

THE SLASHER
Forestry Commission News

No. 23

November, 1949.

THE VILLAGE OF AE

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME FOR FIRST
FOUR TENANTS

hill districts. "Nothing could be further from the truth," he said recently. He proceeded to describe the building of the Village of Ae, in Dumfries-shire, as a pointer to the value of Scotland's forest programme. For work at Ae, the

BRASHING UP OUR GAELIC

To the Editor of The Slasher:

Sir:

I feel I must express my appreciation of the paragraph headed "Brash up your Gaelic" in your October issue.

An acquaintance has frequently referred to me, in my presence, as a "shail" or "shallach",* which I have hitherto assumed to be a complimentary or friendly expression. Now that I know (through the medium of your columns) the actual meaning of the term, I propose to dot him one with my crummock at the first opportunity.

As for your enquiry about "odd words used locally in the woods but not found in the dictionary" I suggest, Sir, that any foreman or ganger accustomed to assembling his men in the early hours of a bitter winter morning, whether it be in England, Scotland or Wales or the Research Branch, could answer that one.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

SASSENACH

*To appreciate the enormity of the offence, please refer to The Slasher of last month, page 4. More about brashing up our Gaelic, and unusual words, will appear in next month's issue.

DIRECTOR, SCOTLAND (Sir Henry Beresford-Peirse) has been quick to refute allegations made at a meeting of farmers and landowners at Inverness that the effect of large-scale forestry development will be to drive people out of the Commission's first self-contained forest-village, is proceeding apace, and the other day tenants received a personal welcome from Sir Henry as they moved into the first four houses to be completed. These are the first instalment of fourteen of similar size, each comprising a living room and scullery, three bedrooms and a bathroom, and outside is a shed for cycles. Work on a further sixteen houses is in progress, and when the village as a whole is complete it will include some 80 houses, church, school, shops, post-office and even a village "pub".

"What is seen today", said the Director, "is the reversal of the trend for people to leave the land -- the bringing back of people into the rural areas in ever-increasing numbers, the provision of houses in lovely surroundings, and an assurance of employment for so long as a man is able to work."

Now meet the first tenants and their families:

Mr. and Mrs. W. COUPLAND and their three children, aged 7, 2 and six months; Mr. and Mrs. G. McARTHUR and their 10-month old child; Mr. and Mrs. W. J. FLETCHER and their child aged one and a half; and Mr. and Mrs. JOHN WHITE.

Scotland has 450 houses under construction. An addition to the existing village of Bonchester Bridge, near Hawick, is being commenced, while a third village is to be built at Loch Awe, Argyllshire.

** IT NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS

FOREMAN BUTCHER'S BAD LUCK

was in due course sent home without the operation being performed (a cough made things difficult). Finally the operation took place and was successful, and then, after a period of convalescence, our friend returned to duty on a Monday morning. FORESTER B. H. KING, who had been looking after Foreman Butcher's area during the latter's absence, duly arrived on the scene to return the cash account, daybook and so on, and to wish our erstwhile invalid good luck.

ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS FOREMAN H. C. BUTCHER, of Micheldever, went to hospital for an operation. Twice he was admitted, only to suffer in vain the anxiety of waiting, for he

Later in the week District Officer ARTHUR SUTTON, accompanied by Forester King, called to see Foreman Butcher. They found that on the day after starting work a cow had moved across the road at the wrong moment, throwing Foreman Butcher off his cycle and spraining his shoulder sufficiently to put him back to bed.

We are pleased to report that Foreman Butcher is fit again -- and keeping his fingers crossed!

** FIRES IN NEW FOREST

THE YOUTH WHO WANTED EXCITEMENT

Mr. Young tells us, there were sixty-seven dangerous or potentially dangerous fires between March 1st and August 31st. All these were officially recorded and attended by Forestry Commission staff and fire units. Of the total number of fires seven occurred in enclosures, with a loss of six and a half acres of plantations.

Here are some of the known causes of New Forest fires this year. One adult was convicted for maliciously lighting a fire; a youth was placed on probation after admitting he lit two fires on consecutive evenings, his only reason appearing to be that he wanted the excitement of seeing the fire engine arrive; after an enclosure fire involving three acres a visitor to Forester Young's office said he felt a moral and financial obligation for the blaze, having set fire to some grass on his land and then gone for lunch. Eleven claims were made against British Railways; picnic fires broke out after having been "made safe" with a covering of leaf mould; and small boys decided to burn out an ants' nest. The remainder of the fires could be attributed to cigarette ends thrown from passing cars, illicit burning by Commoners, careless campers and (shame on them) courting couples.

"Foresters in New Forest", says Mr. Young, "will long remember F.Y.49. Most say it was the worst year they have ever known; and while congratulating all for their untiring efforts in keeping matters under control, we must not forget the patient (and sometimes weary) Foresters' wives who in expert fashion received and passed on telephone messages."

EDITORS' NOTE. Many thanks for letting us hear about your trials and tribulations, Mr. Young. Readers may be interested to know that despite the prolonged drought and sustained high risk there were fewer reported fires (that is to say fires causing, or threatening to cause, damage to our plantations) in the Forest Year 1949 than in F.Y.48. Figures are: 1949, 1,093 fires; 1948, 1,189 fires. What is even more surprising is that the acreage burnt in 1949 was only 489 acres, compared with 1,837 acres in the previous Forest Year. Financial loss in 1949 was only £22,400 as against £45,000 in 1948. Makes you think, doesn't it?

** FORESTRY COMMISSION TIE

NOW MADE IN THREE QUALITIES

Postage ~~1s.~~ 3d. extra in each case and, as you no doubt know, ties are obtainable from C. H. Munday, Ltd., 7, Irving Street, Leicester Square, W.C.2.

THE FORESTRY COMMISSION TIE is now available in three qualities, as follows: smooth weave rayon, 6s. 6d.; rayon non-crease, 9s. 6d.; and, all silk, 13s. 6d.

** WHO'S WHO IN THE COMMISSION (No. 4)

PROFILE OF DISTRICT OFFICER A. SUTTON

with his greatest interest in life. His first contact with the Scout movement came while he was at the University of North Wales, Bangor, where a number of his friends (including District Officer W. L. GUILLE, now in South West, England) re-formed the College Rover Crew. When he was posted to South East England, and stationed at Farnham, Surrey, he eventually became the 11th Farnham troop's first Assistant Scoutmaster. Then, in the winter of last year, came the decision to form a Senior Scout Troop, with District Officer Sutton as Scoutmaster.

DISTRICT OFFICER ARTHUR SUTTON (all 6ft. 3 ins. of him known as "Tiny" to his intimates) confesses that Scouting, outside his normal avocation, provides him

District Officer Sutton is also author and producer of more than one successful Scout play (if you saw what the Press had to say about his plays you would know they were above the average).

Highlights of our friend's Scouting activities have included participation in the building of an impressive gateway for the County Rally (this was erected with the aid of poles from Bramsill Forest and contained over 500 feet of rope in 150 lashings) and a summer "camp" which took the form of a cycling tour and involved pedaling 80 miles on the first day.

"I have been touched by the way the lads help John Cannon," District Officer Sutton will tell you. "John has infantile paralysis, and can only get about with his legs in irons. One day a Scout named Phillip Burchett, with whom I was discussing camping matters, said: 'I would like to be with John Cannon in camp, because I can get about and help him.' But Phil himself has only one leg, and but for his artificial limb he wouldn't be able to get about. Its little things like that which for me make Scouting worth while".

** FAREWELL TO FORESTER O. R. T. ASTON

THE DAYS WHEN IT WAS "A CRIME TO KILL A RABBIT"

Before a representative gathering in the Verderers' Court (in New Forest) of Foresters and members of the Divisional staff, Forester O. R. T. ASTON was recently presented with a book-case to mark the occasion of his retirement. The presentation was made on behalf of well-wishers by Mr. D. W. YOUNG, formerly Deputy Surveyor, under whom Forester Aston had served for a considerable time.

Forester Aston commenced his service with the Forestry Commission in the Dean, and as a young man was appointed a Forester in New Forest, where he spent a number of years. He was also in the Isle of Wight and, in all, served under four Deputy Surveyors, namely the Hon. Gerald Lascelles, Mr. Vernon Leese (with whom he had previously been in the Dean) Mr. Osmaston and Mr. Young.

In voicing his thanks for the gift Forester Aston recalled that when he first came to New Forest in 1914 it was a crime to kill a rabbit. His reminiscences included reference to the difficulties of forest protection in the war years, when fires had to be dealt while bombs were falling.

** EXPLORING NEW GROUND

THE MONTH'S TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS were reported to Headquarters by 19th of last month: DIVISIONAL OFFICER J. T. FITZHERBERT from Inverness to Cardiff; District Officers J. F. GOODWIN, from Education, Lynford School, to Parkend School; W. A. LINDSAY-SMITH from Bettws-y-Coed, N(W), to Ruthin, N(W); D. GRANT from Launceston, SW(E), to Bristol; J. R. B. MARSHALL from Hexham, NE(E), to Kielder, NE(E); P. C. GOUGH from Research, North Pickenham, to Education, Lynford School; Head Forester C. McNAB from Widehaugh, NE(E), to Ringwood, New; Foresters W. E. WILKINSON from Hartland, SW(E), to Halwill, SW(E); R. PRITCHARD from Bodmin, SW(E), to Santon Downham, E(E); J. H. DAVY from Buriton, SE(E), to Widehaugh; H. LANEY from Ringwood to Buriton; W. A. FRASER from Rumster, N(S), to Strathnairn, N(S); R. F. MITCHELL from Loch Ard, W(S), to Garadhbhan, W(S); Foremen K. G. WILLS from Eggesford, SW(E), to Brayden, SW(E); R. BULTITUDE from Quantocks, SW(E), to Stanway, SW(E); P. BOWMAN from Brayden to Bodmin; H. C. B. INGRAM from Andover, SE(E), to Westbury, SE(E); B. F. OLAND from Bramshill, SE(E), to Orlestone, SE(E); E. J. D. WILKINSON from Chiddingfold, SE(E), to Abinger, SE(E); Clerical Officer Miss H. J. SMITH from Education, London, to Woking.

** SOME NEW PUBLICATIONS

GUIDE TO HARDKNOTT FOREST PARK

RECENT NEW PUBLICATIONS include a well-illustrated guide to the Hardknott National Forest Park in Western Lakeland. Thus Guides are now available to all the National Forest Parks with the exception of Glentool, and it won't be long now before a guide to this particular Forest Park makes its appearance.

The Hardknott Guide is a good two-shillings' worth. It follows the pattern of its predecessors inasmuch as it contains much information of value to the hiker, the camper and the tourist. It deals, of course, with a unique type of country covering some 7,275 acres and lying in south-west Cumberland on the borders of Westmorland and the Furness district of Lancashire. The Guide says that to see the hill recesses of the Upper Esk and Lingrove Beck, the high crags and magnificent viewpoints of Bow Fell, Hardknott and Harter Fell, "one must go afoot by steep and rocky tracks, and it is well that this should be so. For this is perhaps the wildest stretch of land remaining in all England..... since Wordsworth first roamed its summits and stream-sides one hundred and fifty years ago, change has passed it by".

The plantations now being formed in the Forest Park will eventually occupy about 2,000 acres, and the Conservator for North West England (Mr. A. H. H. ROSS) has contributed a special chapter on the woodlands.

Another recent publication is an eight-page pamphlet entitled "Britain's New Forests". This has been printed for the Information Section for publicity purposes (for example, distribution at agricultural shows), but it also serves the purpose of giving the individual enquirer a concise summary of the forest programme. Those of the Commission's staff who are asked from time to time to give public lectures might find the pamphlet useful for distribution to their audiences, and reasonable requests for supplies would be met, applications being made through Conservators. There also exist limited stocks of the free pamphlet Forestry in Wales (in both English and Welsh) and this publication, too, is suitable for public distribution. Here again, requests for supplies should be through Conservators. Pamphlets on State forestry in England and in Scotland are to be produced in the comparatively near future.

Yet another publication is the second of the booklets in the Series dealing with the bigger State forests. The first described the Forest of Ae, and the new booklet tells of the afforestation of the Culbin Sands, on the southern shore of the Moray Firth. Behind the formation of Culbin Forest lies a colourful story, and we propose telling you more of this particular area in the next issue of The Slasher.

** THE MUNTJAC AGAIN

FROM FORESTER G. F. BEASLEY, of
Hazelborough, East England, comes a contribution on the subject of the Muntjac.
(Remember the "Barking Deer" story, The

ONCE NUMEROUS AT HAZELBOROUGH

Slasher, July?). It seems likely to me, says Forester Beasley, that the animal sought in New Forest is one or other of the Muntjacs (Indian or Chinese), or it may possibly be a hybrid. Muntjacs are certainly at large in this country and up to the severe winter of early 1947 they were present in large numbers in and around Hazelborough Forest. In addition to the number shot, I am informed that upwards of 60 carcasses of Muntjacs which had died of exposure and starvation were found after the snow of that winter had cleared away. It is on record that these deer were present at Hazelborough as far back as 1936, and possibly before. The probability is that there have been escapes from Woburn Park, and some animals could have made their way as far afield as New Forest.

The Muntjac is a small animal which weighs between 25-35 lbs. The male has two tusk-like teeth (no doubt extended canines) in the upper jaw; these are very sharp and extend about an inch below the upper lip. Both sexes have a sort of slit or natural deep incision half-moon in shape and about one and a half inches long, below each eye. The purpose of this incision is unknown to me. The under-tail of both sexes is white and this shows up with a rather "rabbit-like" effect when the animal is running. This the Muntjac does with the head held low, as distinct from other deer, which run with the head held erect.

The Muntjac is still present in Hazelborough, but in very small numbers. It will no doubt be some years before a full recovery from the disaster of 1947 is made.

** FORESTER TRAINING SCHOOL "ON THE AIR"

GWYDYR FEATURED IN WELSH PROGRAMME

GWYDYR FORESTER TRAINING SCHOOL was
"on the air" recently in the Welsh Home
Service. The six-minute feature
comprised two recordings -- one by Educa-

tion Officer H. CRUICKSHANK and the other by student A. A. SMITH-JONES. A third recording by student H. PEGGLIER could not be broadcast owing to lack of time. The Education Officer briefly described the history and purpose of the School and, explaining that the emphasis in training is on the practical side, quoted the School's Welsh motto -- "Ni wyr nid ymarfer", which means "To learn is to be able to practise". Mr. Cruickshank also referred with regret to the fact that comparatively few Welshmen have come forward to take advantage of the free training offered.

Mr. Smith-Jones said the men at the School came from all parts of Britain, and most had served in the Forces. He had spent nearly four years in the Palestine Police Force, and had decided to take up forestry because he liked the open air life offered by such a career. In describing the practical work taught at the School he mentioned the School Beat, which includes an area of the mountain Moel Saibod, with its rocky outcrops, peat bogs and high rainfall.

** ARE YOU A PHILATELIST?

MR. G. H. CLARK, of the Cambridge
Office, joins his son in pursuit of the
hobby known as philately. He would like

to hear from anyone who is similarly interested, with a view to stamp exchanges.
Full address is Forestry Commission, Shaftesbury Road, Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge.