

PROGRESS REPORT How are we faring? Some time has elapsed since we last took stock, so that an assessment of progress made in the current Forest Year is not amiss. It is a pity that records won't permit a summary to a date later than about mid-April; nevertheless, it is interesting to note that more than 36,000 acres had by then been planted. It is doubtful if the full programme for the season was achieved, but certainly the 1948-49 planting will prove to have been the greatest on record.

Seed collection has proceeded apace and of some species had by mid-April exceeded the estimate. Collection of acorns, for instance, had reached 280,784 lbs., more than 11,000 lbs. beyond expectation. Collection of beech had gone well, with 80,100 lbs. in hand as against the estimated figure of 80,785 lbs. Only 1698 bushels of Scots pine cones were needed and this quantity was easily obtained; but only 122 bushels of Corsican pine cones were collected against the estimate of 1,138 bushels. European larch stood at 174 bushels against the estimated 609 bushels. But where Japanese larch was concerned the estimated figure of 511 bushels had been exceeded by more than 250 bushels; Douglas fir cone collections, at 416 bushels, were near enough at target level, and Sitka (99 bushels) had well exceeded the estimate. No doubt, when final returns are to hand, it will be seen that gaps between collections and estimated collections have been narrowed, if not completely closed.

AN UNUSUAL "PASTIME"

It has taken months of persuasion to get approval to the printing of this "story", and it is only used now on condition that no name is mentioned.

What surely must be the most unusual "pastime" is claimed by a member of the North (Scotland) Conservancy staff - that of paid mourner. Sole surviving member of a family steeped in the tradition of mourning for others, our nameless friend has maintained the calling of his House. Today, although the death rate is fairly constant, it is only by special request that he dons the funereal robes, tucks the black-handled cane under his arm, tilts his greying hat at the proper angle and, of appropriate mien, descends on the parlour of the deceased. The ritual never varies, and is always suitably ended by the clinking of glass on glass. Thereafter, at the head of the mourners and with his black-edged handkerchief well to the fore, he chants benignly to everyone's satisfaction and his own enjoyment.

Indeed, has not our friend the strangest "pastime"?

By the end of March, figures relating to the all-important matter of Dedication showed that throughout the country deeds had been signed, sealed and settled in respect of 10 estates, between them covering nearly 11,000 acres. Deeds affecting 23 estates (and a total acreage of nearly 7,500 acres) were in course of preparation, while plans of operations were being prepared in respect of 256 estates covering a total of 221,589 acres. Owners of 1,106 estates, of a total acreage of 307,314 acres, were considering dedication.

There has been much speculation, some of it quite ill-informed, as to the future of the Dedication Scheme. The critics have gone so far as to say the scheme is "dead" or "a flop". The fact of the matter is that dedication - at least at present - is neither of these things. It is merely going slowly; which is not really so surprising, when all is said and done.

The quantity of timber now being extracted from our forests continues sharply to rise. In the two months ended 31st March 956,856 cubic feet had been invoiced, including 460,331 cubic feet of round mining timber. In the Forest Year to the date given above the total amount invoiced was 2,702,806 cubic feet - an increase of more than half a million cubic feet over the figure for the corresponding period in the previous year. (It should, of course, be stated that the foregoing totals exclude board-mill material, etc., and small quantities of sawn timber).

In the current year the Commission has made nearly 16½ million seedlings and transplants available to the Trade. It is hoped, however, that nurserymen are now well on the way towards being able to supply their own future requirements.

ANOTHER FORESTER PASSES ON For the second month in succession we have the sad task of announcing the passing of a Forester. After 26 years service with the Forestry Commission, the death occurred early in May in Lydney and District Hospital of Forester ARTHUR BUFFREY. Aged 63, he had been off duty for some weeks with heart trouble but, nevertheless, his end came somewhat suddenly.

Forester Buffrey was promoted foreman in 1938. During the war he was seconded to the Timber Production Department; he was promoted Forester in June, 1942, and returned to the Commission in October, 1945. Born in Cinderford, he was in earlier years one of the best known figures in local sport - particularly cricket, in which he always took a keen interest. He had also been a well-known amateur weight-lifter. The possessor of a fine bass voice, Forester Buffrey was in great demand as a singer. He was buried at St. John's, Cinderford, within a short distance of his birth-place, the funeral being attended by many friends and fellow workers.

SLASHER VERSUS SPUD

We suspected that last month's paragraph on the virtues of a "spud", as extolled by Forester Instructor W. F. STODDART, would have repercussions.

"Dear Editor", writes State Forest Officer W. A. CADMAN, North Wales, "I cannot refrain from writing in support of the slasher in the Slasher-Spud Controversy. Spuds may be all right for killing trout (I wouldn't know), but I can state that both my Conservator and I have at different times in our Forestry Commission careers killed a fox with a slasher.

"However, the controversy cannot really be settled until someone has turned out a few wild boars in our forests."

Anyone else care to join in?

RETIREMENT OF FORESTER G. MACKENZIE

After 29 years with the Commission, Forester GEORGE MACKENZIE has retired. Although he is now more than 60 years of age, Mr. Mackenzie is young in heart, for he proposes to begin life anew in Australia, a country he knew well in his youth.

Mr. Mackenzie had been a Forester for 20 years, serving at Monaughty (East, Scotland), Glenmore and Slattadale (North, Scotland). We wish him well.

"MILLIONS" OF ADDERS

According to Press reports, a "plague of adders" has occurred in Hamsterley Forest, North East, England. But let District Officer STANLEY FORRIESTER take up the story. "Nobody knows", he writes, "whence the 'plague' has come. A valuable dog has been killed and another has been at death's door on three occasions; the owner has already paid out 18 times at half-a-crown a time for dead adders.

"Reporters have flocked to the area, and others have telephoned: Have the adders invaded the houses yet? What is the Forestry Commission doing about the plague?

Has anyone died from snake-bites? and "How many vipers have you seen during the past 24 hours?"

"In point of fact the authorities are at a loss to understand the excitement. The Forester's wife, who holds the fort at the receiving end of the telephone, has not seen an adder this year. Neither has the Forester and neither have I. The reports of the dogs having been injured are true, but reports of the numbers of adders in the forest are exaggerated. I believe that two mild winters have resulted in an increase in the number of adders, and that the death of the dog has merely served to focus attention on the matter.

"Meanwhile, reports continue.....as, for instance, 'Chief Commissioner Bewick (the Forester) has given instructions that all adders are to be killed' (report in a daily newspaper)".

FOREST CAMEO-- RHEOLA

A common charge against industrialists in South Wales is that they 'sucked the orange and left the skin behind', writes WALTER EVANS, Chief Clerk, Cardiff. Be that as it may, it is evident to all that they took the coal away and left the unsightly tips. Moreover, pitwood being essential to the raising of coal, they denuded the adjacent mountainsides of their arboreal coverings.

Most planning authorities, either through lack of imagination or economic pressure have done little to remedy the defects of this once beautiful country of South Wales, and it has fallen to the Forestry Commission to point the way. Thirty years ago there was no valley in Wales which could more depress the traveller than the Neath valley which runs from Resolven to Neath. Colliery tips and bare slopes on either side showed the price of industrial prosperity. It was in 1923 that the Forestry Commission took a hand in things and "started" Rheola Forest, and a journey today up this self-same valley will reveal the transformation which has taken place. The coniferous plantations on either side, with their varying shades of green, have brought a freshness to the countryside which is a delight to all tourists. The tips, so long ugly and obtruding, are to all intents and purposes gone; and although the whippet is denied his legitimate sport, the collier (as was his forefathers) is now cheered on his way to work by the heartening song of the blackbird and thrush.

Yes, Rheola has revived this once drab valley, bringing colour into the lives of its inhabitants and pitprops to its collieries.

HOTEL LISTS

Apropos the paragraph in last month's Slasher, in which the East, England, Conservancy was praised for issuing a guide to hotels, Mr. E.C. HANSFORD, SE (England) Conservancy Office, Woking, points out that a record of hotels has been in use in his office since November, 1946. "This register", writes Mr. Hansford, "has been of great benefit to members of the staff. Its circulation, however, has been restricted to the office, because not all remarks concerning the service and standard of hygiene are complimentary".

O'ER HILL AND DALE

The following transfers were reported to Headquarters by 19th May: District Officer R. D. PINCHIN from Gwydyr, Research, N(W), to Alice Holt; District Officer S. W. ROBERTSON from Benmore, W(S), to Barcaldine, W(S); District Officer J. G. CHRYSTALL from Barcaldine to Aberfoyle, W(S); District Officer H.V.S. DIER from Aberfoyle to Glasgow, W(S); District Officer F. WESTON from Tealby, E(E), to

Anton Downham, E(E); District Officer A.P. BENNETT from Dumfries, S(S), to Aberdeen, E(S); District Officer A.W.L. GUILLE from Pembrey, S(W), to Devizes, SW(E); District Officer G. GRANT from Aberdeen to Dumfries; Forester F.W. EVERITT from Ampleforth, NE(E), to Glynn, SW(E); Forester W. McDONALD from Edinburgh (Research) to Tulliallan, W(S); Forester R. McDONALD from Neroche, SW(E), to Ferndown, New; Forester W.J. NI JOLSON from Glenrigh, N(S), to Fiunary, N(S); Forester R.S. ANGUS from Glen Branter, W(S), to Loch Katrine, W(S); Forester V.B. HALL from Downham, E(E) to Wigsley, E(E); Forester R.J. CAMPBELL from Glen Duror, W(S), to Leanachan, N(S); Forester C.O. MACKINTOSH from Inchmacardoch, N(S), to Inverinate, N(S); Forester D.W. KEENS from Micheldover, SE(E), to Cotgrave, NW(E); Foreman D.K. FRASER from Aberdour (Research) to Tulliallan; Foreman R.M. HYSLOP from Kirkhill, E(S), to Clashindarroch, E(S); Foreman I.D. ATKINSON from Kielder, NE(E), to Blengdale, NW(E); Foreman D.H. McCALL from Cwmogwr, S(W), to Crynant, S(W); Foreman D.R. SMITH from Clunes, N(S), to Inchmacardoch; Foreman R. WAINWRIGHT from Clocaenog, N(W), to Dyfnant, N(W); Foreman W.A. FRASER from Glen Urquhart, N(S), to Rumster, N(S); Foreman J. ATKINSON from Wykeham, NE(E), to Newton Dale, NE(E); Foreman N.L. FOWLER from Langdale, NE(E), to Wykeham.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Forester R.J. JENNINGS, St. Asaph, North Wales, is a practical man. Moreover, he believes in pooling ideas and sharing the labour-saving devices in which he specialises. Consequently he writes to the Editor as follows:

Dear Sir,

Any Forester experiencing damage from pigeons, pheasants or jays should communicate with me at St. Asaph, whereupon I will gladly give him full details of a first-class scarecrow employed here. We have previously used devices which were successful in keeping birds and mice from our seedbeds, but our latest model frightened them so much that not only did they refrain from taking acorns and beech mast but they brought back all the seed they took in P48!

Also employed here is a genuine Eastern fakir; fully experienced in the Indian rope trick, this man is invaluable for seed collection and high pruning. He is for hire at the ordinary day rates, complete with loin cloth. Applications should be sent through the usual channels.

Yours faithfully,

R.J. JENNINGS.

Here's your chance, Foresters.

special invitation to witness the arrival of the Princess and the Duke for lunch at Nannau, home of General and Mrs. Vaughan. The Head Forester's wife and daughter were members of a choir which, in Welsh costume, assembled on the lawn and sang the National Anthem in Welsh and Welsh hymns.

BOOKMAN'S CORNER

We congratulate Publications Officer H.L. EDLIN on the appearance of his third book on forestry, entitled Woodland Crafts in Britain (Batsford, 15s.). In this "account of the traditional uses of trees and timber in the British countryside," Mr. Edlin first outlines the work of tree-felling, timber-hauling, and timber conversion by various methods, and then explores the mysteries of such old crafts as hurdle-making, chestnut cleaving, spelk basket-making and clog-sole cutting, along with the work of the wheelwright, shipwright, carpenter and chair-maker. Other chapters describe charcoal burning, the stripping of oak bark for tanning leather, and the collection of dyes, drugs and resins from forest trees. The writer has added to his first-hand knowledge of contemporary crafts by delving deeply into past records, and has brought together more than 150 excellent illustrations, most of them showing craftsmen actually at work.

In bringing woodland crafts to the notice of the public, Mr. Edlin follows the lead of SIR WILLIAM TAYLOR, C.B.E., whose Forests and Forestry in Great Britain (Crosby Lockwood, 12s.6d.) has done so much to make the work of the Department more widely known. Mr. HARRY WATSON, Instructor at Benmore Forester Training School, has recently had two books published by Messrs. Oliver and Boyd. His Story of a Scots Pine (5s.), illustrated by

NEW SOCIAL CLUB Miss JOAN E. CHEALE, secretary of the recently formed SE(E) Conservancy Social Club, would like to hear from other social clubs with a view to arranging some matches and outings. Miss Cheale reports that her club is making good progress. Not long ago a visit was paid to Minley Hostel, Bramshill, where trainees were engaged at indoor games and dancing took place. Last month the club's first social took place at the Woking office, and guests included a party from Bramshill. Mrs. FRESHWATER, the office cleaner, kindly supplied and served the refreshments. The club has acquired two darts boards and a table tennis table, and has hired a hard tennis court for the season.

ROYAL VISIT TO WALES It had been hoped that Princess Elizabeth, during her recent visit to Wales, would plant a tree at Coed-y-Brenin, but unfortunately her programme was so extensive that no further function could be included. Nevertheless, the Princess and the Duke of Edinburgh inevitably saw a great deal of the Commission's work as they toured North Wales and, on a reciprocal basis, so to speak, a number of our employees were able to see the Royal couple. Head Forester J. LOMAS, of Coed-y-Brenin, and his family were among those who received a

his own photographs, serves as a general introduction to the forester's work, while his Botanical Notes on Trees of the British Forests (8s.6d.), illustrated by numerous drawings, is a handy text-book for students of forestry.

SNAP-SHOTS

SEEING THE FOREST - Party of the North Wales Conservancy Office staff recently visited Kerry Forest for educational purposes. Director of Forestry for Wales, Mr. A.P. LONG, and Mrs. Long, together with Mr. and Mrs. M.E.W. MACKENZIE, were up from Aberystwyth for the occasion, and the party was shown such operations as the preparation of seedbeds, seed sowing, lining-out and composting. Plantations of various ages and species were seen in different stages of thinning. The Director, the Conservator (Mr. F.C. BEST), State Forest Officer W.A. CADMAN, District Officer C.E. PEATY and Forester A. HUGHES explained the various operations and pointed out features of special importance or interest. The party was entertained to tea at the New Hotel, Kerry, by the Conservator MARRIAGE - On 30th April, in Bristol, FRANK REDD (Office of Director England) to STELLA H. MORGAN NEWCOMER - On May 16th the wife of Forester AWBERY, Bedgebury, SE(E), presented him with a daughter FROM FOREST TO FOREIGN OFFICE - ELWYN THOMAS, forest worker and part-time clerk at Kerry Forest, North Wales, for the past two years, was successful in the Civil Service Reconstruction Executive Examination and has been posted to Branch B, Foreign Office. His transfer took place recently and, before leaving the forest, employees presented him with a travelling trunk.

MORE NEWS FROM LYNFORD HALL

With the advent of summer a good deal of the student's leisure time is being spent out of doors. The Natural History Club looks like having an interesting season, a high-light of the programme being a visit to Kew Gardens. Where sport is concerned, cricket and lawn tennis are in full swing.

Reviewing the social activities of the past few months it is clear that the programme has proved highly successful. In March the School presented Bowater and Lloyd's beautiful colour film "Newfoundland Enterprise" to an audience of nearly 250, drawn from all ranks of the Commission in the district. A party of students and staff also enjoyed an interesting Sunday at the Wicken Fen Nature Reserve, some 20 miles from the School.

In the Spring term a variety of competitions were held, and in the final of the table tennis doubles Education Officer J. GOODWIN and Forester Instructor T. JENKINS were defeated by two students - P. ORMISTON and R. WHITE.

Billiards and poker matches now take place regularly between the School and a team of Thetford Chase Foresters. The Foresters' team - Messrs. A. CAMERON, A. MITCHELL, C. REDFORD, G. BUTTON, R. HARDY and J. FIELD - have so far beaten the School once, have themselves been beaten once, and have drawn once.

TRIBUTE TO G.B. RYLE

Mention in last month's issue of The Slasher of the pending transfer of Mr. G.B. RYLE, Conservator, South Wales, has produced the following contribution.

In the late twenties a young District Officer was posted to South Wales. Having been born and bred in the salubrious atmosphere of Brighton, and probably taught in school that the main Welsh exports were coal and trade union agitators, it would be a fair guess that it was with some misgivings that he set out on his task. He may, too, have wondered not only how trees could take root in the desolate wastes of the Welsh industrial areas but, if such a miracle happened, how those trees could possibly flourish. The fact that this young District Officer stayed for over 20 years in South Wales, and that the South Wales Conservancy is in a flourishing state, shows that he need not have had any fears and that there was ample scope for his undoubted silvicultural skill. Readers will guess who this young District Officer was. Yes, it was Mr. G.B. Ryle, who is to take up an appointment as Conservator in the English Directorate. Having been successively District Officer, Divisional Officer and Conservator in South Wales, one can imagine with what regret he hands his "child" to the care of another, but we whom he leaves behind no less regret his transfer and will sadly miss his human touch and refreshing unorthodoxy.