

INVOLUNTARY BREACH OF ETIQUETTE

"DROPPING-IN" - BY GLIDER

Mr Laurie had a good excuse for the omission, for he was piloting a glider at the time and, with the best will in the world, he could not have forecas exactly where he would descend.

IN INVOLUNTARY VIOLATION of all canons of etiquette, Mr M.V. LAURIE, Chief Research Officer, recently paid a "flying" visit to the territory of Conservator, South Wales, and failed to give prior notice. But

THE FORMER LORD BURLINGTON

There has been much speculation as to the identity of the be-wigged, cravatted gentleman who, carved in stone, has been placed in position over the doorway of the huge building now being erected in Burlington Street, opposite Headquarters.

Bob Hope in character part? Samuel Pepys? George IV? Your're all wrong. It is a former Lord Burlington. His "likeness" has been copied from an old portrait and carved by an 86-years old craftsman.

And, while we're on the subject of the new building, here are a few more facts. What are known as carved "features", or designs, will decorate other parts of the facade; it will already be seen that these are to include an oyster shell, the central hole in which, we are told, means that the shell represents that which held the Black Pearl.

The stone now being erected is not synthetic. It is genuine, natural Portland stone, and anyone getting close enough to it will be able to see therein signs of fossilised remains of shells. The present rough appearance of some of the stone is due to its being temporarily covered for the purpose of protection. In due course it will all be polished.

But let us tell the story from the beginning, for it is not without interest for us poor earth-bound mortals. Mr Laurie took off from Church Stretton, near Shrewsbury, and soared south for several hours. When over Hereford it was touch and go as to whether the flight would continue for (and it will be news to most readers) it is a well-known fact among gliding enthusiasts that if you are once down to 400 feet, then you should call it a day. It is far too hazardous a task, apparently, to attempt to maintain height, for while this is being done all opportunities for selecting a suitable landing space disappear. Over Hereford, then, Mr Laurie had descended to about 400 feet. He had almost given up hope of finding a suitable upward current when, suddenly, he was able to soar to 3,000 feet at 20 feet per second! The flight continued until he was just south of Monmouth, whereupon he made a perfect landing in a field next door to a Vicarage at which a women's party was in progress. Those ladies who decided against an attack of the vapours were soon on the scene to make sure that Mr Laurie was not minus a limb. As the crow flies the distance from Church Stretton to the point of landing is about 50 miles; as the glider flies, it is - well, your guess is as good as ours.

** PASSING OF MR E. HEWITT

YET ANOTHER COLLEAGUE HAS LEFT US, for the death occurred last month, at the comparatively early age of 49, of

LOSS TO NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Mr EDWARD HEWITT, Chief Clerk in the office of Conservator, North West England. News of his passing will be received with widespread regret, for although Mr Hewitt had only been with the Forestry Commission since 1946 (having transferred from the War Office) he had made many friends in the Department. He joined the Civil Service in 1917, when he became a clerk in the Inland Revenue Department, and in 1934 he was appointed an Area Officer with the Assistance Board. He left the latter Department in 1943 for the War Office, where he served as Civilian Staff Officer.

MR WALTER EVANS, Chief Clerk at Cardiff, writes: "Although I was acquainted with Ted Hewitt for a number of years it was not until I worked alongside him in the War Office during the war that I got to appreciate his sterling qualities. In difficult times - and they were many - we were always sustained by his cheerful countenance, and his example went far to oil the wheels of official business. No junior officer went to him for advice and came away without it, and no one could have wished for a more loyal and generous colleague. Ted was a Yorkshireman of the best type. Somewhat retiring, he never sought the limelight, yet always spoke fearlessly when someone attempted to deny the rights and feelings of others. Courteous to all whom he met, his friendship was not easily earned, but once given he endowed it with latent gifts, the quality of which had to be experienced to be believed. He was a fine Civil Servant and one whom the public service could ill afford to lose.

To his sorrowing wife and young son David, for whom he had great hopes, is extended the sincerest sympathy of all his colleagues in the Forestry Commission".

**** THE ROAD COMES TO PLASHETTS** BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BAILEY BRIDGE over the North Tyne River, a new mile-long road to Plashetts Village, near Kielder, in North East England Conservancy, has been opened to traffic. As the result, the residents of Plashetts are no longer able to claim that they form one of the most isolated communities in the country, and in any case Plashetts is to be the site of one of a number of complete forest villages which are to be built in the Border Country. It is anticipated that about 100 new houses will in due course be erected to augment the existing buildings.

Plashetts Village today consists of two or three scattered farm houses, a Forester's house and seven Forest Workers Holdings, all in the vicinity of the railway station. In the old days some coal-mining took place in the area and the abandoned mining village still stands a mile or more up the nearby hill. When the Forestry Commission took over the area they renovated the houses near the station so that they might be used as homes for forest workers, but until recently there was no road connecting the community with the main road in the North Tyne Valley, one and a half miles away. In order to do their shopping the housewives had to make a train journey to Bellingham, 16 miles away, or to Hawick, 25 miles distant. Where forest operations were concerned all equipment had to be sent by train or hauled across the River Tyne by tractor when the water was low.

Inspection of the forest entailed a three mile walk from Plashetts before it could be reached, and in the matter of fire protection the 2,500 acres plantations were largely dependent upon the forest staff of eight men. Outside help could only arrive on foot with a time lag of about three quarters of an hour.

By the construction of the road and the erection of the Bailey Bridge, the Engineer Branch has earned the thanks of Plashetts. For now tradesmen's vans from Hawick and Hexham call daily at the village and the housewife can obtain all essential food requirements at her own doorstep. Furthermore the Forester's heart is gladdened by the fact that labour, plants and materials may now be taken direct to the forest and that if the occasion demands help for fire-fighting is available in a matter of minutes.

**** LAUGHTON WARRENER RETIRES** MR WILLIAM NEEDHAM, Warrener at Laughton Forest, East England Conservancy, has retired after 24 years service with the Commission. To mark the occasion he was presented with a gift by Forester H. ADAMS, on behalf of his workmates. Mr Needham started work at the age of nine and, we are glad to say, enjoys good health.

**** NOTE ON NUTHATCHES, ETC.** FOREMAN J.H. STYLES, OF THE RESEARCH BRANCH, who is stationed at Kennington Nursery, South East England, has provided some interesting observations on the use of nesting boxes. Unfortunately, shortage of space will not permit our giving the contribution in full, but nevertheless Mr Styles' remarks on conditions at Wareham Forest, Dorset, should not go unrecorded.

Observations at Wareham (says Mr Styles) showed that due primarily to the disastrous fires of 1947 - 49, and to some extent to the sandy, heath-like conditions, all rules of nesting procedure were swept aside. For example, it was discovered that coal tits were not using the nesting boxes provided because they preferred to rear their young in mouse runs in the ploughed furrows of the F.Y.35 plantings. A pair of green woodpeckers built their nest at the base of a young Monterey pine - that is to say at ground level. Above all, I was impressed by the feverish way in which nuthatches attacked pine shoot beetles and weevils for, like woodpeckers, they are able to locate the position of grubs under the bark, and a sharp tap reveals the hidden food.

An examination of the nest of one pair of nuthatches revealed that it weighed more than 15 ounces and consisted of some 3,800 separate flakes of material, involving a tremendous number of flights to and from the box during building operations.

**** THE OWL IN THE MILK CHURN** DIVISIONAL OFFICER W.A. CADMAN, North Wales, writes with reference to reports in recent issues of The Slasher about birds being found drowned. I do not think, he writes, that the Tawny Owl found drowned in a milk churn was in search of water. Owls normally investigate holes, and a milk churn would be likely to attract because of its resemblance to a hollow tree. In the case of the Tawny Owl found drowned in the 400-gallon water tank (which contained 20 drowned birds) I think it is probable that this particular owl was attracted by the prospect of food, having spotted one or other of the corpses. It would be interesting if we could have an exact list of the other species which were drowned.

Over to you, District Officer PALLETT, of South Wales. Can you supply the required information?

**** COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR LLANEGLYWYS** THE FIRST VILLAGE HALL TO BE BUILT in Wales by the Forestry Commission was opened recently and fills a long felt want. It is situated at Llaneglywys, in the heart of Brecon Forest, and is extremely well equipped. But here is District Officer A.W.ARENDTS to tell in his own words the story of how the hall came into being.

Centuries ago, he writes, monks lived in what is now the Forester's house. Had they returned to the district in 1920 they would probably not have detected any major change in the locality, for Llaneglywys is buried deep in the Welsh countryside and at the very end of the only road into the forest. Some say there is another road in, and so there is - if you are on horseback! But in the 1920's the Forestry Commission became interested in afforesting the area, and gradually clothed the hills with trees; furthermore, they provided six bungalows for the forest workers. After the war it was decided to build another six houses, and these are in process of being erected. So the mountains sustained trees and the valley gave birth to a hamlet, and Llaneglywys became beautiful and prosperous. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and when you are a daily frequenter and see a locality which boasts neither bus or shop or community centre, one is apt to become a little jaundiced.

The Commission became convinced that there was need for a hall at Llaneglywys, and a Nissen hut was therefore brought from a disused Army camp many miles away and erected in the hamlet. In it were installed or built such amenities as Calor gas lighting, kitchen with cooking facilities, dance hall, stage, library, committee rooms and so on - all at Commission expense. A local Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr Millechamp, a local farmer, provided the furniture and curtains.

The other day the hall was officially opened by Alderman Tudor Watkins, M.P., who was supported by Mr Gibson Watt (local Conservative candidate), and among those present were the Conservator, South Wales (Mr W.D.RUSSELL), Divisional Officer J.T.L.FITZHERBERT, District Officer S.J.C.WEST, District Officer ARENDTS and Clerk of Works J.R.GIBBS, (who between them played a not inconsiderable part in bringing the hall into being) and Forester A.J.MACKENZIE, another prime mover. It remains to be said that the hall is leased to trustees at a nominal annual rent.

During the afternoon a presentation on behalf of former fellow workers was made to ex-Forest Worker MORGAN, who has recently retired after being employed at Brecon since planting first commenced in 1926.

**** TRANSFERS** THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS HAD BEEN REPORTED to Headquarters by 19th February: Foresters W.GILMOUR from Carradale, W.(S), to Loch Ard, W.(S); A. CAIDER from Devilla, W.(S), to Knapdale, W.(S). Assistant Engineers W.M.PHILLIPS from Edinburgh to Benmore, W.(S); W.H.CLARKSON from Dumfries, S.(S), to Aberdeen, E.(S). Foremen J.W.TEILFORD from Redesdale, N.E.(S) to Plashetts, N.E.(S); R.O.MILLETT from Dartmoor, S.W.(E), to Cannock, N.W.(E); B.G.HOWLAND from Research, Dean, to Research, Wareham; R.J.REID from Research, Bettws-y-Coed, North Wales, to Research, Dean.

**** ORIGIN OF FOREST TERMS** FORESTER E.D. FRASER, of Loch Ard, West Conservancy, Scotland, gives us food for thought in a discourse about forest terms. BRASH, SHEUGH, SNED, ETC. Alternatives to the origin of certain terms as suggested by earlier correspondents, he writes, could be made as follows. BRASH. From the Anglo-Saxon BRECHAM or BRYTAN - brittle; or from the German BRECHAN - to break, or BARSCH - rough. Alternatively, the Dutch BRAAK or BRACKE means a tool for breaking flax or hemp and the latter word, in German, to clear of weeds.

Without going deeply into etymology it would appear possible that variations of the above could have developed into Brash, due to the considerable traffic of merchants and others between Scotland and the Low Countries in the 17th and 18th centuries. It would be interesting to discover the earliest known use of the term in connection with forestry, excluding its American employment to mean Tender - Brittle.

SHEUGH. A variation of the Anglo-Saxon SOUGH - a trench, ditch or drain. Normally used in southern Scotland and northern England. Plants laid in a trench would normally be "HEELED" in to make the soil firm. SNED. Origin may be from the German SCHNEID - to cut, edge of a knife, etc. It is understood that the English SNAG, which means the same, is in general use in some parts of the country.

District Officer H.L.EDLIN, of Headquarters, who first opened the debate on the origin of forest terms, has a few words to say about SNEDDING. Foreman Rex, he says, who seeks

the origin of the word "Snedding" (The Slasher, December, 1949), may be interested to know that this is the modern version of the Anglo-Saxon SNAEDAN, to cut or prune. It occurs in an old manuscript of St. Matthew's gospel, now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, in the phrase: "Sume sneddun telgran of treowum" - "others cut branches off trees". So it is a good old English word which has been used by foresters for untold generations.

Well, readers, where Snedding is concerned it is Forester Fraser versus District Officer Edlin. Which explanation do you prefer?

** THE MIGHTY OAK WE ARE INDEBTED to District Officer WILKINS, South Wales, for sending along the following extract from a contemporary record. It relates to an oak which was felled in 1810.

"It was known as the Gelenos Oak and stood about four miles from Newport in Monmouthshire. When felled, it yielded 2,426 cubic feet of sound timber and six tons of bark. It was bought standing for £405, and the purchaser had to pay £82 for labour for stripping, felling and converting. Five men were employed for 20 days in stripping bark and felling the tree, and after that a pair of sawyers, working six days a week, were five months cutting it up. But the bark realised £200 and the timber about £400."

** TRACTOR DRIVER INJURED. ERIC LITT, a 24-YEARS OLD TRACTOR DRIVER, of Thornthwaite Forest, North West England, was badly hurt when recently, the machine he was driving overturned. As far as can be ascertained the tractor, at the time of the accident, was travelling up the fell side in the Dodd section of the Unit. It appears that it struck an obstacle which caused it to turn over on to the driver, who was subsequently taken to Keswick Hospital.

** CASE FOR OUR CARTOONIST WE ALL KNOW (writes Divisional Officer W.A.CADMAN, North Wales) the case of the Forester who ordered some screws. Of course, as is always the case when a Forester orders anything, it was well known that he didn't really want them at all.

So he was asked to make a case to send to Headquarters (presumably using nails only).

Now, what we all want to know is what does H.Q. do with all these cases? There must be a large accumulation of these hidden away somewhere. Rumour has it that they are passed on for the purpose of smuggling nuts into Africa. (After all, a Big Case has to be made for nuts).

In any case, what's our cartoonist doing about all this?

(Seems more like a case for a psychiatrist - Editor).

** PROUD PARENTS OUR CONGRATULATIONS to Forester and Mrs E.A.STEWART, Dallas, East Scotland, on the birth of a son.

** THE THINGS WE SMILE ABOUT A CONSERVANCY OFFICE in England recently issued an official memorandum with the heading: "Sick Leave With Pay - W.L.A. Members". The Forester replied with the same heading, as follows: "The attached memo. has been sent here in error, as no worker of this name is employed in this unit." Extract from another memo.: "I am informed by the Air Ministry that the under-mentioned R.A.F.Stations will not now be in a position to provide assistance in fire-lighting." Finally, a flashback to pre-Christmas days through the medium of an extract from a London newspaper: "Forestry Commission men and police patrols are guarding Christmas trees from black market gangs. Some of the Commission men are patrolling in "Q" cars to trap would-be thieves. A 24-hour guard is being maintained".

And each "Q" car, we suppose, was equipped with a wailing siren, and each "C" man with a six-shooter.

THERE IS A SLASHER CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE

PLEASE KEEP HIM WELL SUPPLIED WITH CONTRIBUTIONS