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VISIT OF FORESTRY COMMISSIONERS TO NORTHERN IRELAND

At the invitation of the Minister of Agriculture for Northern Ireland, Mr. H. West, the Forestry Commissioners paid a visit from the 10th to 13th May in order to see the work of his Forestry Division.

On arrival, the Commissioners were received on the steps of the Ministry by the Minister himself, Mr. H.S. Oliver (Head of the Forestry Division) and Mr. K.F. Parkin (Chief Forest Officer).

Tuesday, 11th May, was spent in viewing the development of forest recreation and included visits to caravan and camp sites, the Castlewellan Forest Park and Arboretum, and a scenic drive and transient caravan site in Slieve Gullion Forest, County Down. Great progress in the provision of recreational facilities was to be seen which had been much assisted by the fact that unemployment relief schemes had made available labour for long-term projects which were to be paid for by other than Forestry funds.

Wednesday, 12th May, was devoted to the viewing and discussion of experiments in planting in peat areas and the effects of herbicides and fertilizers on the growth of Sitka spruce planted on such sites. In the afternoon, the problems of thinning and windthrow were included.

The morning of Thursday, 13th May, was taken up with the consideration of comparative relative total crop yields and discussion of the effects on diameter and height growth of four different treatments; the species considered was once again Sitka spruce. The afternoon was taken up with a visit to the Pomeroy Forestry School and consideration of education and training matters guided by Mr. D. Woolfenden, the Works Study and Education Officer.

On the evening of the 10th May, the Commissioners were entertained to dinner at Stormont - the seat of Government. The host was the Minister of Agriculture, who was supported by, amongst others, Lord Abercorn, Mr. J. Burns, MP, Mr. P. O'Hanlon, MP, and Mr. J. O'Reilly, MP. Also present were Mr A. Diamond and Mr. G. Kidney of the Home Timber Merchants' Association, and Mr. R.J. Hanna, Deputy President of the Ulster Farmers' Union.

In his speech of welcome the Minister outlined the similarities between the problems and practices of the Forestry Commission and his Forestry Division. He also underlined the considerable progress his foresters have made towards exploiting to the full the recreational potential of their forests. It was apparent that the Minister was fully convinced that the forestry programme had an important contribution to make to the prosperity of his country in the form of raw material for home-based industries, employment, and as an aid to the fast developing tourist trade.

In his speech in reply, our Chairman - Lord Taylor of Gryfe - thanked the Minister and his staff for the honour done to the Commissioners by being invited to view the Northern Ireland forests, and by the considerable courtesy with which they had been

received and were being conducted on their tour. "We have come" he said "to admire Ulster for its achievements, to enjoy its countryside and to understand its problems, for the solution of which patience will be needed. In the realm of public recreation we have seen many achievements, and the car park at Castlewellan Forest - often filled to overflowing I believe - is of a size generally provided only for supermarkets in Great Britain". It was impossible to quantify the value of amenity, beauty and recreation, Lord Taylor continued, but these could help to relieve the tensions of people whose creative impulses had no other outlet. It was a great work to create these opportunities, and in saying this he had no wish to underwrite the value of commercial forestry. Lord Taylor concluded by saying that both the Westminster and Stormont Ministers were fortunate in having Forestry staffs who were so dedicated and capable at all levels, and he hoped that the tree planting ceremony he had undertaken earlier that day would be seen as a symbol of the friendship of the two Services.

PARTNERSHIP AND COMMON INTERESTS IN TIMBER INDUSTRY

Speaking at the annual luncheon of the Home Timber Merchants' Association of England and Wales in London's Guildhall on 28th April our Chairman, LORD TAYLOR OF GRYPE, stressed the partnership aspect of the relationship between the home-grown timber trade and the Commission.

He said that:-

"It is important that the Forestry Commission should not be regarded as a large State institution but should be recognised for what it is - as the Forest Authority concerned not only with the national enterprise but with the propagation and development of forestry as a whole. So long as I am Chairman of the Forestry Commission I will consider it my mandate and responsibility to speak as effectively as I can for Forestry as distinct from any particular section of the growers, merchants or users.

Newspapers from time to time speculate on the magic words "hiving off" and I think it should be recognised that to "hive off" forestry and to divide it between the private and official sectors would do good neither to forestry nor to the country. I hope that at least in this industry we are going to avoid some of the ideological conflicts of Commission versus private industry which are not generally to the advantage of the country and I would like to emphasize not only what the Commission is doing but our community of interest in the many areas in which we operate.

We have of course a common interest in raising standards of home-grown timber and in securing greater recognition of the quality of home-grown timber. The timber trade suffers, like forestry in general, from a good deal of unfounded prejudice. We have common interest in securing greater appreciation of forestry in our country. We suffer from prejudice - from people, frequently selfish, who want to retain the country as it is, who cover their arguments with a veneer of intellectual justification and who are prepared to argue that planting of trees is desecrating the countryside. I think we both have tremendous responsibility for combating ill-founded criticism of forestry.

When the Forestry Commission was set up 50 years ago it planted furiously without due regard to amenity but I am sure that within the last 25 years there has been a change of attitude both in the Commission and in the private sector. Of course we have a responsibility to choose the right species to plant, with the landscape in mind, and to pay due regard to the beauty of the countryside. The Commission has taken advice to ensure that amenity is preserved and protected.

In terms of the forestry policy, the Forestry Commission is a comparatively young organisation. Many woodlands are not yet mature, and semi-mature woodlands do not look as attractive as established woods. Anyone who travels in the North or Border country will appreciate that forestry contributes to the beauty of the landscape. We have to demonstrate our concern in that direction.

It has been said often that forestry must not be judged on its economic return and it is becoming increasingly important to recognise the role of forestry in recreation. A total of 15 million day visitors and 1 million camper nights in Commission forests last year gives some idea of the contribution which forestry is making to meeting the demands of the recreation explosion. People are becoming more mobile and forestry is particularly important in this regard. The Commission is concerned not only about growing trees for commercial purposes but also about providing an outlet for people where they can enjoy a part of the countryside. You too have this common interest with the Commission and I know you recognise your responsibilities in this area.

It is a common sport each year when the Commission's Annual Report is issued to make calculations about the financial return on the investment and we are frequently victims of rather poorly informed criticism. The Forestry Commission represents a very substantial public investment and it is impossible to make the kind of calculation that is made on investment in, say, a soap factory. Our product takes about 50 years to mature.

The Forestry Commission represents a factory which is only 25% in production. It should be realised this is a growing investment and output will double by 1980 and treble by 1990. When looking at results of investment in forestry it should be kept in mind that we are only one quarter in production and three quarters in process of building.

Last year we were able to cut down on costs, e.g. roading costs were cut substantially. We are now more clever in bringing trees out and marketing and handling. Our experience is available to the private sector so that we can share benefits of experiments and research in this area.

Economics in relation to forestry are sometimes regarded as irrelevant, but we cannot allow land to lie fallow when we have an import bill of £715 million a year for timber and wood products.

The Financial Times on 26th April struck a note of alarm - 8500 workers have been laid off recently from paper and board mills in various parts of the country. What is happening in this industry? Their troubles are due substantially to the Scandinavian squeeze. Pulp prices have increased for importers in this industry while paper prices have not increased to the same extent and they will lose their market. In 1970, home-grown paper and board was being replaced by imported produce and the trend will continue to be in that direction. It is therefore in the interest of the paper and board industry that there should be increasing dependence on home supplies. We should build up our own reserves of timber. I hope when Government is reviewing policy in these matters it will keep in mind forestry not only as a major import saver but as having a major impact on the paper and board industry in which there is large capital investment in this country.

We are conscious of our responsibilities. We are anxious to expand forestry and we welcome the fact that last year the private sector planted about 46,000 acres, almost the same as the Commission. So long as forestry is developing it can count on the full encouragement and support of the Commission."

AWARD OF THE BALFOUR-BROWNE DEER TROPHY FOR 1970

MR LEA MACNALLY - Warden-Naturalist to the National Trust for Scotland at Terridon, Wester Ross - has been awarded the Balfour-Browne Deer Trophy for 1970, in recognition of his outstanding work and studies of British deer.

Scottish-born Lea MacNally (45) was educated at Fort Augustus and Glasgow, and for 19 years was head stalker on a highland deer forest - Culachy, an estate in the heart of the Great Glen in Inverness-shire - and joined the National Trust for Scotland in 1969.

He is the author of two very successful books, "Highland Year" (now in its third printing) and "Highland Deer Forest" published last year. Renowned also as a lecturer on wildlife and regular contributor to a number of well-known "glossy" magazines, Lea MacNally is also a prize-winning photographer, specialising of course in pictures of deer.

The Balfour-Browne Deer Trophy is awarded annually by the Commission (in consultation with the British Deer Society) to a person who is judged to have done exceptional work in promoting the conservation and control of deer. It is a silver replica of the bronze "The Challenge" by Scottish deer artist and sculptor, Vincent Balfour-Browne, which was presented to the Commission by Miss E.M.C. Balfour-Browne in memory of her late brother. The last holder was Mr. Peter F. Garthwaite, M.A, who was Conservator, Forest Management, until his retirement.

The trophy was presented to Mr. MacNally on Wednesday, 19th May, by Mr. G.G. Stewart, M.C, Commissioner for Forest and Estate Management, at the annual meeting of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society at Crarae House on Sir Ilay Campbell's Cumlodden estate at Furnace, in Argyll.

INFORMATION WANTED

MR. A.F. MITCHELL at Alice Holt is still busy recording outstanding specimens of trees and shrubs throughout the country, and any of our field staff who may have come across noteworthy specimens in their travels are asked to let him know.

Much of the material being collated by him will be used in the revised edition of W.J. Bean's book "Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles". Alan Mitchell has been compiling this sort of information for some 15 years now, and has already recorded details of about 30,000 different specimens.

B.E.M. PRESENTATION TO HEAD RANGER

The presentation of the British Empire Medal awarded in the New Year's Honours List to Mr. Kenneth W. Clark, Head Ranger at Greskine Forest, was made by the Lord Lieutenant of Dumfriesshire, Mr. K.M. McCall, at Beattock House Hotel, Dumfries, on May 24th. Forestry Commissioner Major Sir William Strang Steele, many local dignitaries and representatives of Forestry and other bodies, were among invited guests which, of course, included Mr. Clark's family.

To give added point to the occasion, the ceremony was preceded by an excursion into the Forest, during which methods of roe deer control and wildlife conservation in Greskine Forest were demonstrated.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

LINDSEY PIE

"Lindsey PIE" is a report which should be read by all those who are particularly concerned about the need to explore new and effective ways of encouraging voluntary bodies to work with one another and with statutory authorities to preserve and promote high quality environment in the countryside. Lincolnshire was the area chosen for the general project.

The report is by MR. JOHN D. LEEFE, B.Sc (FOR.) AS. FOR, in his capacity as Project Officer, for Lindsey PIE - or, to give it its full title - is the "Lindsey Project For The Improvement Of The Environment".

Set up as a direct consequence of the Second Conference on "The Countryside in 1970", the project - which lasted from February 1968 to October 1970 - was sponsored by Lindsey County Council and the Lindsey and Holland Rural Community Council, and was largely financed from a grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. It was managed by a Steering Committee drawn from the sponsoring bodies, plus the Countryside Commission and the National Council of Social Service.

Throughout the report there is one main recurring theme: the only real way to obtain general support for conservation measures is through education, and a free flow of up-to-date information. Among the current projects and services which will continue will be a Tree Advisory Group, conservation work by young people, a windmill museum, village improvement schemes, and landscape improvement of a fen area.

The report is available from the Lindsey & Holland Rural Community Council, 86 Newlands, Lincoln - price 75p (including postage).

John Leefe was seconded from the Commission to undertake this project; he is now back as Training Officer with Education and Training Branch at Basingstoke.

THE COUNTRY CODE - IN COLOUR

The Country Code got a new look with the release on May 12th of a well set-out and colourfully illustrated new 20-page booklet by the Countryside Commission. The booklet sets out the ten points of this "code of conduct for the guidance of persons visiting the countryside" - one point is the need to protect the woodlands against fire - and gives short explanations under each, drawing particular attention to the cost of unintentional damage resulting from lack of knowledge of the working life of the countryside.

The Forestry Commission will be assisting the Code's circulation by distributing copies at the many agricultural shows, exhibitions, etc. at which we shall be represented this year. Should any others of our staff be able to make good use of these attractive little booklets, copies may be obtained (free) from the Information Section of the Countryside Commission, 1 Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1.

"FIRE BLIGHT" - A NEW MINISTRY LEAFLET

Fire Blight disease can be controlled if commercial nurserymen watch their susceptible stocks for signs of the disease, act immediately they see infection, and if they are in doubt, seek advice from the local office of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

This is the message of a new leaflet issued by M.A.F.F, entitled "Fireblight on Ornamental Trees and Shrubs", copies of which are being sent to all commercial nurseries in South-Eastern England and East Anglia. The leaflet contains information, including colour photographs, about symptoms of the disease, its spread, and the

types of trees and shrubs liable to infection. It also gives detailed advice on methods of prevention and control.

The measures advocated in the leaflet have been successful in controlling the disease in infected trees and shrubs. They will almost certainly be improved as more experience is gained and the results of further research become available.

Copies may be obtained from MAFF, Whitehall Place, London, SW1.

FOREST PRODUCTS

'INSTANT' TIMBER DESIGNS FOR FARMBUILDING

A major breakthrough in the use of timber for farmbuilding is claimed by the Timber Research and Development Association following the completion of an ambitious design programme. The use of computer processing techniques has enabled TRADA to produce whole ranges of economical designs for general-purpose sheds using timber portal frames. Based on the use of solid timber members joined at the eaves and ridge by nailed plywood gusset plates, the standard form of design is applicable to any span in the range from 6 to 15 metres, at any bay spacing up to 6 metres.

Any designer, manufacturer or builder can now produce 'instant' designs of portal frame buildings of the required span, bay spacing and eaves height by using span tables and reference designs prepared by TRADA. Advantages claimed for these buildings are simple and economical fabrication, erection and maintenance; ample clear headroom and span; reduction of wall heights to an economical minimum, and good properties of shock, fire and corrosion resistance. The appearance of the buildings is also another important advantage as timber is accepted as a natural material which harmonises well with the countryside environment.

BARKING UP THE RIGHT TREE

Oil slicks, which occasionally threaten America's coastal waters, bays, and beaches and cause damage to marine life, can be soaked up by a relatively inexpensive product of its Southern forests, according to the Texas Forest Products Laboratory located at Lufkin, Texas. Dry shredded pine bark from Southern yellow pines can absorb three times its own weight in crude oil in a few seconds. Pine bark is not toxic to marine life, creates no fire hazard, and does not contribute to air or water pollution.

Large quantities of pine bark are readily available, says the American report, and the expense may be far less than that of other chemical and mechanical methods of oil scavenging. In a series of laboratory tests conducted at the Texas Forest Products Laboratory, dry pine bark, which was scattered on oil-covered water, absorbed the oil quickly but repelled the water for several hours and, since the oil-soaked bark floated, it was easily recovered.

Texas wood-using industries produce more than 5 million pounds of pine bark daily. A few speciality items are made from this mountain of bark but most of it is burned for fuel. There is a feeling among some scientists involved in oil pollution research that Southern yellow pine bark may be one possible answer to this serious problem.

We understand that Timberlab is following up this original line of research.

EVERY LITTLE HELPS

Among the items which come under the heading of "Minor Projects" are Christmas tree sales, bean poles, etc. - and moss!

Concessions for moss-gathering, the season for which opened on 1st June, amass quite a useful cash profit for the Commission each year, and those who pay for the right to gather it are wise enough to leave enough growing to ensure its natural regeneration for the future.

Good moss is in steady demand, mainly from florists for wreaths, hanging baskets, and such like, and much of it is sent to Covent Garden. But some highly specialised forms of moss are used by hospitals in surgical operations, and by industry as dye extractives.

WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Over the period 1968-70, a TRADA research team, led by Dr. O.P. Hansom, Deputy Director of Research, carried out a comprehensive investigation into the transport and handling of tropical hardwoods. Their detailed survey entailed visits to producing and exporting centres in South-East Asia and to leading West African hardwood exporting countries. The project had support from a wide range of interests concerned in the transport and handling of tropical hardwoods, including the National Hardwood Importers Section of the Timber Trade Federation, the Far Eastern Freight Conference, the UK/West Africa Lines Joint Service, and hardwood producers' organisations in countries featured in the reports.

The report on South-East Asia was presented to its sponsors in December 1969, and the West African report was presented in June 1970. The two reports have now been combined and up-dated, and are available from TRADA as a 181-page book. Extra copies after the initial distribution to members are price £1. For non-members, the price is £1.20 per copy. Dr. Hansom introduced the report in a talk which he gave to members of the London Hardwood Club.

DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS OF PREY CAMPAIGN

Britain's populations of birds of prey - species ranging from kestrels and owls to ospreys and golden eagles - are just beginning to build up again after the severe decline during the 1960s. But the recovery rate is much slower than it should be. According to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, widespread destruction by game-preserving interests is largely to blame.

The RSPB held a Press Conference in London on May 5th to launch a campaign to stop the killing of these protected birds, and gained much useful publicity for their cause. So it was especially sad to read reports in the Press only a fortnight later that two English youths had been arrested in Inverness-shire and charged with stealing the eggs of the famous pair of (very scarce) ospreys at Loch Garton - only days before they were expected to be hatched - and despite a round-the-clock vigil being kept on the nest by volunteer wardens. Now it can only be hoped that the ospreys will return next year to try again to raise a family.

All birds of prey in Britain and throughout most of Europe are fully protected by law. In this country, some methods of killing birds of prey carry special penalties. The use of pole traps, for example, is likely to bring a £25 fine or one month's imprisonment.

The pole trap consists of a powerful metal 'rat-trap' attached by a chain to a conspicuous post. It springs shut on the feet of the first bird to alight on it. The bird struggles and the trap falls, suspended by its chain, leaving the bird to hang head downwards to die slowly of pain, exhaustion and fear.

The RSPB has evidence of the use of pole traps on nine estates in England and Wales during the past two to three months. Since 1968, over 40 cases involving the

destruction of many dozens of birds of prey have been reported to the RSPB. In at least ten cases, the RSPB's investigations are continuing with a view to prosecutions.

APPOINTMENTS OF INTEREST

MEMBERS OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND COMMITTEES

The Natural Environment Research Council announce that Mr. H.A. Maxwell - former Conservator for North Scotland - has succeeded Sir Charles G. Connell as Chairman of the Conservancy's Scottish Committee. Lord Tweedsmuir, Mr. S.A.J. Oldham and Dr. D.M. Henderson, have joined that committee in succession to Lord Doune, Professor R. Miller and Dr. G.M. Dunnet.

Mr. E. Richards and Dr. D.A. Bassett have joined the Conservancy's Committee for Wales. Mr. L. Phillips and Dr. R. Rees Prytherch have retired.

Professor A.D. Bradshaw has become Chairman of the Conservancy's Scientific Policy Committee on the retirement of Professor A.R. Clapham. Dr. P.H. Nye and Mr. H.A. Maxwell have joined the committee, from which Sir Charles G. Connell and Professor R.O. Buchanan have also retired.

NEW P.R.O. FOR A.R.C.

The Agricultural Research Council has appointed Mr. J.A. Cole-Morgan, B.Sc. (Agric), MIPR, AI.Agr.E. to the post of Information Officer on its headquarters staff at 160 Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

Mr. Cole-Morgan, who took up his duties on 1st June, has held a number of appointments on the public relations side of agricultural industry and is an Associate Member of the Guild of Agricultural Journalists. He will be relinquishing the post of Public Relations Officer, Fisons Limited - Fertiliser Division, to join A.R.C.

THE CAMPING CLUB

The post of Public Relations/Editorial Officer for the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland was filled earlier this month. At 28 years of age, Miss Gail J. Preest becomes the first full-time PRO of the Camping Club, which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year.

The growth of the Camping Club and its expanding services to the ever-increasing membership, which now stands at 105,000, have necessitated not only this PR appointment but the acquisition of three further floors at the Club's Headquarters in Lower Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1.

ODDITIES

EGG-LAYING PINE MARTEN

It is now two years since our Jubilee Exhibition at Edinburgh, but Mike Long, D.F.O. at Moffat, S(S), wrote to tell "Slasher" about an amusing conversation he overheard during the Show, and feels there may be a useful moral in it somewhere for those of us who are responsible for clarity in our exhibits:

"Mr. "Butch" Murray, an ex-Commission Forester, now a Senior Taxidermist at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, was assisting in the Wild Life Trust Exhibit. One afternoon, while passing the Pine Marten's enclosure, he put therein two hens' eggs as supplementary diet. A few moments later a school teacher stopped in front of the enclosure labelled "PINE MARTEN" with her young pupils and said "Now, children, here you see a Pine Marten's nest with 2 eggs". (She had obviously heard of Sand Martins

and House Martins). At that moment a Pine Marten came out of its place of hiding, took one of the eggs and started to eat it. The teacher let out a scream and cried "Children, look at that horrible black rat eating the Pine Marten's egg".

Mike Long also has some amusing comments to make about the forms some people use to address letters to Commission staff. A letter to a Forester at Glenbreck was addressed: "Her Madgits Forestry Comishun, Twedsmuir". Two letters of enquiry about jobs in forestry for school-leavers were addressed: "The Director General of the Forestry, High Street, Moffat", and "The Super-Visor, Forrestry Comision, Moffat".

THE "SCREAMERS"

A report in the Press recently said that villagers in the island of Ulawa in the Eastern Solomons claim to be frightening trees to death by screaming at them.

Reports from the island say they have revived this ancient skill and recently killed off two trees that were too big to chop down, much to the amazement of the younger islanders.

To kill a tree a village elder creeps up to it very early in the morning and suddenly utters a piercing yell close to its trunk.

This goes on for a month until the tree dies, according to local belief, from the shock of being awakened from sleep so early, so violently, and so often.

(No more "White Fingers" - only white hair for those sleeping nearby and so awakened. Ed)

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL - THE RIX GUIDE

MR. A. RIX, District Officer in NE(E) Conservancy writes:

"The THING these days is to be a pretty good manager and keep the staff happy. If I read Professor Hertzberg correctly, it is necessary to provide satisfactory "Hygiene Factors", such as pay, holidays, perks, and thus move an employee from the "unwilling" state to the "not willing" state. (I must say I like that difference between "unwilling" and "not willing"). Throw in a few "Motivators" like Job Enrichment and Job Enlargement and the employee is finally coaxed out of the "not willing" state into the "willing" frame of mind. Eureka.

The refinements are to match the man to the job, of course, and therefore both must be assessed. We have been doing Staff Reporting for some time now in an attempt to appraise potential and we have a set format for doing so. All this we know.

I attended a management seminar* recently and discussed Employee Performance Appraisal. From this I have produced a small "Guide" which your readers may be interested in scanning. There may be a place for everyone in this".

* Definition of "Management Seminar"

At infant school the teacher enters and says "Good Morning, Boys and Girls". The children stand, "Good Morning Teacher".

At University the lecturer says "Good Morning". The class remains seated, with feet up in front and replies in derisory terms.

In a management seminar the Course Tutor enters and says "Good Morning". The class immediately splits into syndicates to try and determine what he really means and whether there is any solution to the problem.

The editor of "Slasher" thought the Guide "funny enough for Punch", and here it is:

Guide to Employee Performance Appraisal					
Performance factors	Far exceeds job requirements	Exceeds job requirements	Meets job requirements	Needs some improvement	Does not meet minimum requirements
Ability	Leaps over tall buildings with a single bound	Must take a running start to leap over tall buildings	Can only leap over one medium-sized building with no spires	Crashes into buildings when attempting to jump over them	Cannot recognise buildings -- much less jump
Speed	Faster than light	Faster than a bullet	As fast as a bullet	Would you believe a slow bullet?	Wounds self with bullet when attempting to shoot gun
Perseverance	Stronger than an elephant	Stronger than a bull	As strong as a bull	Thinks like a bull	Smells like a bull
Resourcefulness	Walks on water occasionally	Walks on water in an emergency	Washes with water	Drinks water	Passes water in an emergency
Communication	Talks with God	Talks with the angels	Talks to himself	Argues with himself	Loses arguments with himself

NEWS FROM THE CONSERVANCIES

London Headquarters

"ROBBIE" NIPS OFF QUIETLY

SAVILE ROW'S Senior Messenger, Aberdeen-born MR. JOHN (ROBBIE) ROBERTSON, retired from the Commission at the end of April after more than 23 years' service.

A very large number of staff crowded into the Headquarters' Conference Room to witness fellow Aberdonian Mr. W.M. Cormack, Controller of Finance, present Robbie with a cheque and farewell-cards from staff of both Headquarters' offices.

Mr. Cormack kept the gathering chuckling with his fund of anecdotes relating to Robbie's past service and of their very early life as boys in Aberdeen; in reply, Robbie applied his own share of pawky North-east Scottish humour to the occasion. All present wished him their personal "Good Luck" and many of the fair sex had a kiss for him too, which he clearly appreciated.

Robbie did promise us that he would come in and be "interviewed" before he left, but following the farewell ceremony he nipped quietly off and hasn't been seen since. We don't think Robbie had any intention of giving us a story about himself - which is typical of the sort of man he is.

Anyway, for the record, he joined our ranks in 1947 as Messenger at Director (England) office, and was promoted to Senior Messenger at Headquarters in 1958. Even though he has spent many years in the South, he never lost his broad Aberdeen accent. Robbie did say a big "thanks" and "cheerio" to all his friends of the Commission, and those of us who saw him daily already miss him very much.

Basingstoke Headquarters

R.S.A. FELLOWSHIP FOR
CHIEF ENGINEER

OUR CONGRATULATIONS to MR. E.H. MACMILLEN, the Commission's Chief Engineer, who has recently been honoured by election to Fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts.

The Royal Society and the Nature Conservancy were closely concerned with "The Countryside in 1970" campaign, and in 1965 Mr. Macmillen was appointed Chairman of the Study Group on "Technology in Conservation" which, with other study groups, prepared the ground for the Conference on the subject in that November.

Following the Conference, Mr. Macmillen was appointed to the Standing Committee charged with the preparation for the Conference held in October, 1970, and as the representative of the Institution of Civil Engineers which reported to that Conference.

Mr. Macmillen reports that the R.S.A. has agreed to maintain a close interest in conservation matters and has assumed, to some extent, the mantle of the Standing Committee.

North West England

CHIEF FORESTER A.H. CAMERON -
JOINED IN 1928

FOLLOWING some 43 years' service with the Commission, Mr. A.H. Cameron of Thornthwaite Forest, has now retired.

It was way back in 1928 that he started as a Forest Worker and attended the Benmore School 1929-31. His first appointment was at Hamsterley, and he originally joined NW(E) in 1934. During the war he was with South Wales and East England

Conservancies. On promotion to Head Forester in 1957, he joined South-West England and remained there until 1966, when he was promoted to Chief Forester and took up his final appointment at Thornthwaite.

At a large gathering of colleagues in the Royal Oak, Braithwaite, the Conservator, Mr. J.S.R. Chard, presented Mr. Cameron with a pair of binoculars and a wallet. At the same time, he paid tribute to Mr. Cameron's long and much varied service which had taken him through most of England and South Wales. Everyone present wished him a long and happy retirement, which he intends to spend initially in Durham.

LONG SERVICE IN ROUGH COUNTRY

ANOTHER of our long-serving Foresters retired in February of this year when MR. W.H. MORRILL, who was stationed at Hope Forest, found that that day had arrived.

He first commenced duties at Wykeham Moor, Allerston, in January 1938 and remained with Silviculturist (North) until November 1951, when he joined Hope Forest. As many will know, the Snake Pass, which features frequently in the winter weather bulletins, passes through some of the plantations of Hope Forest, and time and again Mr. Morrill had to battle with the elements, even along stretches of the main road, to reach his bungalow. Hope was always a forest with many problems - a difficult terrain, adverse weather conditions, pollution, etc., and yet amidst all this Mr. Morrill served for some 19 years.

Unfortunately, at the time of his retirement he was ill, and so a cheque was presented to him through his wife, as a tribute from his colleagues, by Mr. J.F. Osmaston, his District Officer.

LUCKY FOR SOME!

FRIDAY, THE 13TH, is a day most of us would prefer to spend safely in bed, but not for the reason which forced MR. TOM RICKERBY (who works with the Road Squad at Thornthwaite) to do so on a "Friday Thirteenth" in the Spring of last year; to him this "unlucky" day gave a new lease of life, for he recently celebrated the first anniversary of the four-hour transplant operation by surgeons at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary, which made him one of the first people in Britain to be given a new kidney, one chosen for him by computer.

For years Tom suffered the discomfort and misery of a disease which eventually meant that he had to give up his road-building work for the Commission - with which he has served for the last 11 years - but our last report said that Tom is now almost completely recovered and is back at his old job. He says his "new" kidney is doing the job carried out by his two old ones; these did not work as they should and so for some time he was on an artificial kidney machine. He is not sure who the donor of his new kidney was, but thinks it was someone from Edinburgh.

East England

MR. A.L. MITCHELL

IT is with regret that we report the death, on March 5th, of ALBERT L. MITCHELL, who retired from the post of Head Forester, Private Woodlands in Norfolk, only last January. Mr. Mitchell spent all of his 40 years' service in East England Conservancy; the first 20 years in the formation of Thetford Forest, and the last 20 years mainly on Private Woodland duties in the western counties of the Conservancy, and latterly in Norfolk.

Mr. Mitchell was well thought of by all his colleagues, and the younger foresters whom he had under his charge regarded him with great respect. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell's generosity to all forestry visitors will long be remembered and we extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Mitchell and family.

East Scotland

RETIREMENT OF

MR. R.J.G. HORNE

FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES from the Commission and the timber trade - some 200 in all -

gathered at a Conservancy dance held at the Amatola Hotel, Aberdeen, on April 2nd, to pay tribute to Assistant Conservator, Mr. Ray Horne, on his retirement.

Conservator E(S), Mr. E.G. Richards, presented Mr. Horne with a cheque and the good wishes of all. In reply, Mr. Horne recalled in a most entertaining manner some of the highlights of his long career with the Commission. Later in April, the H.T.M.A.S. presented Ray with a cheque during a dinner held in his honour in Perth.

Dumfriesshire-born Ray Horne began his forestry career at Cowlongon Estate before going to Benmore Training School in 1935. He started his Forester service at Inverliever and Inverinan in W(S) and, following war service with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, he was posted to the Donside district of Aberdeenshire in 1947 as District Officer.

In 1951 he moved to the Moray district, and in 1956 to Aberdeen on promotion to Divisional Officer. Throughout his service in East Scotland he was closely concerned with the period of maximum afforestation in the 1940s and 1950s, and posterity will long be reminded of his work by the plantations which mark his success in persuading Glen Livet sheep farmers of the good sense of multiple land use with its benefits for both agriculture and forestry.

During his years as Assistant Conservator, Ray's enthusiasm and attention to detail, which were an example to his colleagues, staff, and the members of the timber trade with whom he worked, helped him to establish an effective pattern of harvesting and marketing.

South Scotland

TRIPLE ATTRACTION FOR VISITORS

MRS. E. MURRAY USHER, of Cally - a well-known local landowner, opened on June 7th

three new attractions for the public:-

A new caravan site at Talnotry

A Wild Goat Park

The Galloway Deer Museum at Clatteringshaws

The new caravan site lies on the A.712 road between New Galloway and Newton Stewart.

In the nearby Wild Goat Park there are more than 50 wild goats which have gained quite a reputation over the years, and are now roaming in a large enclosed area which can be easily viewed by sightseers. There is a need to control the goats so as to prevent them damaging young plantations.

The Galloway Deer Museum - which will have mounted heads and other interpretative material connected with the deer population of Glentworth Forest Park - is near Clatteringshaws Loch, a favourite beauty spot a mile or so away from the caravan site and Wild Goat Park.

These three new ventures will undoubtedly assist the development of tourism in the South-West area of Scotland, where it is being very actively encouraged.

North Wales

PRESENTATION OF B.E.M. TO

JOHN TUDOR JONES &
DOUGLAS E. McROBERT

READERS will recall the announcement in the New Year edition of the "Slasher" of the above awards to MESSRS. JONES

and McROBERT, which were in recognition of their joint efforts in ploughing the ex War Department artillery range at Trawsfynydd, in specially armoured tractors. It is well worth repeating that they turned up some 900 live missiles and about 20 tons of dead shells on the 800 acre site.

On April 27th Mr. Jones was presented with his decoration by the Lord Lieutenant of Cardiganshire, Capt. J. Hext Lewes, OBE, RN., at the Llanafan Village Hall, near Aberystwyth.

The Lord Lieutenant, who was accompanied by Mrs. Hext Lewes, was introduced by Mr. John James, Conservator, to an assembly of representatives of local authorities, field officers, local staff and Conservancy office staff who had been involved with the ploughing exercise. Bouquets were presented to Mrs. Lewes and Mrs. Jones by Miss Margaret Taylor.

The presentation to Mr. McRobert took place at Chirk on May 3rd, and in this case it was made by the Lord Lieutenant of Denbighshire, Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, who was accompanied by Lady Williams-Wynn. Mr. James introduced the Lord Lieutenant to the assembly of representatives from local authorities and forest and engineering staff from the Chirk Depot where the tractor armour was made. Miss Gillian Pennington presented bouquets to Lady Williams-Wynn and Mrs. McRobert.

A display of photographs showing progress of the work and the type of missiles unearthed, arranged by Michael Little, Draughtsman, Aberystwyth, was shown on both occasions. At Chirk, the armour from one of the tractors used was also on display.

"BOMBED" IN THE FOREST

MR. R.W. WATERS (Dovey Valley Forest) had a rather unusual experience on the afternoon of March 9th, which may be of interest to readers. He relates:-

"I was travelling at about 5 mph in the Landrover on one of the highest roads in the Dovey Valley Forest when something struck the side window, and pieces of what appeared like broken glass entered the Landrover through the open part of the window and struck me on the shoulder and in the eye (luckily without damage).

On stopping to inspect, there were several pieces of what I thought to be glass on my jacket, and upon getting out I could find nothing more; I have come to the conclusion that it was ice dropping from a low flying aircraft which was in the area at the time.

Has anyone else been bombed with ice in the Forest?"

South Wales

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

WE are pleased to print a letter containing some useful retirement advice, received from Chief Forester D.M. (Danny) Morgan, who until his recent retirement was in charge of Cymer Forest. For those readers who may wish to keep in touch with Mr. Morgan, his address is: "Tegfan", 12 Garnwen Road, Nantyffyllon, Maesteg.

The letter reads:

"Please permit me space in the next issue of the "Slasher" to say "thank you" to

all those colleagues and friends from many parts of the country for their nice letters and good wishes, and a very special thanks to all those who contributed so generously to a most useful and valuable present which I received at the party held on my retirement.

"To those about to retire or contemplating retirement, may I say that after spending forty years or so in the woods and living close to nature, retirement is a radical change; a pleasant one nevertheless. The secret is to keep busy with one or more hobbies, or developing new skills.

"That bulging waistline, and that bulbous bottom, developed during the latter years of one's working life through too close an association with the Landrover seat, should not be allowed to grow bigger because of the idle life. On the contrary, for one's heart's sake they should be reduced, and the best and cheapest way of doing this is to TRAMP, TRAMP, TRAMP. A good pair of boots and a walking stick will soon do the trick, and believe me, foresters, it's surprising what you see when you haven't got a Landrover!"

DO YOU KNOW YOUR CONIFERS?

CHIEF FORESTER JACK JENNINGS, Crychan Forest, South Wales, has an interesting

observation to make on Norway spruce, and wonders what other of our Foresters may have to say about it. He writes:

"Does Norway spruce regenerate naturally in our forests? If it does, then in 43 years I haven't seen it!

"I have seen Japanese larch, European larch, Douglas fir, Lawson cypress, Thuja (Western Red Cedar), Scots pine, Austrian pine, Corsican pine, Pinus contorta (Lodgepole pine), Tsuga heterophylla (Western Hemlock) and Sitka spruce, and at the forest of which I now have charge all the above species are to be seen regenerating naturally at elevations of up to 1,000 feet, particularly where mineral soil is exposed near road dozing operations.

"I have an idea that at least in areas of high rainfall, such as those in the Welsh forests, there is insufficient heat in the atmosphere to enable Norway spruce cones to open out and release their seed. They are often to be seen lying on the forest floor in a hard, solid, lump and I have often opened up the cones and located fertile seed. Squirrels, too, pull the cones of Norway spruce to pieces so there is little doubt that the seed is viable and sound. Squirrels waste no time on empty cones!

"Whilst on the subject of cones, I cannot recall having seen a Douglas fir cone opened by a squirrel. There is no doubt that the cones contain fertile seed because the seedlings are to be seen growing vigorously under the existing crop.

"What have other Foresters to say on the subject?"

Research

HEAD FORESTER R.C. KIRKLAND

WE record, with regret, the death last November of Mr. Rex Kirkland.

Mr. Kirkland was trained at Lynford Foresters' Training School 1947-49, and during that period his talents were directed towards entomology - to a large extent as a result of lectures given by Dr. R. Neil Chrystal of the Commonwealth Forestry Institute, Oxford, the author of "Insects of the British Woodlands".

On completion of his training in 1949, Rex was posted to the Forest Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, as a Foreman in the Research Branch's Entomology Section, then under the leadership of Mr. H.S. Hanson. He was, in fact, the first member of the Forester Class to join the Entomology Section.

He was promoted from Foreman to Forester in 1951, and to Head Forester in 1965, when he was also one of the first Foresters to be designated "Career Specialist". With the expansion of Research in the North he was transferred to Edinburgh in 1967, and early in 1970 joined the staff of the newly-completed Northern Research Station.

After more than 21 years with Entomology, Head Forester R.C. Kirkland died at the age of 53. His long experience will be sorely missed.

LATE ITEMS

Basingstoke HQ

CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

Dennis Boyd of Basingstoke, HQ, who (with Mrs. Tucker) is organising the competition for designs for the Commission's own 1971 Christmas cards, is anxious that as many people as possible have a crack at winning one of the prizes: it's not the money - it's the honour!

Although officially entries had to be in by 1st June, to meet a printing deadline, Dennis says that he is trying to 'stretch' the date a bit, so if you hurry, there may still be a chance for your entry.

South Scotland

RECENT RETIREMENTS

Five Head Foresters have retired from Lothians, Berwick and Peeblesshire District in recent months:-

On 1ST JANUARY, MR. J.L. BROLL from Eddleston Water, MR. K.W. TOWNS from Clydesdale, and MR. J.R. HARKNESS from Edgarhope.

Jimmy Broll started his forestry career on private estates in his native Galloway before joining Benmore Forestry School in 1936, and on leaving there he became a Ganger at Newcastleton. At the outbreak of war he joined the 8th Argylls, was captured shortly before Dunkirk and spent 5 years as a prisoner of war in Germany. In 1945 he returned to Newcastleton and Tinnisburn, where he became a Forester and remained there until 1952, when he was transferred to Yair Hill. In 1966 he was regraded to Head Forester and moved to take charge of Eddleston Water. Mrs. Broll and he have now returned to Newcastleton where they have bought a house to retire to.

Ken Towns started with the Commission in his home county of Aberdeenshire, at Seaton Nursery and Clashindarroch Forest, in 1929. He went to Benmore Forestry School in 1930 and since then he has served at Alltcaillach, Montreathmont, Clashindarroch, Glentress and Clatteringshaws. During the war years he was in the Timber Supply Department and afterwards returned to Clatteringshaws, where he remained until 1960. It was then that he was transferred to Clydesdale Forest. Mrs. Towns and he are now living in a pleasantly situated house near Symington in Lanarkshire.

Presentations were made to Jimmy Broll and Ken Towns at the Countryside Inn, Glentress, where many of their friends and colleagues gathered to wish them well. The Brolls received a tea-trolley and the Towns a set of crystal wine glasses.

Jack Harkness began as a Forest Worker in 1925 at Newcastleton (to which he belongs) and then went to Benmore Forestry School in 1929. Since then he has served at Inverliever, Loch Ard, Glentress, Ardgartan, Wauchope, Craik and Castle O'er. In 1966 he was regraded to Head Forester and moved to take charge of Edgarhope. Unfortunately he has not enjoyed good health for the past few years but now Mrs. Harkness and he have retired to their house in Earlston. A presentation of garden tools was made to Jack from his friends and colleagues.

On 3RD MARCH MR. J.R. (JOCK) DAVIDSON retired from Duns Forest after serving for 49 years with the Commission. He started as a Forest Worker at Dalbeattie Forest in his home area in 1922 and through the years he has worked his way up to Head Forester, serving at the Bennan (1926-28); Dalbeattie (1928-29); Glenfinart (1929); Loch Ard (1929-37); Loch Arthur, Dalbeattie ---now Mabie--(1937-47); Forest of Ae (1947-51). During the war years he worked as a Foreman in the Timber Supply Department in various parts of Dumfriesshire and it was in 1951 that he transferred to Berwickshire to start Duns Forest.

On 31ST MARCH MR. MARIUS F. CARRUTHERS retired from Elibank and Traquair Forest under the voluntary severance plan, after 37 years' service. Marius started with the Commission in 1933 in his home area of Newcastleton. He went to Benmore Forestry School in 1936-38 and since then has served in various parts of the South Conservancy. During the war years he worked with HGTPD before joining the Scots Guards and seeing active service in Germany. Since the war he has been associated with Glengap, and spent 6 years in charge there before transferring to Newcastleton and Dreva. For the past 12 years he has been in charge of Elibank and Traquair, in the Tweed Valley.

Friends and colleagues of Jock and Marius met at the Countryside Inn, Glentress, one evening to wish them well in their retirement. Jock has since been presented with an electric power drill and Marius (a keen bowler) with a set of four bowls.