

THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

No. 3

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THE AGRICULTURAL SHOWS

Preparatory work progresses in connection with the staging of exhibits at the major Agricultural Shows. Because of the need for recruiting local help it may be of interest to some readers to know the proposed programme. There may be adjustments or even deletions, but so far as is known at present the Commission hope to participate at the Shropshire and West Midland Show, Shrewsbury (May 19-20); Bath and West, Cardiff (May 26-29); Suffolk Agricultural Association (June 2-3); Three Counties Show, Gloucester (June 8-10); Sussex County Show, Hastings (June 16-17); Royal Counties Agricultural Society, Salisbury (June 23-25); Norfolk Agricultural, Norwich (June 30-July 1); Royal English Agricultural Society, York (July 6-9); Bedfordshire Agricultural Society, Bedford (July 16-17); Tunbridge Wells and S.E. Counties, Tunbridge Wells (July 20-21); Lancashire Royal Agricultural Society, Burnley (July 29-August 2); Worthington and District Agricultural Society, Worthington (August 5-7).

THE EDITOR'S NOTE

Contributions to The Slasher have shown a welcome increase; yet the volume leaves something still to be desired if the Editor is to receive adequate assistance in producing this news-letter and - who knows? - in getting perhaps a step nearer to a time when it will be possible to issue in printed form, with adequate layout and some photographs.

Some territories, however, are proving more helpful than others and have sent along more than one paragraph for this or a future issue. The ideal position would be for each territory to make sure it is represented every month. Anything which can be done to this end will be greatly appreciated.

It is also intended that the Commission shall exhibit at the Highland Show at Inverness.

Meanwhile, here is an S.O.S. It is proposed to devote one small section to the depicting of wild life in the forest. If any readers have any stuffed forest animals or birds (in good condition which could be loaned or given to the Exhibition section, please inform J.Q. WILLIAMSON, Chief Education Officer, Forestry Commission, 1 Bryanston Square, London, S.W.1. Similarly he would also like to hear of any contributions in the way of models (with a forestry flavour) made by any employee of the Commission.

CALL OF KING WILLOW

Down in the New Forest summer is being looked forward to with even greater anticipation

than usual. The reason? Plans are made for an all-Forestry Commission team to prove its prowess on the cricket field. It was in June of last year that the idea of forming a team was first mooted and little time was lost before matches were actually being played. But now proposals are more ambitious. Whereas last season the team was content to play evening games, for the coming season arrangements are being made for weekend matches against local clubs. A pitch - Bramshaw - has been selected and Secretary E. ROBERTS, of the Deputy Surveyor's Office, is confident that an attractive fixture list will be arranged. For gear the club is relying on equipment already held by individual players. Secretary ROBERTS has, in fact, played a leading part in promoting this venture, and has had valuable and enthusiastic support from (among others) Divisional Officer G.D. ROUSE, Forester A. HOLLOWAY (who captained the team last year) and Forester G. BROOMFIELD. In addition to the foregoing, other playing members are likely to include Foresters J. ADAMS, H.B. JAMES, A.L. JAMES, L.H. COLES and F.J. GREEN; Keepers G. SMITH, B. SMITH and G. BLAKE; Foremen A. FRENTH, W. DEAL and R. MEECH; and G. MASTERS. Of the office staff, Chief Clerk R. COOTE and C.A. BASSETT are also keen to play. Assistant Engineer P. BLOOD is another who wishes to represent the Club, and doubtless others will be similarly minded.

THE SKI PATROL

At Carrick Forest, one of the largest in the South Scotland Conservancy, and extending to some 40,000 acres in the wild Galloway region, operations are at present being carried out on two sections, Tarryfessock and Tairlaw. Between these two areas, which are nine miles apart, is a hill rising to 1,500 feet. A few weeks ago Foreman R.C. CALDER had to make payment of wages to squads at both places, but owing to the heavy snow-fall he could not get from one to the other in his small van. Undaunted, Foreman CALDER (who hails from the North of Scotland and, incidentally, had some rather strenuous experiences during the war) got out his skis and thus accomplished the double journey. The Conservancy Office staff is now wondering in which section of Estacode they will find reference to "Ski Allowance"!

STAFF TRAINING

Readers may be interested in a brief outline of a training scheme for clerical staff recently inaugurated in the South Wales Conservancy. As most of the office staff are new to forestry it had long been felt they were hampered in their work by lack of personal contact with Foresters and by ignorance of Forestry practice generally. Pressure of work had until recently prevented the Conservator from repairing this omission, but an agreed scheme has now been adopted, brief details of which follow.

As and when they can be spared from their office work two members of the office staff accompany a District Officer on his visit to a Forest, are introduced to the Forester and shown all operations in progress. They have an informal chat with the Forester, in particular about matters bearing on their work.

These personal contacts have been of considerable value for, not only has official business ceased to be transacted on an impersonal basis, but Foresters and Clerks are being made aware of each other's difficulties.

Again, lectures by the technical staff have been arranged as follows:- Introductory, Mr. G.B. RYLE, Conservator; From Seed to Forest, District Officer Pallett; The Growth of the Forest, Private Woodlands Officer SANZEN BAKER; The Forester's Work, Head Forester H.C. YOUNG; Utilization from the Forest, Divisional Officer W.D. RUSSELL; Acquisition of Land, District Officer L.H. WILLIAMS (Acquisitions); The Forest Estate, District Officer ARENDS (Estates).

The attendance at and the staff's reactions to, the two lectures already held shew abundantly that a long felt need is being met.

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MORE PARTIES

On a memorable Saturday in February a large party of Headquarters staff visited Alice Holt Research Station for the purpose of participating in, and enjoying, a social. An added attraction was the fact that the journey was made by coach, the route taken being via Guildford, in which city considerable interest was shown in the new Cathedral, now in the course of erection. Tea was obtained en route and by late afternoon Alice Holt was reached, where the party was welcomed by Chief Clerk E.C. HARPER. Games were played, and the programme included darts and table tennis tournaments; the visitors were the losers at the former, but shortage of time prevented a decision being reached where the latter pastime was concerned. Miss EMSLEY (H.Q.) arranged the tea partaken during the journey, while Miss MOSS (H.Q.) played a leading part in arranging the games and was also responsible for provision of transport.

Incidentally, it should be recorded that the Alice Holt canteen is proving a success, and full marks are awarded to the energetic Committee for their work on the management side and, on the production side, to the industrious cook Mrs STRUGNELL, ably assisted by her husband.

More than 50 attended a party at Northerwood House, New Forest, on January 16, among those present being Deputy Surveyor D.W. YOUNG, Divisional Officer G.D. ROUSE and District Officers H. CRUICKSHANK and R. MACDONALD from New Park School. The informal programme included dancing and games, while the co-operation of Miss INGRAM and District Officer L.G.T. KENYON contributed much to the success of the party as a whole.

To revert once more to Alice Holt, the Research Station was recently the venue for a children's party. What is rightly described as "a marvellous spread" was provided, the extent of the feast being considerably helped by generous gifts of food by parents and friends. Games were played and an impressive Santa Claus, (R.B. HETHERINGTON), distributed presents from a gaily lighted Christmas tree. There is no sight so heart-warming as that of the revelry of children - congratulations, therefore, to the Misses SHARPE, TURNER, McMAHON, Mrs HENDRIE, Mrs STRUGNELL and all other willing helpers who did so much to make the event a success.

BOUQUET

National Savings News broadcast:-

The follow is a paragraph recently included in a "We have all heard of things that stir down in the forest. Now it is the Savings Movement which is doing the stirring. Thanks to the help of the Foresters who control the seven 'beats' or sub-divisions of the New Forest in Hampshire a savings group has been formed for each 'beat', covering about three hundred workers of the Forestry Commission."

Behind this announcement lies a story of some grand work by Divisional Officer G.D. ROUSE in helping the National Savings people to stimulate interest among the Commission's employees.

THEFTS OF CHRISTMAS TREES

In December the Information Officer provided the B.B.C. with an intriguing little story of how in the Home Counties the "Spivs" were using reconnaissance men to select trees for subsequent and after-dark removal. The B.B.C. told how the owner of a private woodland had found trees marked by a piece of string tied round a branch. It appears, however, that the racketeers were even more painstaking in the North West Conservancy, for at Delamere Forest special markers were found affixed to trees due for recovery at night. These markers were of varying sizes, increasing with the depth of plantation in which they were used, and easily distinguishable by the light of an electric torch.

In shape the markers resembled the customary three-leaf clover, but it is difficult to appreciate the significance of this. As it happens the attempted raid was thwarted; maybe the "Spivs" concerned would do well if in future they use a four-leaf clover as their trade-mark.

HELP FOR THE NEEDY

DERRICK SMITH (Secretariat, H.Q.) is anxious that the benefits of membership of the Civil Service Benevolent Fund should be as widely appreciated as possible. As Departmental Agent of the Fund he points out that help is given to all permanent and temporary non-industrial Civil Servants in all grades above and including Foremen and Foresters who may be in distress - temporary Civil Servants, incidentally, must have had at least a year's Government service before they qualify for assistance. In recent months the Fund has been able materially to assist two members of the Commission's staff (both Foresters) who, owing to prolonged sick leave, are receiving reduced pay.

At present only 22 per cent of the eligible staff contribute to the Fund. The Commission has been asked to achieve, by June next, a contribution target of £500 a year; it is worth noting that a subscription of 2d. a week per eligible person would assure that this target is reached. Well, it's up to you. If you are interested - and who knows what the fates hold in store? - there are local Office Agents from one of whom you can obtain a form authorising deductions from salary. In case it proves helpful they are as follows:- ENGLAND - Director's Office F.C. BALDWIN: N.E. Conservancy J.C. BLOTT: N.W., E. HEWITT: S.W., G. TAYLOR: S.E., Miss M. MANICOM: E., Miss V.R. LEETE: NEW FOREST, R. COOTE: DEAN, T.E. MORRIS. WALES - Director's Office, T. EDWARDS: S., W.C. EVANS: N., L.H. GRINSTED. SCOTLAND - N., C. EDWARD: E., JAMES SKINNER: S., Miss J.M.D. THOMSON: W., A. LIDDELL. RESEARCH - Scotland (Edinburgh), J.A.B. MacDONALD: ALICE HOLT, Miss J.M.A. SHARPE.

INNOCENT AT LARGE AT ALICE HOLT

The Innocent at large (writes E.C. HARPER, who recently went to Alice Holt as Chief Clerk) gazes with reverence and awe at the notepaper solemnly headed "Forest Research Station." What romance is conjured! Let them keep their atomic energy and other research stations. What have they that can compare with Alice Holt? What have they?

The recently opened canteen is truly the place for "shop". While standing in the queue and watching, speculatively, a poor soul trying to negotiate bodies and tables while balancing several plates of soup, our Innocent is asked by a harassed stenographer - "Mycorrhiza: how do you spell it?" He, spellbound at the feat involved in balancing the liquid nourishment, replies: "I don't smell anything". "No, spell it, not smell it". "Spell what?" "Mycorrhiza". "Spell it! Never heard of it, but we're probably both right. With a name like that it must smell."

At table the Mensuration Officer is going into raptures over a dendrometer. "What on earth is a dendrometer?" asks our Innocent. Tolerantly comes the reply: "Aren't you ignorant? Obviously, it is something which dendrometers."

At the same table is seated the Forest Pathologist. Trembling at his own boldness, our Innocent ventures to ask on what is the F.P. working at the moment, and receives a learned discourse on Poplar canker, and a verbal introduction to the merits of an ingenious contrivance known as a Packaway ladder.

Our Innocent, it will be seen, lives in an atmosphere full of romance, replete as it is with talk of quarter-girths (no connection with rationing or the New Look), Ips typographus (pronounced, he notices, as though one has 'hiccups'), and divers other borers, predators and parasites. He sighs over the passing of the only two² Saints (N. & S.) the Commission ever had, and makes his way slowly back to his Estacode and Accounts - Gen. 8. He conjures up more of the aforementioned awe and reverence as he looks once more at the notepaper headed "Forest Research Station". "Let them", he muses, "keep their - no, I've already thought of that".

Yea, there is romance at Alice Holt, if only you know where to find it.

≠ Reference to former abbreviated designations given to Silviculturalists - St. (N) and St. (S) Objection to the abbreviation came from above - that is from Headquarters, not Heaven. - Editor.

THE WORK THEY DO (No.2)

"Application of Conditions of Service" section at Headquarters functions under A.D. PALMER (Establishment), with J.S. OVERY in charge. The latter is assisted by Mrs CRABB, A.J. WALMER and the Misses EMSLEY, ALLAN and HOLMES, and work includes the putting into effect of the provisions of Estacode (and amendments), E.O.C.'s (Establishment Officers Circulars) and T.C.'s (Treasury Circulars), which constitute the terms of service for the various grades. In addition there is work in connection with the Commission's own regulations (e.g. house allowances, car allowances, etc). The wide range of the work of this section (Estacode, for example, being nearly three inches thick) has earned for the team the title "The Brains Trust".

There are three main groups of work - 1. Questions of interpretation referred by other offices: 2. Putting into effect changes in regulations (reviews of salaries, etc) (bless 'em all - Editor) and 3. Superannuation, gratuities, etc.

We live in times of great changes, reflected in the almost continuous flow of revisions of salaries and general conditions, and truly the section has an onerous task in keeping abreast. There were 108 E.O.C.'s in 1947, while 21 addenda and/or corrigenda to these were also issued. Since January 1, 1946, there have been 25 reviews of salaries (sometimes three reviews for a single grade) and each means each single salary in that particular grade had to be recalculated on a new formula.

To add to the section's general task three revisions of the superannuation terms have been promulgated, each with its problem of interpretation and each involving a re-calculation of pensions. Arrears of work in connection with the establishment of Foresters are, however, being overtaken, but when this is done there remains similar work on behalf of foremen and industrial workers.

So if the section hasn't yet got around to your particular problem, remember that it is in capable hands and all possible help will in due course be forthcoming.

In the Welsh Directorate

The Accounts Section of the Welsh Directorate Office is part of a larger section controlled by F.L.G. EDWARDS. Miss MCNEIL is in direct charge of accounts and is assisted by Mrs. LATHAM and C.E. MORRIS.

In addition to the usual Directorate Office charges, all Engineering Branch Road Unit sub-accountants are funded by, and account to, this office; there are five sub-accountants and a labour strength of 650. All bills for machinery and stores, materials, hire charges, etc., are examined and paid for by the section. Some 1,600 cheques are drawn in a year, representing payments totalling to £190,000.

Routine duties include the examination of paysheets and wages analyses, P.A.Y.E. tax cards and sub-accountants' monthly accounts: associated book-keeping and preparation of those interesting little returns known as forms A.105, 106 etc., etc., on which actual payments, by heads of account, are compared with financial estimates. There are also a host of minor jobs to be undertaken such as accident reports, travelling and lodging allowance claims, the Newlyn Hostel accounts and costings and so on.

Last, but not least, the A/cs. Section has the privilege of entertaining and satisfying the requirements of H.Q. auditors, whose frequent visits (it is said locally) bear testimony to the popularity of Aberystwyth!

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The staff at Alice Holt Lodge has been recently augmented by the arrival of J.M.B. BROWN (Ecologist) and H.L. LOUGHBOROUGH (Pathologist's Field Assistant). In the field the Census Branch is expanding, the latest recruits being the Misses GARDEN and DAVIES (both formerly with the Women's Timber Corps) and Messrs. ASLANOWICZ, MACKIERIECZ and CHOATE, the last named being from Burma.

The Mensuration Officer has lost one of his assistants, namely O. KERFOOT, who has sailed for South Africa, having been accepted by the University of Johannesburg for a forestry course. The staff at Alice Holt has also wished bon voyage to "STEVE" TYSZOWIECKI, who has obtained a post in South Africa; he had been at Alice Holt for a matter of a few weeks only, after serving in other branches of the Commission for more than two years. When he departed from the Research Station he was coping simultaneously with the task of arranging his journey and also wedding arrangements, for he was due to marry and sail a week later. Talk of wedding bells reminds our correspondent at Alice Holt that two more marriages are reported as imminent and may have taken place before this issue of The Slasher appears - those of H.S. HANSON and H. FARR. To both go the best of good wishes.

NAMES, PLEASE

The Editor acknowledges with thanks receipt of an interesting contribution signed only with a non-de-plume. It is, however, an unwritten law in a newspaper office - and must also be the case where The Slasher is concerned - that material shall not be published over a non-de-plume unless the author's name and location are disclosed to the Editor. A note to the effect that the actual name of the contributor is not for publication will be sufficient to ensure that it does not appear. The contributor in question is therefore asked to be good enough to communicate with the Editor.