

PENDING RETIREMENT OF MR. F.W. HAMILTON COMMISSION SERVED SINCE ITS INCEPTION

MR. F.W. HAMILTON, Secretary of the Forestry Commission since 1947, who has served the Department for very many years, is to retire at the end of June. Although it was known that his departure would not be long delayed, the naming of a date has brought a much closer realisation that many of the staff will be losing a guide, philosopher and friend.

TWIGLEES FOREST AND THE RULE OF THREE

THREE NEW HOUSES were completed in January at Twiglees Forest, South Scotland. These were occupied by three ex-Service men and their wives, all three of whom are named Jean. In the first three months of occupation three children were born, one to each of the three Jeans. Their names are as follows:

To Forest Worker and Mrs. JARDINE, a daughter, SANDRA

To Foreman and Mrs. MAXWELL, a son, DAVID

To Driver and Mrs. PAXTON, a son, COLIN

THREE CHEERS!

Mr. Hamilton's connection with the Forestry Commission began much earlier than his official transfer to the Department. In 1919, while he was still in the Office of Woods, he was busily engaged (at the office end) on arrangements for the collection and purchase of seed and its sowing, and the raising and distribution of plants in the emergency nurseries which were established in Crown Woods in preparation for the Commission's planting work. Although not officially transferred to the Commission until April, 1924, he was virtually in charge of the office of the Assistant Commissioner for

England and Wales from its inception in 1919. Apart from a short period during the war, when he was seconded to H.T.P.D., he continued in that post until the re-organisation of the Department in 1946, when the separate Directorate for Wales was established. Mr Hamilton then became Chief Executive Officer in the Directorate for England. It was on June 1st, three years ago, that he became Secretary to the Commission.

Although he has spent much time with the Commission he has also served in other Departments - the Metropolitan Police Office from 1901-1905; Customs House 1905-1907; and, of course, the Office of Woods from 1907 to 1924. As is to be expected, the highlights of his career have occurred in the Commission, but there are tales of incidents in his earlier years which proclaimed an element of mischievous humour in his make-up which the dignity of age and office has not entirely obscured.

Mr. Hamilton's present health and past record make us confident that he will enjoy for many years the leisure and respite from official cares that all are agreed he has so thoroughly earned. In leaving he will take with him the good wishes of all ranks, whether in the various offices or in the field.

Mr. Hamilton's successor will be Mr. H.A. TURNER, formerly an Assistant Secretary at the Treasury.

** PRESENTATIONS TO CONSERVATORS

GIFTS MARK EXCHANGE OF POSTS

A PRESENTATION WAS MADE RECENTLY to Mr. G.J.L. BATTERS, to mark the occasion of his transfer to the office of Director, England. Mr. Batters, as reported in the previous issue of The Slasher, is to assist the Director as Conservator, State Forests, after having been Conservator, N.E. England, since 1947. The gift took the form of a pair of field glasses in a leather case and was handed to Mr. Batters by FORESTER H. FRANK, of Rosedale, on behalf of many well-wishers. The former, in expressing his thanks, referred to the happy times he had spent in the Conservancy over a period of some 22 years. He also recalled his earlier days with the Commission, which were spent with Forester Frank in Yorkshire. State Forest Officer W. FORSYTH presided, and representatives of Field Officers and Foresters, as well as the staff of the Conservancy Office, attended.

** DEATH OF MR. TOM KING

"REMEMBERED FOR HIS UNFAILING HELPFULNESS"

IT IS WITH DEEP REGRET that we record the death, on April 30th, of Mr. TOM KING, H.C.O. in the office of Director, England. During the period of evacuation to Bristol he sustained an injury in the blackout, and unfortunately the effect upon his health proved permanent. Despite this serious handicap Mr. King continued efficiently to carry out his duties, often while in considerable pain, but

always with cheerful fortitude.

Mr. King joined the Forestry Commission in 1927, following service with the Board of Trade. In the first World War he served with the Royal Fusiliers. The funeral took place at Caterham and was attended by a number of his former colleagues from the office of Director, England, and Headquarters, including the Secretary, Mr. F.W. Hamilton.

A colleague writes: "The sudden death of Tom King came as a great shock to his friends. He will long be remembered for his unfailing helpfulness and good relations with all about him; he was a gentle man and will be greatly missed in the Department. He had a wide knowledge of the Commission, which he was ever ready to apply to his own work and to share for the benefit of others. After his family, Tom King's garden came first in his out-of-office interests, and he was justly proud of his achievements - especially of the sweet peas which were the envy of his many gardening friends.

"Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mrs. King and the only son, Eric."

**** STORY OF THE SMALL STONE DISC FORESTER R.J. JENNINGS, of St. Asaph, North Wales,**
FORESTER'S INTERESTING FIND sends us an interesting account of an antiquarian find. "In 1940," he writes, "during ploughing operations at Dovey Forest, where I was Forester, I picked up a small stone disc with a hole in the centre. It eventually travelled with me from Montgomeryshire and Merionethshire to Shropshire. Then, eight years after it was turned up by the plough, it claimed my attention during a transfer, and it occurred to me that it might be of antiquarian interest.

"From the Conservancy office it went travelling again, this time to the National Museum of Wales at Cardiff, who declared it to be an ancient spindlewhorl used in Wales before the Middle Ages, and subsequently, 'Attached to the end of the spindles', to quote the report from the museum, 'these whorls gave a twirling motion required for spinning thread.' The report went on to say that they are occasionally found in spots remote from modern or known habitation, and were doubtless lost by women who span while watching sheep.

"During the past 13 years in Wales I have found on Commission property an old English coin (at Clocaenog Forest), and an old Irish coin in a wall at Cwmeinion Forest. The latter was probably brought across many years ago by one of the Irish harvesters who came to work in gangs in Wales. I have also found two Neolithic flints. It would be interesting to hear of other finds in other parts of Britain."

**** PASSING OF FORESTER ACE HIS MANY FRIENDS** in the Commission will learn with deep regret of the passing, at the age of 53, of Forester DONALD ACE, of Brechfa Forest, South Wales. After joining the Department in 1929 as an Acting Foreman, Forester Ace spent the whole of his time in the South Wales Conservancy. He was held in high esteem by all with whom he came into contact, and the sympathy of his colleagues is extended to his widow and children.

**** TREES AND A WELSH HILL FARM HERE IS YOUR CHANCE** to win a money prize. In connection with the Forestry Section of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show prizes of £5, £3 and £1 are offered for the best essays on "The value of trees, woodlands and shelter belts on a Welsh hill farm". Those eligible to compete include working foresters, students or trainees, students of the College of Estate Managers, members of Young Farmers Clubs and, last but by no means least, staff and employees in the Principality of the Forestry Commission. Essays, we are informed, should be limited to about 2,000 words. One of the judges will be Mr. W.D. RUSSELL, Conservator, South Wales, and essays should be sent to the Secretary, Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, Queen's Road, Aberystwyth (which is promoting the competition) not later than 30th June. The Show, by the way, is at Abergelle in July.

**** ANCIENT MONUMENTS ON COMMISSION PROPERTY THERE MUST BE** many State forests which have ancient monuments within their boundaries. The history of these would doubtless provide an interesting series, if Foresters would send details along to The Slasher.

At Coed Clwyd, in North Wales, is the famous Jubilee Tower, which is situated at the top of Moel Famau at a height of 1,852 feet. It was built in 1809 by the people of Flintshire and Denbighshire, to celebrate the 50th year of the reign of King George III. The subscription list was headed by £105 given by the Prince of Wales. The structure originally had a base of 60 feet and a total height of 150 feet, and the design was Egyptian in

character, and was carried out by a Mr. Harrison, of Chester. The opening ceremony was carried out by Lord Kenyon (at the instance of the Prince of Wales) together with the Sheriffs of Flintshire and Denbighshire, and the support of "the gentry, nobility and yeomanry of the district."

The four corners at the base had heavy square buttresses, while in the centre there was a tall, tapering pinnacle. This, however, was never quite completed, for it was damaged by a storm; repairs were put in hand, but some 20 years later another storm severely damaged the structure, bringing down the central pinnacle and one corner of the base.

Visitors to the locality are always keen to climb to the Jubilee Tower where, on a clear day, they have ample reward for their efforts. From the tower one can see the whole of the Vale of Clwyd; the Denbighshire Hills; The Wrekin, Shropshire; Rivington Pike near Bolton; the Cumberland Hills; Snowdon; Cader Idris; and the Isle of Man.

(We are indebted to Forester C.P.CARR for the foregoing note.)

** TRANSFERS

CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER MOVES TO SAVILE ROW

MR. M.V. LAURIE, Chief Research Officer, has "taken up residence" at Headquarters. All communications on technical matters and matters of policy, which would normally be referred direct to him in the first instance, should in future be addressed to Mr. Laurie at Savile Row. Correspondence relating to personnel, housing, accounting and other similar administrative matters should, however, continue to be addressed officially to the Chief Research Officer at the Forest Research Station, which remains located at Alice Holt Lodge, near Farnham, Surrey.

Transfers reported in the month to 19th April were:

District Officer E.E. DIXON from Carlisle N.W.(E), to Woking, S.E.(E); Foresters F.F.G. PARSONS from Gardiner, S.W.(E) to Wareham, S.W.(E); R.B. GILSON from Clipstone, N.W.(E), to Hope, N.W.(E); C.N. SIMPSON from Smales, N.E.(E), to Chirdon, N.E.(E); A.M. MORRIS from Cranwich, E.(E), to Fermyn, E.(E); R. WALTON from Fermyn to Cranwich; O.R. BARSBY from Hope to Clipstone; Foreman G.I. MORGAN from Dummond Hill, E.(S), to Drumtochty, E.(S); J.F.B. WOOD from Burley, New, to Ringwood, New; P.H. AINSWORTH from Mounces, N.E.(E), to Chirdon.

Assistant Engineer G.W. PRESTON from Thornton-le-dale, N.E.(E), to Pickering, N.E.(E); Clerical Officer J. OUTERSON from Headquarters to office of Director, Scotland (Edinburgh).

** THE BEAUTY OF EGGESFORD

A CONIFEROUS PANORAMA

IN SOME CASES (writes Mr. L.W. CARTER, of Bristol, Headquarters of South West Conservancy, England) the critics may have grounds for taking the Commission to task. But none of us is perfect and there are two sides and many viewpoints to every question. In any case the question of right and wrong where the Commission's operations are concerned is not the real subject of these notes. My object is to draw attention to one place in particular where the Department has, in my opinion, succeeded in combining beauty with practical needs.

Many readers of The Slasher will have spent holidays in the beautiful county of Devon, that home of good red soil, of brown cider and, in normal times, rich yellow cream. Some will have confined their movements to the glorious seashore, a paradise of sandy bays and red cliffs, and small towns and villages of white houses on the hill slopes. The interior of the county is equally delightful, and I am thinking especially of the country beside the road from Exeter to Barnstaple in the beautiful valley of the River Taw. After passing the old grey town of Crediton the road falls into the valley and is accompanied by both river and railway. Then, past Lapford, with its square church on a hill to the right, the traveller comes to Eggesford Forest. Although one of the first of the State forests it is not large, and consists of scattered blocks of woodland, one of which is a long narrow belt of conifers, many of them larch, on the right hand side of the road. This belt extends on the hillside for several miles round the sweeping bends of the road, as far as Eggesford Station, and what a panorama is unfolded!

The sparkling waters of the river on one hand, frequent glimpses of which can be seen from the road through the hazel and alder bushes which line the river banks; on the other side the forest, clothing the slope to the skyline with a variety of colouring from the dark green, almost black, of the firs to the light pastel shades of the young larch needles. Altogether, in the early summer months especially, a picture of great beauty and verdant grandeur that will live long in the memory of all who see it.

** CONGRATULATIONS

BEST WISHES to District Officer S. FORRESTER, North East England, who has married Miss ALINE SHARP. Now, points out our correspondent, we have two foresters for the price of one.

Congratulations, also, to Forester and Mrs. R.E. YOUNG, of Rosedale, N.E. England, now the proud parents of twins; to Clerical Officer K. SWINBURN, of the York office; and Mrs. Swinburn, to whom a boy has been born; and to Clerical Officer W. POOLE, office of Director, Scotland, and Mrs. Poole, on the birth of a daughter, Frances.

The staff of office of Director, Scotland, recently made a presentation of two fire-side chairs to colleague "Bill" ELLIOT, to mark the occasion of his marriage to Miss MAUD FOX, of the Board of Trade. Miss Fox was present to hear Mr. T. EADIE, who made the presentation, draw attention to similarities in the Dedication Covenant and the marriage equivalent, the latter excepting the need for "beating-up". Mr. Elliot made a suitable reply, and at the close of the proceedings he (and the bride-to-be) were provided with a horse-drawn carriage to take them from the office.

** THE STORY OF A FIELD IT LIES IMMEDIATELY behind the "Forest Inn", within a stone's throw of the forest. It is an ordinary-looking field, oval in shape and commanding a good view of miles of surrounding country. Its grass is matted and tufted, and is grazed by a single cow. From a weather-beaten notice board one is just able to gather that the field belongs to a local council, the name of which has been obliterated not by the weather, but by the hand of man as a wartime measure.

Some few months ago the cricket enthusiasts of Alice Holt Lodge were much exercised over the matter of a "home" ground. Then somebody bethought him of the field; and somebody else remembered having played cricket on it. A good wicket it was, too, in those years before the war. So the council was identified, approached on the matter and permission obtained to make such use of the field as required. The "table-to-be" has now been cut, raked and fenced off, and the cow's sphere of influence has been correspondingly reduced.

It was after this that some interesting facts about the field came to light. And so it is no longer just a field. It has a history - for, according to a local historian in a published booklet, this ground, so ideally situated, gave the name to the famous Oval, less ideally situated in Kennington. Be that as it may, there is no doubt whatever that it was a renowned cricket ground some one hundred and fifty years ago. In 1808, for instance, it was the scene of a Surrey v. England match.

A famous local cricketer, "Silver Billy" Beldham, with his team of stalwarts from Farnham and district, played many a game there. Contemporaries waxed lyrical over his prowess. "Silver Billy", so called on account of his blonde hair, was described as "the king of bats". John Nyren, son of the famous Richard Nyren, of Hambledon, praised highly both his batting and bowling. It was said that Beldham used to "cut with the speed of thought"; that it was a study for Phideas to see Beldham rise to strike.... Michael Angelo should have painted him". Beldham lived to the grand old age of ninety-eight. What a pity he did not get his century.

Quite obviously then, the field must be restored and used only for the purpose for which it could have been created. "Silver Billy" will then be able to rest peacefully. Should his ghost choose to watch the efforts of Alice Holt we are sure he would do so with a critical but tolerant eye. And when, after an all-too-brief innings a player walks away from the wicket and cons the dreaded "0" on the score board, he will be able to console himself with the thought that even "Silver Billy" must, on occasion here, have experienced just the same atrocious luck and scored no more.

THERE IS A SLASHER CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE
AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE

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