

TALKING OF SQUIRRELS

THEY ARE GOOD TO EAT

MR. G.B. RYLE, Conservator at the Office of Director, England, says: "Of course Grey squirrels are good to eat. Personally, I prefer them to rabbit, and we stew them in precisely the same manner. One squirrel makes quite an adequate meal for one person, but its value does not end there. My family has tried glove-making with the skins. Lack of technical skill in the manufacture, and not unsuitability of the material, has been the cause of a somewhat 'ancient Briton' appearance of the finished articles. In the 30th. Reigate Scout Troop, however, my boy's squirrel-skin knife sheath is the envy of his companions."

MR. R.F. WOOD, Silviculturist (S), says he and a friend tried a pair of squirrels some time ago -- "mainly to tease our respective wives, who considered it a disgusting procedure on a par with cannibalism." The squirrels were treated as though they were rabbits and were cooked in a casserole. "Personally," goes on our correspondent, "I thought them pretty well indistinguishable from rabbit, perhaps rather good rabbit."

Another correspondent says it appears that 50 years ago squirrel (presumably Red squirrel) was a popular dish in New Forest, for there lads took part in an old "sport" called Cock Squoyling, which involved hunting the squirrel with sticks and stones as a prelude to its being baked in a pie. Reference to the "sport" is made in an old guide book ("The New Forest: Its History and Scenery," by Wise, 1862). How it derived its name we do not know, although we believe a squoyle to be a short stick loaded with lead at one end.

Finally, do you know that (according to good authority) if you put a squirrel's tail in your pocket it will always climb out? You should try it some time.

**FOREST MECHANISATION

ROPEWAY TESTS AT THORNTHWAITHE

certainly proving of interest. There is no doubt, of course, that the thinning programme is likely to call for considerable development in the ropeway form of extraction.

THE DOUBLE-HEADED ADDER

AN ADDER has been found in Allerston Forest, North East England, which has two perfectly-formed heads, including, of course, two pairs of eyes and two mouths.

It is now bottled and in the possession of Forest Worker G. GOUGH, who was in the company of Forest Worker H. STEPHENSON when the snake was found.

The specification to meet present requirements has been taken as calling for a range of up to 600 yards; ability to operate over any likely gradient; capacity to transport up to three tons an hour; and ability to be dismantled and re-erected on an adjacent site in two days. The ropeway consists of a main cable of three-quarter inch diameter, which is tensioned by a hand winch between ground anchors at top and bottom. Intermediate supports with self-centring hangers support the main cable as required by the conditions of the site, while the double bogie carriage on the cable is provided with hoists to lift the load from the ground for heights up to 20 feet. A power driven winch is sited at the top of the slope to haul up the empty carriage or

to haul up the load in case of uphill extraction. This winch is mounted on skids and is able to haul itself into position, using its own three-eighth inch diameter operating cable. Power is supplied by a 10 h.p. air-cooled engine, through a 4-speed gearbox and clutch to the operating drum.

The site at Thornthwaite is a 400-yard long slope of 30 degrees on Dodd Fell. It is hoped there will be more to be said about these tests in the not too distant future.

****A LIFETIME IN THE DEAN
RETIREMENT OF MR. T.W. MORRIS**

staff alike gathered to pay him homage and to wish him well, and to see him presented on their behalf with a handsome walnut bureau.

Mr. Morris commenced work in the Dean in 1903 as a boy clerk and, following war service in the Far East, he became Chief Clerk in 1920, succeeding Mr. Rowland Hill, father of the present Land Agent, Mr. J.E. Hill. By his long and meritorious service he has carried on the traditions of his father, who was Head Forester in The Dean and who completed 52 years service, and of his grandfather who, as a Keeper, completed 40 years.

During the last war Mr. Morris was seconded to the Home Timber Production Department as a Divisional Chief Clerk under Mr. W.D. RUSSELL, now Conservator, South Wales, and subsequently moved to Bristol. He returned to The Dean in 1947.

A special tribute to Mr. Morris was paid at the luncheon by Mr. J.Q. WILLIAMSON, who said that when he arrived at The Dean as Deputy Surveyor Mr. Morris delayed his retirement in order to help him. He, Mr. Williamson, had first had the benefit of Mr. Morris's guidance when he had gone to The Dean as a "raw" District Officer.

Mr. Morris' services to the Crown and the Forestry Commission were also praised by Mr. A.E. WALKER, the Head Forester, and by Mr. Hill, Land Agent. In reply, Mr. Morris expressed his confidence that full support would be given to his successor, Mr. F.C. REDD.

****THE SIGN OF THE BROAD ARROW
A FORESTRY COMMISSION TRADE MARK?**

AS ALL OUR FIELD STAFF KNOW, the official symbol of ownership branded on all tools used by the Department is the broad arrow together with the letters "F.C.", thus:


F.C.

The origin of this symbol has aroused much curious speculation, and it has generally been assumed among the rank and file that we borrowed it from the fashionable clothing worn at a well known penitentiary on the outskirts of Dartmoor. But at last the truth is out. The correspondent of a Sunday newspaper assures us that the broad arrow "was used by a collector of Customs in 1598 in Newcastle as a mark for goods seized", and "it was first used for marking timber in the Forest of Dean in 1639." Thus the Department, as successors of those in charge of the ancient Crown Woods, has as good a claim as any to the broad arrow as its "trade mark."

The broad arrow, historians tell us, was also used in the North American colonies during the eighteenth century, as a mark on trees and timber destined for the use of the Royal Navy. So essential was timber for ship-building in those days that in 1772 there was passed the Dockyards Protection Act, which says that anyone setting fire to any of His Majesty's ships, ammunition, ropeyard or timber for His Majesty's ships "shall suffer death without benefit of clergy." Curiously enough, this law is still on the Statute Book and the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, pointed out in a recent debate that it could still be invoked in the case of sabotage. Who can say that timber supplies are any less essential to our defence today than they were in 1772?

****WHO IS OUR OLDEST PENSIONER?**

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHARLES HURST

It was anything but a warm day, but Charles was working in his shirt-sleeves and apparently he didn't feel the cold.

NOT LONG AGO I WAS AT LYNCHURST, in the New Forest, writes Mr. H.W. GULLIVER, Chief Clerk, South East England. There I came across CHARLES HURST, a former Head Keeper, who was tidying his

Now I joined the staff of the Forestry Commission at the Lynchurst Office in 1926 -- 24 years ago -- and Charles Hurst had retired before then. For many years I paid him his pension, which he regularly called for on quarter days; punctually at half past two he would present himself at the office, and our little chat became an institution. How he loved to tell me about the "good old days" of

Mr. CUMBERBATCH, the HON. GERALD LASCELLES and Mr. VERNON LEESE -- all former Deputy Surveyors of the New Forest.

I knew Charles Hurst before I went to The King's House, for Lyndhurst was my home, and as Head Keeper he was a man to be reckoned with -- especially by boys in search of conies or looking for plovers' nests.

Well, once more we had met, and we had our chat of days now more distant than ever. But it was the same old Charles Hurst; hail and hearty and unchanged except for his deafness. Suddenly I realised again that here I was with 24 years service with the Commission and my companion already retired before I started work. How old must he be?

Yes, Charles is "getting on", as they say in the New. He is 91. I wonder if he is the oldest pensioner. It would be interesting to know.

****THE LARGEST TREES IN THE WORLD** HERE ARE A FEW FACTS which may be of interest, particularly to those who talk about trees.

SEQUOIA WHICH WEIGHS 6,000 TONS

The tallest tree in the world is believed to be the Founder Tree, a redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) in Humboldt State Redwood Park, California. Its height in 1947 was recorded as 364 feet.

The biggest tree is thought to be the General Sherman Bigtree (*Sequoia Wellingtonia*), in the Sequoia National Park, California. It is nearly 115 feet in circumference and 273 feet in height. The weight of its stem, branches, foliage and root system has been estimated at over 6,000 tons, and its volume more than 60,000 cubic feet. The diameter of the stem eight feet from the ground is 27.4 feet, and at 100 feet from the ground it is 18.7 feet. The diameter of the largest branch (130 feet from the ground) is seven feet.

To quote Sir KAISER SHUMSHERE: "The oldest tree in the world is at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna at Pyrag. It is called Akshaya Bata, or the banyan tree (*Ficus Bengalensis*), and it is 5,000 years old." There are Sequoias in California which are estimated to be between 3,000 and 4,000 years old; "The Dragon Tree" of the Canary Islands, blown over in 1868, was about 4,000 years old.

In Britain, according to Dallimore and Jackson, there are a number of yews the ages of which exceed 1,000 years. Where big trees are concerned H.L. EDLIN, in his "British Woodland Trees" (Batsford), says that a Douglas fir in Powys Castle was 168 feet tall some years ago; that girths up to 20 feet and heights up to 168 feet have been recorded for Silver firs.

In the near future the foregoing information, and additional facts, will be available on a stencilled sheet. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy should send a note to the Information Officer at Headquarters.

****TRANSFERS: ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES TRANSFERS REPORTED TO HEADQUARTERS BY 30th SEPTEMBER:**

Divisional Officer G.I. MACKENZIE from Chester, NW(E), to Director (England) London. District Officers A. PATERSON from Director, (England) London, to Cambridge E(E): M.R.W. WILLIAMS from Laurencekirk, E(S), to Banchory, E(S). Head Forester J. CORBETT from Allean, E(S), to Craigvinean E(S). Foresters J. REID from Blackcraig, E(S), to Allean, E(S): J.K. REID from Alltcailleach, E(S), to Blackcraig. K.B. HARVEY from Research, Kielder, to Research, Edinburgh. Foremen J. CRAMB from Berrmore, W(S), to Glenbranter, W(S): J.A. WOOD from Myherin N(W), to St. Asaph, N(W): M.H. COLSON from Brecon Forest, S(W), to Coed Caerdydd, S(W). Clerk of Works A. SHAW from Ae, S(S) to Dumfries, S(S). Executive Officer F.C. REED from Director, England, to Parkend, Dean. Clerical Officers Mrs. E.L. VARRIE from Cambridge, E(E), to Dumfries S(S): A. REID from Director, Scotland, to Dumfries, S(S).

Newcomers to the Department are: District Officer R. FAULKNER, Research, Edinburgh: Foreman A. POWELL, N(W): Clerical Officers A.E. BREWER, SW(E): L.T. IRVING, Finance, H.Q.; and A. OSWALD, Estab., H.Q.

****A FOREST CAMEO**

COPPER BEECHES AT COLLINGBOURNE

the following year. Now more than 1,000 of the 1,240 acres which comprise the forest have been placed under plantations.

FORESTER B.R.G. HAMMOND, of Collingbourne, South West England, has sent along a few notes about his forest. Collingbourne, he says, was acquired in 1936, the first planting taking place

Collingbourne lies on the eastern end of the northern escarpment of Salisbury Plain which, bleak and bare, has probably remained almost unchanged since the Stone Age. The soil consists of chalk sub-soil with a thin overlay; usually the chalk is very near the surface, but where the land is flat there is a tendency towards clay with a flint overlie. Originally Collingbourne consisted of poor oak standards over hazel and birch coppice, but today all the timber worth selling has been removed. During the war H.T.P.D. took away nearly 300,000 cubic feet.

The planting programme has been directed to the establishment of beech, with advantage taken of the birch as cover. Very rapid growth has taken place, the average height of the beech planted in P.37 being 28ft., and there is a clear floor beneath the trees. In 1948 the planting programme of 325 acres is believed to have been the largest of the year in the Conservancy.

The Research Department has laid out two experimental areas in the forest, comprising groups and strips planted with Oak, Ash, Sycamore and Wellingtonia, and there is also a small P.46 planting of Picea Omorica which is making favourable progress.

Through the centre of the forest, running north and south, there is an unusual deep drift or valley, this probably being at one time the course of a river. On both sides of this drift Sitka spruce has been planted. The forest as a whole is rich in natural flora, and such interesting wild flowers as lily-of-the-valley and fly orchid have been found. Being surrounded by open downland, rabbits present an ever-growing problem, and deer and hares are to be seen.

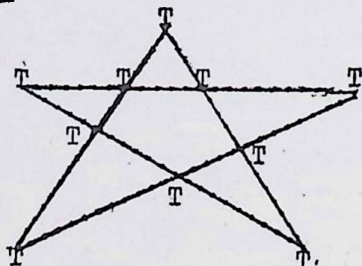
****LOP AND TOP**

MIN OR DOG? Recently a Foreman from the Dean presented a travel voucher at a certain station. This was too much for the junior booking clerk, but he eventually agreed to issue a ticket for the required destination and to sort the matter out later. At journey's end the Foreman was more than a little surprised to find that he had been travelling on a dog ticket.

CONGRATULATIONS to E.O. B.W.J. CUTLIFFE, of Bristol, and Mrs. Cutliffe, on the birth of a daughter. Former colleagues will be interested and pleased to hear that ALAN ORR-EWING, ex-District Officer, North Scotland, is the proud father of a second son. Mr. Orr-Ewing is now in British Columbia with the Canadian Forest Service.

****ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES**

1. This is how to plant 10 trees in 5 rows, placing 4 trees in each row -



2. Two miles of wire will enclose 160 acres.

THIS IS THE 34th. ISSUE OF THE SLASHER, COVERING A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS AND 10 MONTHS. IN ALL THIS TIME HAVE YOU CONTRIBUTED? IF NOT WE SHALL BE GLAD TO HEAR FROM YOU. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE.