

OUR OWN FLAG

It should not be long now before the Department's newly designed flag is proudly flying in widely separated parts of the country. Some months ago the Chairman was informed that the use of the proposed flag had been approved by the King, and that the necessary registration had been made in the official records of the College of Arms. A London firm has now made the first flag, which is 17 ft. 6 ins. by 10 ft., and this is to be flown in the near future at Northerwood House. Directors have been asked to state what use they may have for flags of smaller size. Showing the flag at Agricultural Shows, etc., comes to mind, of course. The drawing on this page indicates (if somewhat inadequately) the design of the flag. As in the case of the Forestry Commission tie, dark brown and green are employed to portray the soil and trees, and where the flag is concerned the colours (from left to right) are alternately brown and green. The crown is traditional, and the words Forestry Commission are in gold.

Flags, of course, need poles. This brings us to a point where a brief discourse on our operation at Northerwood House is indicated. Last month what is believed to



be the biggest home-grown flagstaff in Britain was erected outside the New Forest mansion. This pole, 108 ft. long and weighing more than three tons, was originally a Douglas fir which was grown in the New Forest; before felling, about a year ago, its height was 125 ft. and its age between 85-90 years. A firm of local contractors was engaged to erect the pole and the somewhat difficult operation was carried out without a hitch. It is probable that the new flag will be "broken" when the Chairman visits

Northerwood House this month.

WHAT KILLED THE FUNGI?

Foresters who see their trees defoliated by leaf fungi, or killed by Honey fungus, may be comforted to know that the fungi themselves are prone to difficulties and disasters. One of the methods used at Alice Holt, by Pathologist T.R. PEACE, who is ably assisted in the study of these "villains" by Mrs. P.R. LEWIS, is to grow them in tubes of nutrient jelly. Normally most fungi produce abundant cottonwool-like growth in these circumstances, provided they are kept reasonably warm and are given fresh jelly from time to time. Now warmth means the use of an incubator during the winter months, and not long ago a failure of the Research Station electricity supply plant involved "coddling" the fungi with hot water bottles; yet despite this care and attention a great many of the cultures died. Some careful detective work was therefore necessary (and a knowledge of crime fiction will lead to the realisation that pathologists are closely akin to detectives) to discover the cause. And what killed the fungi? Too much to eat? No. Death, it is believed, was due to poisoning by a leak of Calor gas. The result is that for some time the Pathologist will have fewer diseases than usual to spread about!

RETIREMENT OF FORESTER J. McEWIN

After 29 years service with the Forestry Commission, all spent in Portelair Forest, Forester J. McEWIN has retired. Now aged 65, Forester McEwin joined the Department as a foreman in February, 1920, and was promoted to Forester, Grade II, in August of that year. He was promoted to Grade I Forester in 1928. Before joining the Commission he had some 20 years experience in forestry which even the 1914-18 war did little to interrupt, since he served in the 366th Forestry Company in France for a considerable time. His Army service, incidentally, also included spells with the Scottish Horse and the Black Watch.

"I started my apprenticeship," says Mr. McEwin in a letter to the Editor, "on the Earl of Mansfield's Logicalmond Estate. That was in 1900, and my wages were 7s. 6d. a week. After three years, when I was a journeyman, I received 16s. a week." He goes on to detail his employment elsewhere and, with reference to his service with the Commission at Portelair, adds: "I must say I have never regretted it. My son, who is only 17, now works at Portelair, and I certainly think it is the right job for a young man."

In 1938 Mr. McEwin was reported as having seen the Loch Ness monster. His claim, however, is modest. He and his squad saw a distinct "wash" in the loch which could not be accounted for. But that was all.

In his 29 years with the Commission Mr. McEwin did not lose a day's work-through illness. We trust that he will remain in good health, and to him and to Mrs. McEwin go our best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY Lord Robinson spoke at Brook's Club, S.W.1., last month on forestry in Australia. Those present included the Rt. Hon. Tom Williams, Minister of Agriculture, the Rt. Hon. Arthur Woodburn, Secretary of State for Scotland, the Commissioners and the Directors. The Chairman saw a great deal of the Dominion's forests last year and was greatly impressed by the high standard and efficiency of the Forest Departments.

WHO GOES FELL-RACING? Who of the Commission's employees are exponents of fell-racing? Little is known in the South of this particular sport and when, occasionally, one hears of it one's appetite is whetted for more news of such an unusual pastime. One former devotee is District Officer E.E. DIXON, who is now stationed at Carlisle. He once did a great deal of fell-racing, mainly on the slopes of the Eden Valley, and in Lakeland proper. He usually finished somewhere in front and once finished first, on which occasion his pulse is said to have recorded 167! "Fell-racing, ridge-walking and 'mountain-busting' ", says Mr. Dixon, " are very popular in the Lake District. I think the record for the latter is about 80 miles in 24 hours, which included the climbing of all the principal mountain peaks of an aggregate height of more than 30,000 ft. The main Lakeland fell-racing contest is at Grasmere, and there are others at all the main towns and villages, including Satterthwaite in the middle of Grizedale Forest. The record here, I think, is 15 minutes and 3 seconds, the race involving a climb to the highest point of the forest."

It may be news to some people to know that in Mr. Dixon's part of the country the fox is hunted on foot.

GETTING TO KNOW THE OTHER MAN'S PROBLEM A series of ten weekly talks has been organised by Mr. J.R. THOM, Conservator, South Scotland, for the benefit of his office staff. These are proving interesting and instructive, and are being given by the Conservator himself, his Divisional Officer, the Chief Clerk, and District and technical officers. The idea behind the course is to give everyone a better knowledge of the organisation for which they are working, and in the summer it is proposed to show the indoor staff something of operations in the field.

News from the South (Scotland) Conservancy also includes reference to a highly successful Conservancy dance at the County Hotel, Dumfries. Nearly 50 couples took part. Those present were welcomed by the Conservator; Mrs. Thom distributed the prizes, and Mr. J. LAIDLAW was in office as M.C.

SOCIAL LIFE AT LYNFORD HALL Besides taking part in such out-of-school activities as the Botany Club, the Entomology Club and so on, the student at Lynford Hall Foresters Training School has other diversions. Indoor, as well as outdoor, games are well catered for, writes Mr. B.A. PAINTER, the Social Secretary. For example, the School now possesses a full-size billiards table, and on this some interesting games have been played -- the highlight being a recent contest between the School and a team drawn from Thetford Chase. The latter defeated the School, but a challenge has been issued for a return match.

Table tennis, too, has its quota of support, and in a recent "knock-out" competition the Education Officer, Mr. R.J. STREETS, stole the lime-light by defeating the "favourites" and going through to the final.

Thoughts are now turning to cricket, and the School's own cricket ground is being put into the best possible order. The fixture card is fairly full and, with a little luck, it should be good season. Those who wish to play lawn tennis have two well-kept courts at their disposal. A lake (situated in the School grounds) and a nearby river provide for those who like to follow the more leisurely sport of fishing.

Children from nearby forest beats and villages have been entertained at a party at Lynford Hall, and more than two hundred dancers were present at a Christmas ball.

FRESH FIELDS TO CONQUER The following transfers were reported to Headquarters by 19th February:

District Officer T.A. HUGHSON from Fort William, N(S), to Bristol, SW(E); Forester L. WYATT from Census work, E(E), to Bourne Forest, E(E); Forester R.B. GILSON from Bourne to Clipstone, NW(E); Forester J.R. MAXTONE from Allean, E(S), to Drummond Hill, E(S); Forester A.C. STEWART from Montreathmont, E(S), to Millbuie, N(S); Forester P.C. RICHMOND from Alice Holt to Lyminge, SE(E); Foreman J.E.D. FREEMAN from Rhinefield, (New), to Purbeck, (New); Foreman A.W. BIGGAR from Tilliefour, E(S), to Corrennie, E(S); Foreman

W. BURGESS from Kirroughtree, S(S), to Mabie, S(S); Foreman W.A.R. HOUSTON from Mabie to Ae, S(S); Foreman B.F. OLAND from Alton, SE(E), to Bramshill, SE(E); Foreman J.W. RICHARD from Alltcaillach, E(E), to Durris, E(E); Foreman F.A. WOODCOCK from Widehaugh, NE(E) to Pundershaw, NE (E); Clerk of Works J.V. TURNBULL from Wykeham, NE(E), to Bickley, NE(E); E.O. Miss D.M. FROST from Headquarters to Office of Director England.

(Editor's note: We have now almost run out of "headings" for future paragraphs about transfers. Any suggestions? We have already used "Arrivals and Departures"; "Pastures New"; "Recent Transfers"; "Transfers"; "Staff Movements"; "Changing Their Beat"; and, this month, "Fresh Fields to Conquer".).

FORESTRY 200 YEARS AGO

Us modern foresters (writes Forester C. McDOWELL, of Pitfichie, East, Scotland) are inclined to preen ourselves and feel complaisant as we look at the new forests which are growing up around us; but do we ever visualise what our particular units may have looked like over 200 years ago, or think of the odds that faced the foresters of olden times? Great advancements have been made since those days, but whether the timber now being grown will be a great deal better than that of 200 years ago remains to be seen. Recently, when reading a book dealing with the history of Monymusk (now part of Pitfichie Forest), I was interested to learn of the first woods to be planted there. The estate was purchased by Lord Cullen in 1713, and the description of it given in the Miscellany of the Spalding Club by Sir Archibald Grant, son of Lord Cullen, is as follows (spelling and wording being as printed in the book):

By the indulgence of a very worthy father, I was allowed in 1716, though then very young, to begin to inclose, and plant, and provide, and prepair nurseries. At that time there was not one acre upon the whole estate inclosed, nor any timber upon it but a few elm, cyeamore, and ash, some stragling trees at some of the farmyards, with a small cops wood, not inclosed, and dwarfish and broused by sheep. The people poor, ignorant, and slothful, and ingrained enemies to planting.

The book goes on to refer to the "splendour and developments" which took place in the course of years under the management of Sir Archibald, who gained fame in agriculture and afforestation, and who by his genius and enterprise soon turned the bare, bleak country into a region of fertility and beauty. The great John Wesley, after a visit to Monymusk in 1764, wrote of the pleasant and fruitful valley with the hills covered with trees, row after row to the very tops. After two world wars those same hills are again bare, and as they form part of Pitfichie we who are replanting them hope we will not go any further wrong with our choice of species, than did Sir Archibald Grant more than 230 years ago. It is interesting to note (again quoting from the history book) that there seems to be something in the soil specially suitable for the growth of certain trees, notably larch and fir; further, according to the book, in days gone by specifications for new houses of any importance in the district often contained a clause that "Monymusk Wood" was to be used.

In conclusion, it might be mentioned that a letter published by David Hume in the anecdotes of William Hogarth credits Sir Archibald's wife as saying that planting was her spouse's folly, and people should take care lest their concern for posterity should hurt them.

RARE BIRDS

Following our recent references to rare birds, Forester N.R. HEPBURN (Dallas, East, Scotland) points out that a fine variety bird life can be seen in his district. In spite of rigorous repression, he says, it is not unusual to see from his window the quartering of the graceful Hen Harrier. Quite often when in the forest he has watched the seemingly lazy Buzzard circling aloft, whistling at his unwanted presence or harrying some venturesome Hoodie. Even more uncommon, but nevertheless present, is the diminutive Merlin, the deadly Peregrine Falcon and, "king" of them all, the Golden Eagle. The Raven, Magpie, Jack snipe, and Redshank are fairly numerous, and in lesser degree the Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Dipper, Corncrake, Nightjar, Bullfinch, Coal-tit and Redpole.

NEWS FROM EAST ENGLAND

In 1946, owing to increased staff, the Conservancy Offices in Cambridge were no longer capable of housing all personnel, with the result that a second suite of rooms had to be obtained. In the following year additional offices had to be taken over in a third building. At long last, however, it has become possible to assemble the entire staff under the same roof -- in a wing of the Civil Service Departmental Colony which has been developed on the south and most pleasant side of the town. It is only now that all members of the staff have the opportunity of really getting to know each other; indeed, until the move was made some had not even seen colleagues who worked in other buildings.

A spirit of friendliness has quickly developed, however. A social club has been formed, and activities promise to equal, if not surpass, those of other Conservancies which, from time to time, are recorded in The Slasher. A social and dance is on the diary for this month, and the programme is to include a visit to London for dinner and the theatre, forest picnics, cricket matches and so on.

POLLINATION (O. and M. STYLE)

The main job of the Organisation and Methods Section is the gathering of new ideas and the bringing of these to various sections of the Department. At Headquarters the work is being tackled from many angles and, despite

major commitments, time is found to introduce some simple, but nevertheless effective, innovations. For example, an investigation is being made into the merits of various types of filing covers, and a new-style cover will soon be available to all offices. This is primarily for copies of official receipts and cheque lists, but being of a standard size, and incorporating the popular two-hole punching, it will probably prove useful for many other records.

Accuracy and a sense of pride in one's work are promoted by the use of properly ruled and printed books. Printed "Journals" have already been produced, and delivery has been taken of printed Cash Books; the latter will be issued with the special receipts (with Receipts Cash Sheets as copies) now to hand -- use of the one depends on the other, of course. The special cheques (a carbon copy of which forms the Cash Sheet) should by now have reached all offices "below the Tweed". Further ideas from outside sources will be welcomed.

TRIALS OF A SAMPLE PLOT PARTY

Foreman D.E. EARL (Alice Holt) tells a story of trial and tribulation which recently beset a sample plot party. The party was operating in a plot in which thinning was confined to the removal of dead and dying trees; it seems that the local inhabitants must have had access to the files, for as soon as the backs of the party were turned the "locals" certainly did the removing. For a time it appeared as though our sample plot friends would be robbed of some valuable measurements,

Nothing daunted, however, two members of the party followed a long trail of crushed brushwood to some cottages, and there found some carefully piled wood-stacks; here and there in the stacks were to be seen traces of the characteristic and tell-tale white bands. The discomfiture of the cottagers, when called upon to drag their piles of wood apart in the interests of forest research, can better be imagined than described.

SUOMEN METSÄTILITSELLINEN SEURA

No prizes are offered for the correct interpretation of the heading of this paragraph but, before you read further, try and work it out for yourself.

You don't get it? It is simply the full style and title of the Society of Forestry in Finland -- one of more than 200 overseas technical institutions with whom the Department is constantly exchanging publications and periodicals. These come to us in all languages -- the NEDERLANDSCHE BOSCH BOUWTIJDSCHRIFT in Dutch, the SVENSKA SKOGSVARDS FORENINGENS TIDSKRIFT in Swedish, and even LESNICA PRACE in Czech. Fortunately, most include summaries in English. After circulation to senior technical officers, all these publications pass into the care of the Librarian at Alice Holt, and so are available for reference by the Research Branch and others of our staff interested in forestry overseas. In return, our own publications go out literally to the ends of the earth -- Hong Kong, Fiji, Sarawak and Swaziland are just a few of the Colonial territories that receive the Commission's Annual Report.

What does it all add up to? A pooling of the knowledge of the world's forestry experts, so that every new idea can be put to good use without delay; timber shortage is a world problem, and nearly every country is ready to contribute towards finding the solution.

HERE AND THERE

Congratulations to R.H. FISHER (C.O. at Aberystwyth) and Mrs. Fisher, on the birth of a daughter; and to Forester R.P. WOOLLARD (now at Wigsley, East, England, and formerly in the S.E. (E) Conservancy) and Mrs. Woollard on the birth of a son; fellow workers at Newborough, Anglesey, recently made a presentation to A. JONES, to mark the occasion of his marriage; our congratulations to him, and also to I.W. HUGHES, forest worker at Newborough, who has married Miss Elizabeth Jones, District Nurse -- the couple have also received a gift from Commission employees.