at Savile Row, and JANET, his wife, on the birth of a girl (Lesley). Until recently Janet was a C.O. at H.Q., London, latterly serving in the Harvesting and Marketing Branch.

****NOTIFICATION OF STAFF CHANGES**

THIS issue of The Slasher includes an Establishments list of non-industrial staff changes notified in May. Similar lists will be issued with The Slasher in future.

IF YOU DO SOMETHING, SEE SOMETHING, OR HEAR SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY,
TELL YOUR SLASHER CORRESPONDENT. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENT IN EACH OFFICE.

The undermentioned non-industrial staff changes have been notified during the month of May, 1968.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Name	Grade	Location	Remarks
Dunbar, J.M.D.	Senior Inf. Off.	H.Q.(L)	transfer in from M.O.D.
Williams, R.B.M.	S.E.O.	H.Q.(L)	transfer in from M.O.D.

TERMINATIONS

Jamieson, R.A.	Chief Forester	S.(S)	Retirement
Gordon, J.	Forester	N.(S)	Retirement
Rose, J.	Forester	E.(S)	Retirement
John, E.E.	L/C E. A.	N.(W)	
Cunningham, J.F.	C.E.A.	E.(S)	
Watts, J.E.	E.O.	N.W.(E)	Retirement

TRANSFERS

Name	Grade	Old	New
Johnston, D.R.	Conservator	Cambridge E.(E)	Alice Holt H.Q. (Mgmt. Services) Tr. on promotion.
Spencer, J.A.	Asst. Conservator	H.Q. (P & E) Alice Holt	H.Q.(B) Forest Mgmt.
Hewitt, R.M.	Asst. Conservator	London H.Q. (H & M)	New Tr. on promotion
Thallon, K.P.	Asst. Conservator	Reading S.E.(E)	Cambridge E.(E) Tr. on promotion
Atterson, J.	D(F)O I	Edinburgh D(R)	Dornoch N.(S)
Dickenson, M.E.S.	D(F)O I	Godalming S.E.(E)	Bellingham N.E.(E)
Forrester, S.	D(F)O I	Cairnbaan W.(S)	N. Devon S.W.(E)
MacIver, I.F.	D(F)O I	Barnstaple S.W.(E)	South Cowal W.(S)
Waters, W.T.	D(F)O I	Lincoln E.(E)	Dovey N.(W)
Wilson, K.W.	D(F)O I	Kielder N.E.(E)	Godalming S.E.(E)
Alexander, A.C.	D(F)O II	Helmsley N.E.(E)	Bellingham N.E.(E)
Norrie, W.	D(F)O II	Kilmun W.(S)	Woodbridge E(E)
Stephenson, F.	Head Forester	Ampleforth N.E.(E)	Hamsterley N.E.(E)
Campbell, J.	Forester	Queens W.(S)	Fort Augustus H.Q.(W/S)
Chree, J.W.	Forester	Fort Augustus N.(S)	Queens N.(S)
Green, P.	Forester	Wykeham N.E.(E)	H.Q. (A.S.U.)
Hill, J.T.	Forester	Swynnerton N.W.(E)	H.Q. (A.S.U.)
Howard, R.L.	Forester	Culloden H.Q. (I.T.S.)	Inchnacardoch N.(S)
McIntosh, D.C.	Forester	Port Clair N.(S)	Borgie N.(S)
Morrison, I.C.	Forester	Balblair N.(S)	Ferness N.(S)
Sandilands, A.	Forester	Borgie H.Q.(I.T.S.)	Culloden H.Q. (I.T.S.)
Kernahan, K.A.	T.W.G.II	H.Q. (O/S)	H.Q.(W/S)
Eley, E.J.	Supt. Works (T.W.G.III)	Ruthin N.(W)	Llandovery S.(W)
Shearer, R.B.	L/C E. A.	Secondment Overseas	Aberdeen E.(S)
Clarke, P.J.	S.E.O.	H.Q.(L)	H.Q.(B) return from detached duty
Roberts E.G.	S.E.O.	Aberdeen E.(S)	Edinburgh H.Q.(S) return from detached duty
Rawson, J.	E.O.	H.Q. (Edin.)	Chester N.W.(E)

/Staff

