

The CLASHER

**FORESTRY
COMMISSION**
News & Views

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BIRTHDAY HONOURS

C.B.E. FOR PAST CHAIRMAN

Mr. Leslie A.W. Jenkins, past Chairman of the Commission, was appointed C.B.E. in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to export. It was announced in June that Mr. Jenkins had joined the Board of Aircrow-Weyroc Ltd., the wood chipboard firm.

Appointments within the Commission were:-

O.B.E. Mr. J.S.R. Chard, Conservator NW(E)

M.B.E. Mr. D.H. Ross, until recently a Head Forester in West Scotland; he played an outstanding part in designing ploughs for cultivating and draining hill land. One of these has formed the present standard draining plough which is used extensively for forestry purposes, not only in Great Britain but in many parts of the world.

NEW FORESTRY COMMISSIONER APPOINTED

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH has been appointed a part-time Forestry Commissioner, for a three-year period from 1st June, 1971, to fill the vacancy caused by the appointment of Lord Taylor of Gryfe to the post of Chairman.

Lord Balfour has held many important posts in the commercial world, including directorships of the Bank of Scotland and the British Linen Bank; he is also on the Boards of such large enterprises as the English Electric Co., and D. Napier & Son Ltd.

His recreations are music, climbing, flying and amateur dramatics.

We offer him our congratulations and a warm welcome.

THE LATE MR. ROBERT ANGUS GALLOWAY, OBE, MC, B.Sc.

All of those in forestry, particularly in Scotland, will be saddened to learn of the death of Mr. R.A. Galloway - former Secretary of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society - in Edinburgh on the 10th July.

He was educated at George Watson's College and Edinburgh University, where he gained a B.Sc. in Forestry in 1922. He served in the Royal Engineers in the First World War, reaching the rank of captain and gaining the Military Cross. He became a solicitor in 1925 after studying law at Edinburgh University for three years, and two years later joined the firm of Adair & Galloway.

At this time he became Joint Secretary and Treasurer of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, and Secretary and Treasurer on the death of his father, who had been Secretary since 1895. He was Honorary Secretary of the Society of Foresters of Great Britain and Secretary of the United Kingdom Central Examination Board in Forestry. He was also Assistant Editor of "Scottish Forestry" from 1937 to 1947.

He was appointed O.B.E. in 1954, the year of the centenary of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society; he resigned from the Secretaryship of the Society in 1969.

He will be greatly missed, as a very kind, helpful and charming gentleman.

DEAN FOREST SCHOOL - REUNION

A small committee consisting of Dean School staff and local forest staff was responsible for organising a programme to coincide with the closure of the School.

On Tuesday evening, 29th June, a number of old Dean students congregated at the C.S.M.A. Club at Whitemead Park and were welcomed to the Dean by Mr. G.D. Rouse, Conservator SW(E) and Deputy Surveyor (Dean). During the evening plans were finalised for the remainder of the reunion.

On Wednesday, 30th June, tours were arranged to visit places of particular interest and these included Symonds Yat and Highmeadow, Abbotswood and Blakeney Walk, Churchill, Nagshead and Knockalls - all places which over the years have had close associations with student work. The weather was glorious and the pace leisurely; there was a good deal of banter and reminiscence flowed freely. These tours were interspersed with refreshment at the scenes of old - the Fountain, the White Horse, Staunton, the Yat Rock, etc. In the evening about 70 guests attended the reunion dinner at the Beaufort Hotel, Tintern. The dinner was presided over by Mr. P.C. Gough, the present Education Officer, Dean, who introduced the speakers.

Mr. R.G. Sanzen-Baker, former Deputy Surveyor, Dean, and an old Dean student said the Grace (after Robbie Burns) and should be complimented on his accent.

The principal Guest was Sir Arthur Gosling, former Director General of the Forestry Commission and an old Dean student. He spoke of his own career in forestry and had some amusing anecdotes to tell of his experiences at all levels. All were delighted to have him present and to see him looking so fit.

Mr. J.H. James, Conservator N(W) and a former Chief Education Officer, proposed the Toast of the Dean and its foresters. He spoke in complimentary terms of the products of Dean and told some amusing stories of his experiences during the selection of students for training. He also told the story of his failure to find one of his forests during a visit by a senior officer (Sir Arthur!).

Mr. J.F. Goodwin, Chief Education and Training Officer and former Education Officer, Dean, for more than 20 years, and himself a Dean student, replied. During his speech he made particular reference to the presence of Mr. Harold Jones, who all were pleased to see present. Harold Jones had taught Botany to Forestry students for over 40 years and many students had cause to thank him for his help and guidance both at the school and in later years.

Mr. R.J. (Jack) Jennings spoke of his experiences, both humorous and serious, and also of his life as a forester. He is well-known for his "odes" and has promised to produce another one to commemorate the occasion.

Mr. Trevor Jenkins (Jenkins rouge!) spoke briefly and mentioned that he had followed Sir Arthur at Llanover Forest but had been unable to keep up in the race for promotion!

There was a good distribution of age classes from 1919 to 1968, and after an excellent meal, good company, very pleasant speeches, all went their various ways to prepare for the enjoyments of the morrow.

Thursday, 1st July, was a continuation of the sentimental journeys of Wednesday. During the afternoon a light-hearted cricket match developed and between 2.30 and 6 p.m. 101 runs were scored by each side and a pleasant break for tea was taken at Whitmead Park; thanks are due to Mr. & Mrs. Gasston for their ready help.

Thursday evening was given to "beer and skittles".

The sentimental journey ended on Friday morning, 2nd July, when the visitors remaining came to the School to have a last look at school photographs, the building, and to say goodbye - it was a long coffee break!

There is a suggestion that some form of Dean Association be set up with a view to keeping in touch the widely scattered band of ex-Dean students. The main difficulty is one of communication and Education and Training Branch will require all the help it can muster. The Branch would therefore welcome any suggestions; these should be addressed to Mr. J.F. Goodwin, Forestry Commission, Priestley Road, Basingstoke, Hants.

The specimen commemoration tie has been received. An order has been placed for those already ordered, and further supplies are available if required. The cost is about 85p, plus postage.

CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW, 1971

This was the Commission's second appearance at Chelsea, and the first as a general exhibit.

Despite the poor weather the Show was well attended. At times, six Commission staff were required to deal with the enquiries and the sale of publications. The first two hours (from 8.30 to 10.30 am) were the least busy, because the public arriving at that time tended to remain in the main marquee. A total of over £250 was obtained from the sale of publications.

The stand was located in the centre of the showground, on the Main Avenue and opposite one of the entrances to the main marquee.

The exhibit comprised a plunge bed filled with pulverised bark, in which Astilbe and dwarf conifers, borrowed from Messrs. Radcliffe Manor Ltd., of Buckingham, were growing; trays of bark and bark-based potting compost; an elevated floral display of ornamental plants growing in bark; and a shop-front display of our publications and coloured enlargements of photographs of Bedgebury, Westonbirt and recreational facilities. The whole was surrounded by a rustic fence, with an arch over the entrance, adorned with Lawson cypress and Coleus.

Visitors to the stand included the former Secretary of the Commission (Mr. Bertie Turner), Paul Temple (the grower, not the detective), and a number of nurserymen. From the large number of serious enquiries received, it would seem that there will be quite a future for "Horticultural Bark".

F.C. COMPUTER DEVELOPMENTS

Research workers at Alice Holt will soon be enjoying improved computer facilities. Obsolescence has finally overtaken the two Sirius computers which, since 1963 and 1967 respectively, have faithfully served the needs of Alice Holt Staff; they are being replaced by a modern IBM 1130 machine which is considerably more versatile. As

computers go, this latter is a small machine and arrangements have been made with the University Computing Company to link it up with the powerful Univac 1108 computers at the Company's London bureau when jobs outside its own capacity have to be tackled.

If present plans mature, the use of computers will soon be extended to the handling of routine work now being performed in Forest, Conservancy and Headquarters offices. The plans are at present confined to accounting and industrial payroll work. The programme is to convert the accounting work first, starting in July 1972, and it is hoped to complete the accounts conversion within a year. A start will then be made on the transfer of industrial payroll work, and this also is expected to take about a year to complete.

The computation work involved in this new venture is unsuitable for running on the new research computer, and a separate contract has been made with the University Computing Company for the hire of computing time. To handle data preparation and control a new branch of Finance Division is being established at Basingstoke and Mr. Douglas Pringle has been selected to head this. The development of the computer programmes is being tackled by a Commission team of eight programmers selected from the Forester and Executive grades, led by Mr. Cedric Clancey; the team will have professional assistance from the Bureau.

When fully established, the new branch at Basingstoke (which will have a terminal link with the computer bureau in London) will have a staff of about 30.

APPRAISAL INTERVIEWS

Last summer most staff completed a questionnaire about Appraisal Interviewing and sent it in for computer analysis. The idea was to obtain a clearer picture of what had been happening about Appraisal Interviewing in the Commission and to obtain views on the way in which the scheme might need to be changed or developed.

The Career Development Branch, who conducted the survey, has now published its report. High printing costs preclude sending a separate copy to each member of the Commission's staff but sufficient copies have been circulated to make the report available to everyone. If you don't have the opportunity to read a copy within the next month and want to do so (they were your views!), please let Mr. K. Folkes, Career Development Branch at HQ(B), know.

FORESTRY COMMISSION CHRISTMAS CARDS

The judging of the Forestry Commission Christmas card competition took place at Savile Row in mid July. The organisers had received only a modest number of entries but they still had a difficult choice between some entries of very good quality. In the event, there will be two Christmas cards, on sale early in September, which should prove particularly attractive to the staff of the Commission.

The "Economy" model is an attractive little card selling at 3p, produced from an original design by Miss Jean Davies at the South Wales Conservancy Drawing Office, Cardiff.

The "Regular" model is a large colour card of particular appeal within the Commission and will sell at 5p. It is produced from an original photograph submitted by Mr. T.H. McGeorge, HQ(B).

The winners of the competition will receive a prize of £2 each, and the card will carry an acknowledgment to the designer.

Dennis Boyd (whom we congratulate on his recent promotion to Principal), of Basingstoke HQ, says he is planning to circulate samples of the cards widely throughout the Commission in early September, so keep an eye out for the samples and please

put off buying your Christmas cards until you have seen what he has to offer, as we are confident that we shall have two cards of very wide appeal and value. We shall be trying to sell many more than last year in order to keep the price to the absolute minimum to meet the printing costs. Once again a small margin of profit will go to the Benevolent Fund.

VALE PARKEND SCHOOL

Old Students of the Dean School will especially appreciate this nostalgic and excellent little poem, written by ex-Dean student Jack Jennings (now Chief Forester at Crychan, South Wales) to commemorate the final prize-giving ceremony at the Dean School.

Jack has given it no title, but we have called it:

PARKEND IS ENDED, BUT THE MEMORIES LINGER ON

The sandstone walls look brooding dull and grey;
They closed the Parkend Forest School today;
No heavy booted feet tramp through the hall
That front door key has turned once and for all;
No rattling plate or spoon in jug and dish,
No smell of onions, cabbage and fried fish
Pervades the passages and dining room;
From shower bath no raucous shout or booming
Voice upraised in ribald song and verse;
In middle dormitory no muffled curse;
From lecture room no sound of questions come;
The building now is empty, silent ... dumb.

But in the Fountain Inn those who found fame
Will be remembered not so much by name
But by their skill at games, wisecracks and tricks:
"He" climbed that chimney stack; "He" hit that six;
Who swam in Cannop ponds so black and deep?
Who drank all that rough cider? dressed a sheep
In football shorts? who placed a chamber pot
On Parkend flag pole? and who oiled the clock
With treacle from a tin and margarine?
Who weeded in the nude at Moseley Green?
An era passes, sixty years have gone
But student memories will linger on.

"THE CASE FOR FORESTRY"

The publication of a booklet with the above title designed to promote the planting of more forests in Britain was marked recently by a Press conference in London organised by the Forestry Committee of Great Britain - a committee set up by the Timber Growers' Organisation and the Scottish Woodland Owners' Association to liaise and negotiate with the Commission on matters such as grants.

In "The Case For Forestry" the low level (in relation to that of other European countries) of Britain's investment in forestry is stressed. And the booklet points out that with only 7.6 per cent of the land area under woods and forests, Britain has the smallest percentage of all countries in Europe with the exception of the Netherlands and the Irish Republic, and that only 8 per cent of our national timber and timber products requirements are met by home production - the balance being imported at a cost of £715 million in 1970.

Calling for an expansion of forest planting, the booklet points out that 14 million acres of upland, marginal ground in the U.K. - most of it in Scotland - is as suitable for forestry as it is also for grazing sheep or cattle. At the moment, says the booklet, these 14 million acres contribute only 4 per cent of total agricultural production. It goes on to point out that, although the "forestry versus sheep" controversy has never really been determined, there is a place for integrated forestry and agricultural production.

Copies of "The Case For Forestry" are obtainable gratis (though s.a.e. appreciated) from the Forestry Committee of Great Britain, National Agricultural Centre, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG.

"NORWAYS" NEED A HELPING HAND

As a follow-up on the item "Do You Know Your Conifers", by Chief Forester Jack Jennings, which appeared in the May/June issue of "Slasher", Mr. H.E. Edlin writes:

"Like Jack Jennings, I have never seen natural regeneration of Norway spruce in British forests, though I have often come across seedlings of Sitka spruce and the other conifers he mentions. This is odd, because in Norway it is quite commonplace to see spruce regeneration coming up so densely that it forms a turf of conifer foliage on the forest floor. The same thing happens in Switzerland, where many Alpine forests show vigorous regrowth of spruce from self-sown seed.

"These two countries - one north of Britain and the other south - have one climatic feature in common that we in Britain never get. This is continuous snow cover during the winter months. I suspect that deep snow is essential to successful natural regeneration of spruce though how it works I cannot say. It may chill the seed to give better germination or it may simply protect the delicate young seedlings from marauding birds and mice during the critical winter months.

"Another curious fact is that although most common Alpine and Scandinavian trees spread naturally to Britain after the Ice Age, spruce did not. Pine, birch, oak and ash all came in and regenerated freely. The failure of spruce to move north-west suggests that our climate is unsuited to its full natural life cycle. It can grow here but cannot renew its kind, without man's aid.

"In conclusion, Norway spruce cones do open naturally in the warm dry climate of the New Forest, but still no young trees appear. New Forest squirrels, who are apparently hungrier than their Welsh cousins, and attack any sort of cone, may possibly destroy the seedlings as well as the seeds in the cones."

TREES TO CHANGE DESERT CITY INTO OASIS

Within the next two decades the sand-locked city of Khartoum - capital of the Sudan - may well become Africa's greatest oasis, according to a Scottish forester, Mr. Archibald Stein of Lanarkshire, who is attached to the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organisation.

Mr. Stein claims to have found the means to defeat the howling wind-blown sand which chokes and blinds the city's half-a-million inhabitants for weeks on end during the dry season. Aided by Sudanese foresters, he built a thick barrier of fast-growing trees, mainly comprised of eucalyptus from Australia and a particularly drought-resistant species from Somalia, which serves as a massive windbreak.

"This has worked very well", Mr. Stein said. "About 14 kilometres south of Khartoum, where only ten years ago there was only a barren steppe, there is now a

luxuriant forest". He added that Khartoum is now well on its way to becoming a beautiful city to live in, enriched by shady forests and parks which will protect it from the old enemies - the wind and the sand.

CATTLE FEED FROM TIMBER

A process which can transform forestry industry waste products into protein-rich cattle feed is being refined by timber scientists in Sweden, according to a report in the "Scottish Farmer".

The scientists have discovered, during the course of research on micro-organisms which damage and destroy timber, that chemical processes and the enzymes involved can have a beneficial use as well as a destructive one.

STAFF INSPECTION REPORT ON A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

A member of Works Study (who can obviously laugh at himself) sent us the following:-

"For considerable periods, the four oboe players had nothing to do. The number should be reduced and the work spread more evenly over the whole concert, thus eliminating peaks and valleys of activity. All twelve violins were playing identical notes; this seems unnecessary duplication. The staff of this section should be drastically cut.

"If a larger volume of sound is required, it could be obtained by means of electronic apparatus. Much effort was absorbed in the playing of demisemiquavers; this seems an unnecessary refinement. It is recommended that all notes be rounded up to the nearest semiquaver. If this were done, it would be possible to use trainees and lower-grade operatives more extensively. There seems to be too much repetition of some musical passages. Scores should be drastically pruned. No useful purpose is served by repeating on the horns something that has already been played by the strings. It is estimated that if all redundant passages were eliminated, the whole concert time of 2 hours could be reduced to 20 minutes and there would be no need for an intermission.

"In many cases, the operators were using one hand for holding the instrument whereas the introduction of a fixture would have rendered the idle hand available for other work. Also, it was noted that excessive effort was being used occasionally by the players of the wind instruments, whereas one compressor could supply adequate air for all instruments under more accurately controlled conditions.

"Finally, obsolescence of equipment is another matter into which it is suggested further investigation could be made, as it was reported in the programme that the leading violinist's instrument was already several hundred years old. If normal depreciation schedules had been applied, the value of this instrument would have been reduced to zero and purchase of more modern equipment could then have been considered."

A READY-MADE FACTOR 1 RELASCOPE

Further to Michael Locke's note in the March/April "Slasher", Mr. K.W. Wilson, District Officer, Surrey, writes:-

"Take a Stanley flexible tape - metric type with a lock. They're always handy to have in your pocket in the forest. The tag at the end is 10 mm wide - if under, file to size. Bottom edge of the case is 50 mm, so extend tape to 45 mm and bingo! - a relascope."

NEWS FROM THE CONSERVANCIES

London Headquarters

RETIREMENT OF

MISS MARJORIE PEAL

OUR friend and colleague, Miss Marjorie Peal, Executive Officer in Finance Branch, retired officially in June; however, in order to enjoy the summer months to the full, she left us in March. Marjorie did not wish to have an official presentation but was given a cheque with which she purchased a set of stainless steel cutlery, shown to her colleagues at an informal gathering, before slipping quietly away.

Marjorie began her career in the Civil Service in the Ministry of Labour and she came to the Forestry Commission in April 1949, and worked both in Director (England)'s office and at Headquarters.

We wish her many happy years of retirement.

LOGICAL TREES

Believe it or not, an enquirer recently telephoned our Publications Section and asked: "Does the Forestry Commission publish the booklet called "The Increasing Use of Logical Trees in the Civil Service?"

OVERHEARD IN THE LOCAL HQ(L) CANTEEN:

Mr. B: "Where's Jack? Is he playing golf to-day?"

Mr. C: "No, he's not playing golf, he's on leave to-day".

North East England

CHAMPION DIGGER DRIVER

MR. H. WILLIAMSON, Plant operator at Hamsterley Forest, went to Sheffield to compete with some twenty-four other highly skilled hydraulic excavator operators in a competition to choose the most expert in the cutting of three chains of open ditch, using a McConnell ditching bucket mounted on a Massey Ferguson 175 tractor.

Points were awarded for straightness of line, cleanness of cut, effectiveness of drainage, and the time in which the allotted length was carried out. Mr. Williamson emerged as the winner and was acclaimed North Midlands Champion. He already holds the title of Northern England Champion, having previously competed in various locations in the North.

The only area of the country over which Mr. Williamson does not hold undisputed sway is the South, but he hopes to complete a "hat trick" in August, when he takes part in the competition at Bristol, for which he carries our good wishes.

RETIREMENT OF 'JOCK' CUMMING

AS previously announced in the "Slasher", Head Forester John (Jock) Cumming has retired from Jervaulx Forest, and to mark his leaving some 60 friends assembled at the King's Head, Masham. Acting as Chairman for the evening, Mr. Ian Macdonald, District Officer, spoke of Jock from early days at Benmore and paid tribute to the many acres of very fine new plantations that he had created during his time at Jervaulx.

That Jock was a very well-known figure in Commission and Private Woodland circles was borne out by the fact that he was honoured by five separate presentations. Mr. Douglas Nelson and Mr. Robert Malcolm presented Jock with a picnic basket and

shooting stick from the respective gangs. Mr. Robert Baird, Head Forester, Wykeham, handed over a cheque from F.C. staff, as did Mr. George Stevenson, Head Forester to Lord Bolton. A framed photograph of Jock was presented to him by Mr. David Robertson, Assistant Conservator, together with a key to give him access to the forest.

Mr. Macdonald also paid tribute to the good work done by Mrs. Cumming, and Mrs. Edgar, wife of the Head Gamekeeper to Lord Masham, presented her with a bouquet. In response, Jock thanked everyone for the presents and all the staff who had helped him to make a success of his job.

Entertainment was provided by Mr. Jim Millar, Head Forester at Catterick Camp. In addition to piping Jock and Mrs. Cumming to the supper table, and winding up the evening with a selection on the bagpipes, Jim led the party with some very lusty singing of a distinct Scottish flavour. Mrs. Noble, wife of Mr. Jim Noble, Head Forester to Leeds Corporation Water Works, accompanied on the piano.

East England

MR. WILLIAM JOHN LAKE

MANY old friends will learn, with regret, of the sudden death on Wednesday, 9th June, of William John Lake, Mobile Mechanist, Thetford Chase, E(E).

Billy Lake was 57 and had been with the Commission since 1948, during which time he put up a wonderful record of loyal, conscientious service.

He was a very good sort, and will be greatly missed. Our sympathy goes out to his widow, son and two daughters.

South East England

WOODLAND WALK AIDS BLIND PEOPLE

FOR want of £2, somewhere in the world to-day a child is blind. In the Commonwealth there are over six million blind people, four million of whom went blind from preventable causes, and at least one million of whom could have their sight restored.

It is facts like these which are of such concern to the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. Last year more than twenty thousand people were given back their sight by this purely voluntary Society in India and elsewhere, at an average cost of £2 for each person.

Young people in the South East England area had the opportunity to help this desperately important work on Sunday, 4th July, when the Society - with the cooperation of the Forestry Commission, held a two-mile sponsored walk in the New Forest. This was a walk with a difference; entrants came in pairs and were tied together to make a three-legged unit. The route lay along forest paths and was fully monitored by stewards to ensure that all who set out on "Expedition Eyesight" returned to base. First Aid was available for sore feet.

INVASION OF THE BEE PEOPLE

AN urgent message flashed across the air waves of the New Forest District Office recently - the ceremonial oak tree planted by the past Chairman of the Forestry Commission to mark the Commission's Jubilee in 1969 was under attack - was indeed bent double with its crown touching the ground.

A rescue party in the person of Keeper John Gulliver hastened to the spot, and with great courage apprehended the culprits - a swarm of bees. No doubt they will render compensation in the form of honey, in due course. The tree is now recovering.

South West England

DISTRICT OFFICER M. G. HARKER, S.W.(E) reports that:

In a copy of the Journal of the Royal Institute of Cornwall the following story occurred about an 18th Century Cambridge (of course) divine who was visiting the owner of one of Cornwall's stately homes.

Having spent much of his life in Cambridge, he was somewhat ignorant of the outer world and of country life in particular. On seeing a hen with a large brood of chicks he remarked "How wonderful is the providence of nature. To think that so small a creature should provide milk for so many." Perhaps he was not so foolish, after all, for who has not heard of pigeon's milk?

And also that:

The Productivity Council addressed a report on the organisation of a certain undertaking, which shall be nameless, to "The Assistant Consummator". It was the "Assistant" that hurt!

North Scotland

AN OUTING - AND A SONG

THE Educational Outing on the 23rd June provided the staff of N(S) Conservancy office with a pleasant, interesting and, of course, informative day. Following the route of General Wade's road on the shores of Loch Ness they travelled between "Nessie's" monstrous watering place and Farigaig Forest.

At Inverfarigaig a Commission "Forestry and Wild Life Exhibition" was visited, where the well laid out display of stuffed animals and forestry models evoked appreciative comments from the party, adding to the many similar remarks recorded in the visitors' book signed by 4,700 people in 1970.

Moving on to Inchnacardoch Forest, the party saw the Conservancy's own tubed seedling production unit, where District Officer Ron Marnie and Head Forester Hugh Morris explained and demonstrated the technique. In this - its first year - the unit will produce 300,000 Lodgepole pine seedlings for field trials throughout the Conservancy.

The party then headed westwards through wild, beautiful scenery which man's hand will surely never alter nor destroy. At Ratagan Forest, on the shore of Loch Duich, beneath Mam Ratagan and the Five Sisters of Kintail, a picnic lunch was enjoyed and entertainment provided by Linda Cummings and Kathleen MacKintosh of the Drawing Office, who sung their own composition "Papa's taking us to the Forest":-

(To the tune of "Papa's taking us to the Zoo tomorrow")

Chorus: We're going to the Forest today, today
It's such a long way away, away
For us to go and play, play, play
At the Forest today.

Saying goodbye to District Officer Chris Christie, Chief Forester Jim Ogilvie and Head Forester Geoff Reid, the party moved on to meet District Officer Julian Verel, Head Forester Bill Hunter and Forester John Fisher of South Strome Forest, where it toured the main block and watched extraction work with the Isachsen Winch.

Now on the return journey, it travelled along the recently opened Strome Ferry by-pass road, part of which was built on the existing Forestry road, and which in one part has an avalanche shelter covering both road and the railway track alongside.

The party wish to record its thanks to all who arranged and laid on the many items of interest in the day's outing.

CRICKET IN THE FAR NORTH

THE Summer season commenced in Inverness on the evening of 17th June, when a team from North Scotland Conservancy (Inverness and District) met a team from the Crofters' Commission in a challenge cricket match.

Encouraged by the foreign players, who professed a knowledge of the ritual performance, the Gentlemen of the N(S) team took their places confidently in what appeared to be an ever-widening ring. In the magical number of overs, said to be 16, the other team scored 61 for 6 (note the recurring 6 throughout), whilst the Forestry Gentlemen performed by jumping over the ball as it passed them or by waving and dancing madly as it dropped down from the sky.

The teams changed places, and with assistance from Ken Roscoe (38 not out) and Geoff Barrie (20 not out), the Forestry team scored 62 for 6. In a nearby hotel the final rites were appropriately celebrated and the evening closed in an esoteric discussion on the rules pertaining to l.b.w.

INVERNESS FIND COULD ALTER HISTORY BOOKS

ONE of the most important archaeological excavations ever to be undertaken in the Inverness area of North Scotland began early in July on Commission land at Craig Phadrig, whose wooded slopes overlook the town from the west.

The site is that of a clearly defined rectangular vitrified fort, and the investigation could alter theories put forward by tourist guides and history books alike.

The Picts are known to have been ruled by King Brude from a stronghold in the Ness Valley in the sixth century A.D. It is widely believed in the Highlands that the fort perched on Craig Phadrig was that very same stronghold. Brude is reputed to have been converted to Christianity during a visit there by St. Columba.

On the other hand, many archaeologists believe that vitrified forts of this type were of considerably earlier origin, probably between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D., during the Iron Age.

Inverness Field Club are organising the excavation under the direction of Mr. Alan Small, a lecturer in the Department of Geography at Dundee University.

East Scotland

FORTY YEARS IN FORESTRY

EARLIER this year, HEAD FORESTER E.D.(TED) FRASER, met a few of his many friends in Perth to say his farewell to the Forestry Commission. Mr. E.G. Richards, Conservator E(S), thanked him for his services to the Commission, presented him with a cheque and conveyed the good wishes of all.

Ted is an Invernesian, and became interested in forestry while still at school, and after a period of practical work entered Benmore Forestry School. On emerging in 1932 he was posted to N(S) Conservancy, where he remained until the outbreak of war, when he was seconded to the Timber Control.

At the end of the war Ted joined the Control Commission for Germany, where he served as a District Officer. On his return to Scotland he was posted to the West, to Carron Valley, but after two years was promoted to Head Forester at Loch Ard,

Aberfoyle, where he made his mark with the large post-war plantings.

After serving ten years at Loch Ard he was transferred to Craigvinean, E(S), where he served for over seven years. In his last years of service his experience and skills were applied to private woodlands, based on Perth.

In his youth Ted was keen on motor racing, and developed other skills and interests which he intends to pursue in his retirement, such as wine-making, travel and photography, of which he is a skilful exponent - particularly on landscapes and forest operations.

South Scotland

SOUTH SCOTLAND SPORTS

THE annual summer outing of the South Scotland Conservancy Golf Club was held over Dumfries and County Golf Course on Friday, 21st May. As usual, their good luck with the weather held, and 27 players enjoyed excellent golfing conditions. The winner of the Fotheringham Trophy was Mr. S.K. Fergusson (Bennan Forest, S(S)), and with Mr. J. Wilson (Wark Forest, NE(E)) as runner-up.

The diversity of sporting interests in South Scotland Conservancy was further demonstrated on the 24th May, when the A.G.M. of the office Curling Club was held. The league, in which 8 rinks took part in 28 games, was played over the winter months. It had a thrilling climax in that the decision for first place rested upon the result of the final game. The winning rink was skipped by Mr. J. Paterson, ably aided by Mrs. Chard and Mr. and Mrs. Hendry. Mrs. James, wife of Senior Officer, Scotland, presented the James Cup to the winners.

West Scotland

RETIRED TO THE "BONNIE BANKS"

Commission.

HEAD FORESTER T.S. FRASER has retired after twenty-five years' service with the

He started work in Darnaway Estates prior to the war and did a spell as an Under-Forester on Balmoral Estates. After a distinguished war service in R.A.F. aircrew, he started in Loch Ard, and in 1951 took charge of Rowardennan.

He and his wife were the guests of over a hundred of his colleagues and friends at a ceilidh in Rowardennan Hotel, where he was presented with a fine antique clock, a mahogany cabinet, and a set of miniatures. Mr. E.J.M. Davies, Conservator W(S), paid tribute to Tom's long and most competent service, his unorthodox but effective methods of dealing with the public in a most trying area, and above all his dedication to his forest, which in the years to come will stand as a reminder of his competence as a forester.

Having spent nearly 20 years at Rowardennan controlling the tourists to Loch Lomondside so to ensure his forest's establishment, he is still retaining his links with the tourist industry, having acquired a delightful residence at Balmaha, a thriving tourist centre on the Lochside just a few miles south of Rowardennan.

Incidentally, at a recent spot fire in that area, "T.S.F" was on the scene no later than thirty seconds behind the Head Forester's Landrover. Obviously, fire consciousness will never wane with Tommy!

North Wales

MR. E.J. DUMMETT RETIREES TO PAINT

COLLEAGUES and friends from the Commission

and elsewhere gathered at the Swallow Falls Hotel, Betws y Coed, on 28th June, to pay tribute to Ted Dummatt, Senior Superintendent of Works, on his retirement. Mr. J.H. James, Conservator N(W), presented Mr. Dummatt with a canteen of stainless steel cutlery and a cheque, and expressed the good wishes of all. Mrs. James presented Mrs. Dummatt with a flowering plant.

Mr. Dummatt has been with the Commission for 22 years, joining first in South Wales. For the past 18 years he has been in North Wales, stationed at Gwydyr. Among his many achievements in the construction of miles of roads and bridges was the building of the pre-stressed concrete bridge leading to the caravan and camping park at Beddgelert. He was the Assistant Instructor for the Commission's explosive courses held in North Wales and Scotland.

Ted Dummatt is an artist and intends to retire locally, where he can both create and exhibit his works.

SHOT OF THE WEEK

MR. JOHN H. JAMES, Conservator N(W)
holed-out his tee shot from the 17th

at Aberystwyth at the end of June!

Owing to a slight deviation from the intended line, however, the ball curled out of sight over the trees and ended in the cup on the 18th green - a distance of some 250 yards.

Local rumour has it that he was anxious to get to the 19th hole.

South Wales

A FORESTER LOOKS BACK

MR. JACK JENNINGS, Chief Forester at Crychan Forest, will be retiring soon after 44 years' service to the Commission. Here he looks back to the days that were; they were hard days, as many of our other long-service men will remember.

"The postman brought me a letter from Basingstoke to-day ... the one we all get sooner or later ... "Dear Mr. Jennings", it read ... "with reference to your retirement on".

"Well, this made me begin to think back a while and I discovered that it really was 44 years ago since I first did a day's work with the Commission. This was in 1927. There was a depression on at the time and you had no need to have a "good" job to be regarded as an important chap - you were a big cheese if you had any kind of job at all.

"Forest workers had a rough time in those days. For a start, when you turned up in the morning you were never quite certain that you would be permitted to commence work. If it was raining then you were told to stand by until 11 am. If it was still wet at lunchtime, that was the end of that, and home you went for the day, without pay, let me add. There was no dole or unemployment pay for agricultural workers. After all, we didn't pay for a stamp. The adult wage was, I believe, 30/-d. per week and the only deduction was 9d per week for National Health.

"The working week of fifty-something hours was six days. Saturday counted as a full day and I have a few memories of piecework rates. Hand lining out was 1/-d per 1,000. Oak stakes were 3d each and this included felling, cleaving and pointing. Bracken weeding was 5/-d an acre and we reckoned to do an acre a day. I have memories, too, of turf draining by hand at 1/- a chain.

"Agriculture was in the doldrums, and all my colleagues were former farm workers. Some strange characters come to mind; gamekeepers, mole catchers and ploughmen, whose dinner consisted of a square wad of cheese pressed into a hole in the centre of a cottage loaf. "Thermos" flasks were unheard of: you drank cold tea from a bottle and some men brought their food to work in a large red handkerchief. I have been sowing seeds in a nursery beside a man wearing a bowler hat and leggings.

"Young lads like myself always had hopes of getting to the Forestry School though the number of openings was far fewer than the number of candidates. To make the grade you had to work very hard, keep your mouth shut (which I found presented some difficulty), and make sure you were in the Foresters' good books. Senior Foresters were idols to youths such as I. A Grade I Forester on a salary of £150 a year was to me in the Cabinet Minister class. There were, I believe, only five Head Foresters in the whole of the British Isles.

"As an ex-school ganger I worked under a few peculiar ones. The most difficult was the first one I went to after leaving the Dean School. To reduce me to my proper level and to demonstrate how useless a member of the staff I was likely to be, he put me to cutting gorse with a deaf mute. After a fortnight he came along with a chain and measured up what we had done, threatening me with disciplinary action as he worked out the area for such an expensive job. In vain I protested. I was a Supervisor. "Forget all ye learrned at that skule laddie", he said "ye've come here to worrrrkkk!" My reply resulted in my transfer within a week!

"Another Forester, incensed with the damage that rabbits were doing to the newly-planted arboretum, lined out several hundred transplants of Rhamnus Purshiana, the Cascara sagrada plant, around the area from stock in the nursery that we were raising for Bedgebury. "Let 'em have a chew at that lot", he said. "They'll learn how to run!" The rabbits ignored them.

"Then there was the Forester who told the Land Agent that the Forester's house he lived in was an utter disgrace. "The only thing that keeps it standing", he said "is the death watch beetlesholding hands"!

"1927 was the year in which we sowed the seed of the notorious 27/31 Ident of Corsican pine. Later known as Ursuline pine from the name of the vendor, they showed great promise in the seedbeds as 1+0 and eventually developed into a shrub a few feet high with the habit of a pineapple top.

"Seedbeds in those days were covered with mineral soil. No one had heard of grit. You made up the seedbed by raking off all the hard clay lumps and knobs, and having trodden them to a powder in the alley-ways, collected it up and used it to cover the seeds. If the soil had a tendency to cake, one sharp shower or rain would convert your beautiful beds into a concrete waste.

"My old master mentor and tutor was a very famous Head Forester - the late William Tribe. When I first knew him at Laughton Forest in 1930, he said to me "When you go into a wood for the first time always break off a few twigs as you go, so that the man following will know the way". I hope that the work the men of my age group have been doing for most of their working lives will prove to have been a useful occupation; it has been mostly pioneer work, and if what we have produced has marked out a path, you who are following will know the way.

"I have always enjoyed writing. I think it began with detention and writing lines at school and for 24 years I have been sending odd notes, etc. to the "Slasher". Much of it has been in my usual vein, which I fear lots of folk get fed up with, and which frequently gets me into trouble. If this should be my last effort, I would like to say "Thanks, fellows, for reading it, commenting on it, and putting up with my nonsense. I have enjoyed your letters and working with you (well, most of you, anyway)."

(At which point we must say how grateful we, and our predecessor, have always been for Jack Jennings' prolific contributions to the "Slasher", which have not only given colour, controversy and always welcome comedy to its contents, but have also served us well! We shall look forward still to his pen's production. Ed.)

THAT'S TELLING THEM

ANOTHER contributor from South Wales sent us this cutting from the "Western Mail" of June 23rd:-

"An elderly woman Councillor of a South Wales local authority took part in a debate on the afforestation of a reclaimed industrial site. "I do not know about this afforestation but what about planting some trees there?"

There's nothing like getting straight to the point!

THE COMMISSION SAVES
THE EMPIRE

THE Tower of London's next guest will be from Wentwood Forest, S(W). At the moment he is staying with MR. COLIN TITCOMBE, of Brockwells Farm, Caldicott. A worker in Wentwood, Colin found a young raven at the beginning of May, when it was half starved. "It could hardly fly", he said. "I thought it had been trying to fly and strayed from its nest".

Later he found a dead parent. Rather than risk the life of the young raven by leaving it, he took the bird to his home. "It has become very tame", says Colin. "We let it out over Whitsun. He flew around a few trees but he would not fly away and kept coming back. I wrote to the Tower of London to see if they would accept it and they did. I'm going to take it up there on July 17th".

Yeomen Clerk at the Tower, Mr. John Herd, said there have always been six ravens at the Tower since the reign of Charles the Second. "Legend says that without them the British Empire would fall and the Tower of London would crumble to dust".

Mr. Herd said that the Resident Governor of the Tower hopes to be able to welcome Colin and accept the Wentwood raven. He said that the birds had an official meat allowance from the Government of 30p per bird per week.

The Wentwood raven will be a guest until one of the six dies. The oldest living raven on record lived to the age of 44, but they normally live between ten and twenty years.

The Commission's contribution to the safety of the British Empire will be looked after by the Yeomen Warder and Quarter-Master, Mr. Jack Wilmington.

Several of the Tower's ravens have come from Scotland, but the last three have come from Wales.

Northern Research Station

HEAD FORESTER DONALD FRASER
GOES TO E.F.G.

HEAD FORESTER Donald K. Fraser, who for the past 20 years has been Silviculture Forester and Head Forester in charge of the South

East Scotland Research area, first at the Bush nursery and then at the Northern Research Station, resigned on the 11th June, 1971, on taking up an appointment with the Economic Forestry Group based in Edinburgh.

Colleagues at the Northern Research Station gathered together on Friday, 2nd July, and presented Donald with a leather overnight bag, which he assured us would be put to good use in his E.F.G. work. Mrs. Fraser was unable to attend but a bouquet of flowers was presented to Donald, to give to his wife.