

QUIBBLES IN THE QUANTOCKS

1,200-ACRE ACQUISITION
OPPOSED

BROADLY SPEAKING, the Commission's operations produce surprisingly few controversies, although from time to time individuals who should know better elbow their way forward and decry our "regimented ranks of conifers" or our "conifer slums". Unfortunately, what the average person doesn't appreciate is that our new forests are commencing to give a blood transfusion to the countryside, that families are being settled on the land and life is coming back to many a silent valley. Moreover, that there is beauty in coniferous woodlands, provided the species are suitably mixed and planting follows the pattern of the countryside,

All of which makes it the more regrettable that a really sizable burst of anti-conifer cross-fire should emerge from an ambush in the West Country hills. There, in the lovely Quantocks, great exception has been taken by villagers and others to the proposed acquisition by the Commission of some 1,200 acres of land at Quantoxhead, adjoining the existing 2,283-acre Quantock Forest. The land, incidentally, has been offered to us by Mr Geoffrey Luttrell, who is Chairman of the South West Regional Advisory Committee. Letters have been written to the Press, protesting against the alleged spoliation-to-be; at least one indignation meeting has been held and, under the leadership of certain dignitaries, a Friends of Quantock Association is being formed.

WELL DONE !

The State planting programme for the whole of the country last season was 43,600 acres - still below the Command Paper estimate, but nevertheless a formidable area.

The area actually planted was 43,496 acres, only 114 acres behind the programme figure. England exceeded her quota by planting 15,099 acres against the 15,000 asked for; Scotland planted 19,625 acres out of 20,000; and Wales also exceeded her programme figure - by planting 8,762 acres against the 8,600 acres expected.

Let us keep up the good work this coming season!

For our part we have done what we can to make it clear that if the land is acquired everything possible will be done in our planting to preserve (and possibly enhance) the amenities of the district. In an endeavour to disseminate purely factual information about the proposed acquisition, and to debunk the theory that the Commission is the big bad wolf of all who utilise the land, newspapers published in the area have been solemnly escorted through Quantock Forest and the land in dispute. And the lone cry of one local authority, which is not so sure that forestry is a bad thing after all, has been heard in the wilderness and has gladdened our hearts. This particular authority has in its ranks a councillor with vision - a man who believes (and does not hesitate to say so) that the Quantock Hills with the Commission around are better than the hills without us. In fact - no Commission, no local employment of any consequence.

There, at the time of writing, the matter rests. We sincerely hope that differences will be resolved, for the good of all concerned.

** CHAIRMAN'S VISIT TO AMERICA
ATTENDING CONFERENCE AT
LAKE SUCCESS

Britain who are attending the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilisation of Resources. They are expected to arrive back in this country on September 14th.

LORD ROBINSON, ACCOMPANIED BY MR JAMES MACDONALD, Director of Research and Education, left on the Mauretania on August 9th. for New York. At Lake Success the Chairman and Mr Macdonald are among delegates from

** CLUB STARTED ON A £5 NOTE
ASSETS NOW MORE THAN £500

IN KERSHOPE FOREST, IN THE BORDER COUNTRY, is situated Kershope Camp Working Mens' Club and Institute, which was formed little more than two years ago. Then there were 36 members and finances took the form of a borrowed £5 note; there are now well over a hundred members, total assets are more than £500, and the club is an institution in which not only the whole forest staff but local farmers and railway employees are showing more and more interest. One who has played a big part in bringing the club into being is Forester G.A. SHARP, who tells us that the club's formation started with a general meeting of all interested camp personnel, from whom were selected officers and committee. Three trustees were nominated.

Soon afterwards rules were adopted and a subscription fixed at six shillings a year. Limited finances precluded the appointment of a steward (who would have been required on a part-time basis), so that certain important duties were undertaken voluntarily and without payment by various members of the Committee. Supplies of beer and spirits were obtained from the State brewery at Carlisle (of which much has been heard of late) and Youngers, of Edinburgh. By this time (September, 1947) the club had £25 to its credit, and "launched out" with the purchase of a radio, hire of billiard table and piano, purchase of a table tennis set, boxing gloves, darts boards, playing cards, bar fittings and club furniture. Then came the appointment of the part-time steward (whose minimum wages, incidentally, are fixed by the Catering Wages Act).

Secretarial duties in the first nine months included work on membership and associate membership cards, and in connection with the steward's fidelity bond, fire and burglary

insurance, club officers' fidelity assurance, customs and excise returns and so on, to say nothing of county library returns, arrangement of dancing classes and summer bus trips, etc., etc.

An interesting item from the club minutes reads as follows: "..... proposed to invite a darts team from Penton Social Club and that each visiting member be supplied with one pint and one pie free."

It should, perhaps, be mentioned that the club has been founded on model rules provided by the Club and Institute Union, who also loaned some valuable notes on club formation. These latter dealt with the requirements of the Licensing Acts.

Forester Sharp doesn't tell us what sort of accommodation the club has. We should be interested to hear. Is there, for example, provision for lady visitors? And are forest workers of the fair sex entitled to membership?

** FIRE IN HUTTED CAMP

HOUSING MATERIALS LOST

A SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL call was recently made on the Commission's local fire services, for a fire of considerable size occurred at Dalavitch, on Loch Awe, in the West Conservancy, Scotland, and involved a huted camp erected by a firm of contractors to accommodate those of their workers who were to build Finnish houses for us. Unfortunately, one of the huts contained a quantity of building materials, and the loss of this, together with the huts which formed the camp, will result in a delay in the erection of the houses.

When the alarm was raised, Forest Workers were summoned by field telephone and were soon speeding to the scene of the blaze. Some came across the loch by boat, while others arrived from Inverinan and Ford (Inverliever). It was obvious that they could not save the huts, but their valiant efforts, together with those of the Oban Fire Brigade, prevented the fire from spreading to the nearby forest. As it was only about 20 trees were scorched, and about half of these are expected to recover.

At the time of the fire the workmen had not taken up residence, and only the caretaker was on the spot.

** UNUSUAL ACCIDENT

DEATH OF AN OWL

FORESTER B.R.G. HAMMOND, of Collingbourne, South West England, reports an unusual accident. At the back of the stores hut at Collingbourne, he says, there is a milk-churn in which rainwater is collected. The other day a Tawny Owl was found drowned in the churn. "This goes to show," says Forester Hammond, "just how serious is the need of water to wild-birds during times of drought. It is unfortunate that so useful a bird as an owl should have been the victim."

** WHO'S WHO IN THE COMMISSION (No.3)

PROFILE OF FORESTER D.R. BEAUMONT

THE FOLLOWING PROFILE of Forester D.R. BEAUMONT, who is in charge of Orlestone, South East England, is contributed by Mr H.W. GULLIVER, Chief Clerk at the Conservancy Office, Woking.

Forester Beaumont (writes Mr Gulliver) is proficient at wood turning. Before meeting him I had, of course, heard all about the lathe he is alleged to have made out of his grandmother's sewing machine, but I had a pleasant surprise when I was the recipient of a sample of his work. This took the form of a set of four egg-cups on a stand, the intricate finishing of which left no doubt at all that the job as a whole was the work of a master. The stand is of teak and the egg-cups had been fashioned from a laburnum some 80 years old which, Forester Beaumont tells me, came from the grounds of an old Rectory in Suffolk. When he came across the tree it had been dead for some years.

The majority of us would be content to leave our spare-time occupation at woodwork, but not Forester Beaumont. He is organist at the Warehorne Church and, although he is modest where his accomplishments in this direction are concerned and says he knows enough to get the congregation through the psalms and hymns, the fact that he has occupied the post for a number of years speaks for itself. It is certainly remarkable that Forester Beaumont has never had a music lesson in his life!

Forester Beaumont is a grand man with whom to spend a leisure hour, for he talks with great knowledge of facts and legends concerning cathedrals, castles and other historic buildings he has visited. He wrote out for me from memory Thomas Ingoldsby's "Legend of Canterbury - Nell Cook", in which the "Dark Entry", a low passage near the cathedral, is mentioned. As this ran to 47 verses his interest in the subject is evident! Forester Beaumont is also a collector of old flint implements, and possesses several which he has found in various parts of the country, including an arrowhead of the Neolithic period, and several flint scrapers.

** TRIBUTE TO A GANGER

A THORNTWHAITE RETIREMENT

RECENTLY (writes J.E.M.) a gentleman retired from the

Forestry Commission after 24 years faithful service. He had planted a forest in the Lake District and at one time received 30s. a week, and daily he cycled 25 miles to and from his work. For months, in days gone by, he worked alone, tending and guarding his saplings, and at long last there came the day when, in his 74th year, he handed over his responsibility to others. "I am sure," states our correspondent, "it is the wish of all who knew Ganger T. ARMSTRONG, of Thornthwaite, that he may long enjoy his retirement."

** FIELD AND FOREST CLUB

OBSERVATIONS WELCOMED

SOME READERS MAY BE INTERESTED to know that the Commission has a Field and Forest Club. This has Divisional Officer

W.A. CADMAN, of North Wales Conservancy, as secretary, and there

are club representatives in each Conservancy. The main objects of the club are "to observe and record natural history occurrences of interest, to promote the protection of rare species and to carry out investigations, which may be considered desirable, into the status of any particular species." The secretary is in touch with various bird and natural history societies, to whom any appropriate information is passed - although no record of a rarity is

published without the actual observer's and club representative's consent. In certain cases rewards are claimed from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds for the successful protection of particular rare species.

Last year a start was made in the compilation of lists of birds occurring at certain forests. These will be invaluable for comparison with future lists to show the influence on the distribution of bird life brought about by the afforestation of large blocks of land. A report on the status of Pole cats and Pine Martens in Wales has been made for the Cardiff Museum, and similar reports on the status of Peregrines and Black Game in North Wales have been compiled.

Now then. You know the club's terms of reference, so why not communicate with your club representative if you feel you have anything worthwhile to report? Representatives include: D.O. P.F. GARTHWAITE, N.E.(E); D.O. A.E.G. FLYNN, N.W.(E); D.O. J.M. ROSS, S.E.(E); Forester J.T. WILDASH, S.W.(E); Conservator, E.(E) (in the absence of an appointed representative); Deputy Surveyor, Dean, ditto; Mr D.W. YOUNG, New; Div. Officer J.T. FITZHERBERT, N.(S); D.O. B.R. FEAVER, E.(S); Conservator J.R. THOM, S.(S); Conservator J.E. JAMES, W.(S); Conservator S.(W) in the absence of an appointed representative: Div. Officer W.A. CADMAN, N.(W).

**** THE QUIBELL OAKS** FORESTER H. ADAMS, of Laughton, E.(E), and Forester D.F. MARSHALL, of Willingham, in the same Conservancy, took part in a pleasing little ceremony at the agricultural show at Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire. Three young oak trees were taken from Willingham Forest and planted at the entrance to the showground by the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and Lord Quibell, and the two foresters held the trees in position during the ceremony and afterwards "tidied up" the operation. The trees are henceforth to be known as The Quibell Oaks. Lord Quibell, of course, is a former Forestry Commissioner; he lives at Scunthorpe.

**** THE MUNTJAC AGAIN** FORESTER W. COTTENHAM, of Apethorpe, E.(E), has no doubt about there being a Muntjac, or Indian barking deer, in the New Forest (The Slasher, July). "I had one in Oundle Woods in 1947," he says. "And a few years ago the head keeper at an estate at Haywards Heath, Sussex, shot one and had it set up for the late Sir Alexander Kleinwort. Some years ago a Muntjac was shot in Tomblin Wood, Apethorpe.

"The Muntjac is easy to track in damp soil. He skips along when disturbed, and all four footprints come close together. Its tusks protrude like those of a boar pig."

**** M.C.C. SELECTORS, TAKE NOTE!** A SATURDAY AFTERNOON..... the field nestled comfortably in the bed of the valley, surrounded by a panorama of the most pleasing shades of green one could imagine (and bordered, incidentally, on the north by a trim Commission forest); the road, along which passed a single bus each hour, lay to the south, appropriately flanked by a well-tended shelter belt; the spectators, sitting on benches or lying on the grass, had submitted to the semi-tropical heat and could find energy only for polite hand-clapping; and the only other sign of life, apart from the erratic flight of a pseudo-industrious butterfly, came from the cricketers themselves.

The reader might justifiably feel that English village cricket was the subject of this discourse; but no, the foregoing describes the scene at a recent cricket match between the staff of the Edinburgh Office and the students of Glentress Forester Training School, on the school playing field some 20 miles from the Scottish capital.

The weather was perfect, even though the wicket was rather hard, and a large party which made the journey from Edinburgh was entertained at the School in the best Commission tradition. What matter, then, if the cricket was not up to Test standard? Admitted, some of the players wielded the bat in Sir Adrian Boult's best Albert Hall style, and others favoured the American baseball technique; nevertheless, all shared in a common purpose - to extract the maximum pleasure from the game. The score was of little consequence, though Glentress knocked up a bold 108 in reply to Edinburgh's hard-earned 34 (of which, incidentally, J.R. FLEWIS scored 25). The best Glentress bat was carried by J. MAXWELL, who collected 44 runs. Glentress bowler W. HECKLES helped himself to 6 wickets for 4 runs, while A.B. MACPHERSON had 3 Glentress wickets for 14 runs, and G. STEVENSON 4 for 29.

There are no statistics available regarding the marathon "baseball" game in which the ladies participated in the evening!

Warm thanks were extended to Education Officer T.A. ROBBIE and the students. The Edinburgh staff recommend the trip to Glentress from any part of the country, and the students will accept all challenges!

**** THE TRIALS OF ESTABLISHMENT SECTIONS** FROM CARDIFF COMES THIS DISCOURSE on the work of Establishment Sections, the author being Mr W.R. DOHERTY, H.C.O. in charge of the Establishment Section in the South Wales Conservancy Office. He is assisted full-time by Mrs. B.F. JOHN, a C.O., and part-time by J.L. THOMAS, another C.O.

Frequently, says our friend, one hears of the speed of growth of the tree, but I do not think any species has grown so fast or so much as the Establishment work in the Conservancies. Time was when such work was "tacked on" to the Divisional Accountants. Then something happened. Just what I do not know, but the result is well known to all who

are concerned with Establishment matters. A spate of reforms and anomalies descended on us. The reforms are being carried out and, as for the anomalies, some of those have been resolved. The first of the reforms was the establishment of industrial staff; then came sick leave with pay. This was followed by the granting of special leave with pay in certain circumstances.

Now all these reforms have caused a tremendous increase in work. Industrial staff in the old days were paid if they worked and not paid if they did not. It was as straightforward as that. So far as Conservancy Office Establishment staff were concerned the industrial staff were a number on a return. But now they are real live persons, hundreds of them, and any one of them may go sick tomorrow. If a man stays long enough with the Commission he will get a pension or a gratuity, so that John Smith, from the day of commencement with the Department, becomes a case for Conservancy Office supervision - almost from "cradle to the grave". On the other hand, John Smith may only stay a month, but nevertheless full records have to be kept just in case they are wanted sometime or other in the future.

A huge field is covered by Establishment Section. Recruitment, promotions, transfers, pay and overtime, leave, sickness, accidents, travelling, removals, etc. And the regulations! Estacode Sections A to Z (when it reaches that far), E.O.C.'s by the hundred, Road Haulage, Wages Orders, Agricultural Wages Board Orders, National Insurance Act and so on. It should not be forgotten that Establishment Sections deal with people, and without an efficient section people may grumble, and that would reflect on the efficiency of the Department as a whole. So, you Establishment people, you guides, philosophers and friends, even though you may not know the difference between "1 plus 2", "S.S." and "T.D.18", those that do would not be very happy without you around, even though you do slash some of their Acs.Gen.8!

** VIEWS FROM ST.ASAPH FORESTER R.J.JENNINGS, of ST.ASAPH, North Wales, refers to the "infinite" variety of views visible from his house and surrounding woodlands. From a bedroom window in the Forester's Lodge, he writes, we can see Liverpool Bay, with the endless parade of ships in and out of the port. Sometimes the large vessels come near enough to the coast for me to recognise the company to which they belong. On a very clear day we can view the Cumberland - Lancashire and Westmorland fells, as well as the Isle of Man. From my garden can be seen part of Snowdonia, in Caernarvonshire, and from the road behind the house is seen Coed Clwyd, a forest only recently "started", as well as a high point of Clocaenog Forest in Denbighshire. Go down to a wood a short distance below my house, and you will see the whole coast-line from the Great Orme of Llandudno holiday resort to Colwyn Bay, and along past Prestatyn to the Wirral peninsular of Cheshire. Often, on a fine night, and from the same point, can be seen the lights of New Brighton and Blackpool Tower. From Kinnel Park, on our east side, can be seen St. Asaph Cathedral, the ancient Rhuddlan Castle, the famous Marble Church at Bodelwyddan; and if your watch has stopped, you can see the correct time (through binoculars) on the church clock at Rhyl.

It occurs to me that one or two Foresters in North West England - for example Forester ARTHUR KING at Grizedale, near Ulverston - may be able to see us here in North Wales, or maybe we have a landmark in common, such as Blackpool Tower. If so, may we hear from you, Arthur? And who really can see the furthest distance from their forest? Now then, Foresters!

** WEDDING Congratulations to Miss M. POUCHER, C.O. at Cambridge, E.(E) on her marriage to Mr P.S. REYNOLDS. On behalf of the staff Mr G.H. CLARKE presented her with gifts.

THERE IS A SLASHER CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE
PLEASE KEEP HIM WELL SUPPLIED WITH CONTRIBUTIONS.