

THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

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** AGRICULTURAL SHOW DATES

TIME ONCE MORE to think of Agricultural Shows. As usual, the Commission will be exhibiting at the major events, so that the following dates may be of interest to those in the field who are likely to be called upon to assist with local preparations. The programme will, in all probability,

COMMISSION TO EXHIBIT AT MAJOR EVENTS

be augmented.

May 16-18, Devon County Show, Barnstable; May 24-25, Shropshire and West Midland, Shrewsbury; May 31-3 June, Bath and West, Brighton; June 7-8, Great Cheshire, Chester; June 13-15, Three Counties, Leominster; June 21-24, Royal Counties and Sussex County (combined show), Bognor Regis; June 28-29, Royal Norfolk, Sandringham; July 4-6, Royal, Oxford; July 11-13, Yorkshire, Great Moulton; July 18-19, South Eastern Counties, Tunbridge Wells; July 26-28, Royal Welsh, Abergele; August 2-5, Royal Lancs., Bolton; August 31, Monmouthshire, Monmouth; Sept. 14, Montgomeryshire, Welshpool.

In addition there is, of course, the important Highland Show, to be held on June 20-23 at Paisley.

S.J. BETTERTON, a foreman in the Dean, will for the second year be in charge of the Commission's exhibit. He is to be assisted by R.K. HART, a foreman at Bramshill, South East England, and R.C. SCAMMELL, a forest worker in New.

** 'PLANE CRASH IN FORESTRY NURSERY

NARROW ESCAPE FOR COMMISSION EMPLOYEES

WORKERS AT TAIR ONEN NURSERY, the largest nursery in Wales, had remarkable escapes the other day when a Bristol freight 'plane crashed in their midst. The 'plane was on a test flight at the time, and the four occupants lost their lives. The crash occurred only eight miles or so from the scene of the recent disaster

to the Tudor airliner, in which 80 people who were returning from the International rugby match in Ireland were killed.

FORESTER F. SLATTER was first on the scene, being only 50 yards away from the 'plane when it hit the ground. He was followed by Forest Worker LITTLE, but, unhappily, it was apparent that little could be done. Tair Onen gives employment to an average of 150 workers, and at the time of the crash quite a number of the younger employees were in the vicinity. Fortunately none was hurt, and as far as can be ascertained at the time of writing, the damage caused in the nursery was not great, though wreckage spread over a considerable area.

** FROM YORK TO LONDON-- AND VICE VERSA

MR. G.J.L. BATTERS, Conservator, North East England since 1947, is being transferred to the Office of Director, England, whom he will assist as Conservator, State Forests. He will

succeed Mr. C.A. CONNELL, who is leaving London for York, to take up Mr. Batters' former post.

** GERMAN FORESTERS' VISIT

FORMER POW AS ESCORT

AN OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY ASSIGNMENT recently came the way of District Officer J.R. HAMPSON, of North Wales, for with representatives of the British Council and the Royal Forestry Society of England and Wales, he escorted a party of

German foresters bent on seeing something of the Commission's operations and of private estate forestry in this country. The visit was organised at the instance of the British Council, and District Officer Hampson played a leading role because he speaks some German, having had an opportunity to improve his knowledge of this language when, as an R.A.F. pilot, he was shot down over enemy territory and became a prisoner.

Leader of the German delegation, which comprised seven experts of the German Forest Administration, was Oberlandforstmeister Wilhelm Hausman. The programme included a visit to Thetford Chase, the Commission's great forest area in East Anglia; to the Duke of Buccleuch's estate near Kettering; Capt. Welryche-Whitmore's estate near Bridgnorth, Shropshire; Clocaenog and Gwydyr forests and the Forester Training School, Capel Curig, all in North Wales; Leighton woodlands, near Welshpool, by permission of Mr. C.P. Ackers; the Imperial Forestry Institute, Oxford; and nearby Bagley Wood.

****ILLNESS OF MR. E.J.S. HINDS** BEST WISHES FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY are extended to Mr. E.J.S. HINDS, Chief Clerk in the office of Director, England, who recently entered hospital for an operation. It is understood that this has been satisfactorily performed and that the patient is making progress.

****"MARRIAGE" OF FOREST AND COALMINE** THE THIRD BOOKLET in the series describing the bigger State forests has now been published. **BOOKLET ON RHEOLA, SOUTH WALES** This deals with Rheola Forest, in South Wales, and tells an absorbing story of how tree-planting has not only brightened the drab, industrial Neath Valley, but is ensuring a supply of home-grown pitwood for the nearby coalmines and obviating some of the need for importing this material.

Like its predecessors--Forest of Ae and Culbin-- this booklet is well illustrated. A photograph which appears on the inside cover is of outstanding interest and significance, for it shows Corsican pine not only growing but flourishing on an abandoned pit dump. We are told that the formation of Rheola Forest is typical of the work now going on throughout South Wales. Planting by the Commission commenced in 1922 and now, 30 years later, "the oldest plantations are yielding substantial quantities of pitprops and give promise of producing fine sawmill timber later on.....Moreover, the green mantle of foliage spreading across both sides of this industrial valley provides a welcome contrast to the bare hillsides, with dumps of coalpit refuse, that disfigure so much of South Wales". While tree planting has proceeded steadily year by year on the central blocks of the forest, extensions have been made over the neighbouring hills, and ultimately plantations will extend from the valley of the Tawe in the west to that of the Pelena in the south, with outriders near Rhigos on the north.

The labour force employed at Rheola in 1949, we are informed, totalled 128 men, and this number is expected to increase as the area of plantations requiring thinning expands. A high proportion of the men employed are ex-miners who have left the pits because of occupational disease. Thus forestry gives employment to a section of the working population that might otherwise be forced to remain idle; and the employment it provides is continuous -- an important factor in an area such as the Neath Valley, which has known more than its share of unemployment in times of industrial depression.

Rheola covers nearly 14,000 acres, and by 1949 nearly 7,000 acres had been placed under plantations. Of the balance, some 2,500 acres consist mainly of mountaintops which are under sheep grazing. The current planting programme is nearly 1,000 acres a year, so that in four or five years the whole of the plantable land at present available will be carrying tree crops. The thinning programme, now only approaching 250 acres a year, will expand until out of the total of 11,000 or so acres of plantations ultimately established, around 2,000 acres will need attention every year. "The desire", says the booklet, "is to maintain forever hillsides, once barren and unproductive, as green and fruitful sources of the timber that will always be needed in these busy (Welsh) valleys".

The booklet, like those already published, is priced at 6d. Indeed a modest sum for a wealth of information.

****NEWS FROM WEST SCOTLAND** THE SERIES OF LECTURES which is being given to the Conservancy Office staff continues to prove interesting and helpful. Recent lectures have included the following: "Conservancy Office Estate Section", by Mr. W. McMILLAN; "Silvicultural Operations", by State Forest Officer H.V.DIER; "Private Woodlands", by District Officer M. LONG; "Functions of the Engineering Branch (Roads)", by Conservancy Engineer A. GREEN; "Functions of the Mechanical Engineering Branch," by Mr. N. DEVERIA; "Forestry Commission Organisation," by Mr. T. FARMER, Chief Clerk; and "Forestry Commission Finance", by Conservancy Accountant J. STEELE.

From lectures to domesticity. Recent months have seen a number of proud fathers within the Conservancy. Conservancy Engineer GREEN has become the father of a daughter; Mr. J. BLYTH, of Establishment Section, has added a daughter to his own establishment; Mr. D. MASTERTON, of Accounts Section, has added a daughter to his personal account; Mr. H. BROWN has upheld the honour of the Estate Section with the arrival of a son; District Officer P. INNES has also become the father of a son. We congratulate them all (and, of course, the respective spouses) on the happy events. And here, for the time being, we must call a halt, lest The Slasher begins to read like a page or two from a Register of Births.

Badminton is again in the Conservancy news. In a previous issue we reported a win for the Glasgow office over the "Davie Ross Select" at Aberfoyle. Forester Ross subsequently issued a challenge to a return match, which took place in Glasgow and resulted in Forester Ross and his team having their revenge by winning 5 games to 4.

On March 18th., the day of the Scotland versus England Rugby International, a bus load of Glasgow office staff descended upon Edinburgh and attended the game. The weather was bad and all were thoroughly soaked with rain, but compensation came when Scotland converted a try to win in the closing minutes of the match. The roar might well have been heard in Savile Row. Following the game a badminton match was played between teams representing the Glasgow and Edinburgh offices, the former narrowly winning by 13 games to 12.

** TRANSFERS

The following transfers had been reported to Headquarters by 19th March: Divisional Officer G.D. Rouse from New to Headquarters, as Chief Education Officer in succession to Mr. J.Q. WILLIAMSON, now Deputy Surveyor, Dean; District Officers D.G. CAMPBELL from Inverness to Dingwall, N(S); A.A. ROWAN from York to Hexham, NE(E); Foresters C.J. LEWIS from Parkhurst, New, to Burley, New; A. MORRISON from Loch Ard, W(S), to Carradale, W(S); T.W. BOLAM from Redesdale, NE(E), to Bickley, NE(E); J.F. BULLEID from Savernake, SW(E), to Stoke Leigh, SW(E); D.J. COX from Haldon, SW(E), to Charmouth, SW(E); F.C. BARLING from Goodwood, SE(E), to Vinehall, SE(E); P.J. OFFARD from Arundel, SE(E), to Alton, SE(E); W.E. STANLEY from Thrunton, NE(E), to Wykeham, NE(E); E.C.W. EVERITT from Charmouth to Savernake; Foremen J.R. HENDERSON from Lodgehill, New, to Holidays Hill, New; M.P. SALMOND from Chopwell, NE(E), to Redesdale; E. LEYSHAN from Eggesford, SW(E), to Haldon; J.H. STYLES from Kennington (Research) to Alice Holt (Research); O. WILLIAMS from Usk, S(W), to Michaelston, S(W); Clerical Officer D.C. BANFILL from Shrewsbury to Cardiff.

** THE FOREST RANGERS MAKE

HOW MANY FORESTS HAVE THEIR OWN FOOTBALL CLUB?

THEIR BOW The Rheola Club is in its first season and looks forward to greater activity and enhanced reputation in 1950-51. The club came into being with an appeal for funds which resulted in £10 being raised towards the purchase of kit. A sports fund was also started, and to this each employee voluntarily contributes one shilling a month; now, despite heavy initial expenditure, the club is in quite a healthy financial position, with a balance in hand of nearly £30.

FOOTBALL IN SOUTH WALES The problem of securing a suitable ground has to date remained unsolved, but it is hoped that by next season the club will be able to arrange home fixtures. Provided this is so, all concerned are confident that Rheola Forest Rangers (to give the club its correct title) will provide some strong opposition for local teams. The club is affiliated to the West Wales Football Association, colours being green and white. So far this season play has been confined to friendly games, the record being; played 10; won 2; drawn 3; lost 5; goals for 20; against 31. One of the best games was against Cwmgiedd Rovers, a rival team from Cwmgiedd Forest. There is an attractive fixture for Easter, when Rheola's opponents will be George Kent's Welfare, a Neath and District team.

Next season, all being well, Rheola will be competing in the Neath League. We wish the club well and compliment those who have worked hard to bring it into being with a special word of approbation for Forester M.R. MADDOCKS, the founder, and Head Forester N. SMITH, the President.

** MEMORIES OF HARDKNOTT

I HAVE JUST READ WITH GREAT INTEREST (writes a reader from East Conservancy, England) the recent published Guide to Hardknott National Forest Park. During the last three years of the war I was stationed at Keswick as an instructor at the W.D. Driving School, and therefore traversed much of the Forest Park in transport ranging from the ubiquitous jeep to 15-ton half - tracked armoured vehicles - most of the time with learner-drivers at the wheel! Many of the drivers under tuition were members of the Polish armed forces, and it is quite probable that a number of our present Polish employees have 'reconnoitered' the area in question. Forestry Commission staff in the locality, who know the wildness of the terrain, may be interested to hear of the route which was followed as a final test after a month's instruction. It was:

Keswick-Ambleside-Coniston-Walna Scar Pass-Ulpha-Boot-Wastwater-Burnmoor Track-Boot-Hardknott Pass-Cockley Beck-Wrynose Pass-Blea Tarn-Red Bank-Grasmere-Keswick.

And all in 10-11 hours!

The journeys over Wrynose, Hardknott and Walna Scar passes were regularly undertaken in both directions, and on the first occasion on which a jeep was introduced to Walna Scar Pass the overall width of the vehicle was found to be three inches too great. This matter was, however, soon remedied. It is to be hoped that the Engineer Staff whose lot it is to repair the roads and tracks will forgive us our trespasses, on the grounds that an emergency existed in those days.

****LETTER TO A CONSERVATOR**

AN APPLICANT FOR EMPLOYMENT wrote to a Conservator, as follows: "I very much regret having to make this request, and shall be grateful to you if you will accept this petition. As I have possible to change jobs, I

AND OTHER ITEMS

should like to know how I could reach that aim which I am intended.....I shall make the greatest exertion to give you full satisfaction, dear sir." THE FIRST of what is hoped will be a series of friendly football matches was played recently in The Dean between the Forester Training School and North Beat. Both sides showed they were capable of a high standard of football, and North beat were three goals up at half time. In the second half the School pressed hard and scored twice, but North Beat added another goal to make the final score 4-2 in their favour. Tea was generously provided by the School. AUDITOR WEDS. The marriage took place at Glasgow recently of Mr. J.C.O'HARA, of the Finance Branch travelling audit team in Scotland. The bride was Miss MARGARET A. PATERSON, and gifts were received from colleagues in London and Edinburgh. CONSERVANCY STAFF at Cambridge enjoyed a dinner and pantomime, arrangements being in the capable hands of Mr. W.G. WATSON. "FOREST" OPERATIONS are under way on the balcony at Headquarters, outside the windows of the Stores Section. Lawson Cyprus from South East England have been planted in tubs and tended (principally by Mrs. S.L. SUMMERS and Miss A.L. HUNTER) with great care. Earth was collected from home gardens and from excavation works across the way in order to fill window boxes, and the balcony has been notable for a fine show of crocus, snowdrops and primroses. There is promise of anemones, tulips, carnations and dahlias to come. A number of kind people have contributed the bulbs and plants, and further contributions would be gratefully received.

MISS CATHERINE SAVAGE, Clerical Officer, South Conservancy (Scotland) was married on Easter Monday to Ex-School Ganger JAMES O'MARA, Redesdale Forest, North East (England). Our congratulations, also, to Mr. ROBERT SHEARER, Surveyor, South Conservancy (Scotland), who was married in March to Miss AVRIL KYLE, of Dumfries.

****RECOGNITION AT LAST**

WRITING IN STATE SERVICE, Journal of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, H. CADWALLADER says: "History informs us that the position.....of Clerk of Works was (once) that of a Royal Master Craftsman, and among the great men who occupied this position were John Thorpe, Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, Nicolas Hawksmoor, William of Wykeham, James Wyatt, Samuel Pepys and Cockerell." So now you know.

****POSTSCRIPT**

In error the ~~venue~~ of the Yorkshire Agricultural Show is given in the first paragraph on page one as Great Moulton. It is, of course, Malton.

THERE IS A SLASHER CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE

AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE

PLEASE KEEP HIM WELL SUPPLIED WITH CONTRIBUTIONS --

DON'T LET YOUR TERRITORY BE OUT OF THE NEWS