

IS THE SQUIRREL EDIBLE?

SOME SAY NO: THE MAJORITY
SAY YES

WE MAKE NO APOLOGY for returning to the subject of the edibility of the grey squirrel, for numerous readers have contributed their opinions. For example A.J.H. CLAYPOLE, Clerk in The Dean, writes to say he has eaten squirrel and found it extremely palatable. "It tastes just like rabbit," he says, "and my method of cooking was to cut up the squirrel and place it in a casserole with a little water and some bacon, or sliced onion and carrots and a little fat. Steaming then took place in a moderate oven for about two hours. During the war, when coloured American troops were stationed in this area, Grey squirrel was in great demand and the soldiers were happy to barter cigarettes and tobacco for what they no doubt considered an extremely good dinner."

FLYING SAUCERS

MANY OF OUR READERS will have seen articles in certain national newspapers about "flying saucers". As a result of these articles there has been much speculation as to whether "saucers" have, in fact, manifested themselves and whether, as some newspapers have put it, we are indeed being watched by another world.

Be that as it may, a senior officer at Headquarters who lives on the outskirts of London claims to have seen a "flying saucer". On the evening of 20th. August last year, he stated, he was alone in his garden when he heard a "sizzling" sound like that made when a locomotive is letting off steam. It was distant at first, but increased in volume until the noise was quite alarming. While he was speculating as to the precise direction from which the noise was coming he saw a large glowing, circular object which was rotating and which was completely encircled with flames. It sailed into view from the direction of open country, flying to the south east and travelling horizontally. It left behind it an illuminated billowy mass of white vapour; then, when almost overhead, it came into contact with a small cloud and disappeared. The noise ceased. The time was 9.27 p.m., and the whole incident lasted about 10 seconds.

The description of the "saucer" given above varies little from those given in some newspaper accounts. We shall be pleased to hear from any readers who have witnessed similar objects or phenomena. (And, please, no ill-timed observations about taking more water with it).

Now listen to District Officer D. MACKAY, East England: "A Polish worker here relates that when he was a prisoner in Siberia the main meal of the day was Red squirrel. Here is the recipe: Skin and prepare as for rabbit, insert in pan, cover with cold water; add a small quantity of salt and two tablespoons of vinegar. Leave overnight and, when required for the meal, boil for half an hour, then put in oven and roast. Care must be taken to put sufficient vinegar in the water, or the meat will taste like turpentine."

Another correspondent writes that he considers Grey squirrel superior to rabbit; it is at its best, he says, in the late autumn, since then it is fat. Young squirrel is preferable; it may be boiled, stewed, fried or roasted.

Forester R. WALTON, East England, tells us that when in America a friend was provided with a meal of Grey squirrel and thought it excellent. The squirrel was first skinned, cleaned and bisected in the same way as a rabbit is dealt with, and then each portion was dipped in a

bowl of beaten egg and fried slowly in plenty of fat.

Points from other letters are: "I am able to confirm that Grey squirrel is good to eat. When roasted the meat is excellent, and preferable to rabbit or pigeon." - Divisional Officer W.A. CADMAN, North Wales.

"The meat should be cut in pieces and soaked in salt water for two hours, and then placed in a paper bag containing flour. This should be shaken until each portion is well covered. The pieces should then be fried in deep fat until well browned." - Keeper T.C. SHAW, (who lived for many years in Canada).

And, finally: "I have only once eaten Grey squirrel. It was in a casserole, and it was quite ghastly." - District Officer S.R. PAYNE, East England. "Grey squirrel are vermin and are not fit for human consumption." - Forester H. FRANK, North East England.

** A RARE FIND IN SOUTH WALES
HITHERTO UNRECORDED PLANT

A PLANT WHICH, IT IS CLAIMED, has not previously been recorded elsewhere in the country has been found at Pembrey Forest, South Wales. District Officer W.C. WILKINS tells us that this plant - SISYRINCHIUM ANGUSTIFOLIUM MILL - is common throughout North America but has been found near Kerry and Galway, in Ireland, although there is no reason to suppose it was introduced there by human agency. One assumes

from the fact that it was found just above the spring-tide level in a remote part of Pembrey (the forest has been formed on sand dunes) that its introduction into Wales was also natural. Specimens have been collected and sent to the National Museum of Wales.

To quote District Officer Wilkins: "The plant belongs to the Iris family. The leaves are narrow and grass-like; stem 6 inches to a foot high, with two acute wings. Flowers blue, with six equal perianth segments and three stamens united in a tube. One to four flowers are clustered together terminally."

** "THE FIRST 'ROUND-UP'"

OR NO "LIE-IN" FOR THE FORESTER

THIS ACTUALLY HAPPENED. One Sunday morning recently at 5.30 a Forester was awakened by the sound of galloping hooves and, looking out of his bedroom window, he saw two runaway farm horses moving along his fence line and making for the nearby village. After muttered imprecations about the loss of his Sunday morning "lie-in", he dressed and dashed out of his house in order to head off the horses and drive them back to the farm.

After turning back the horses the Forester followed in his van, although it was frequently necessary for him to stop and alight and to shout and gesticulate to prevent the animals from attempting to move in the opposite direction. This went on for half an hour or so, until at last the farm was reached. There our friend found it impossible to round up the horses alone, so that he had to knock up the farmer. The latter, at first somewhat resentful of this early morning intrusion and at having his "lie-in" disturbed, eventually decided that he should be grateful to the Forester and, after helping to round up the horses, promised to repair his fence at the spot where the animals had broken through.

That was that - for the farmer, but not for the Forester, for on the way home his van was bogged. He had to return to the farm for help and, the tractor being out of action, how do you think his van was pulled out of the ditch? By one of the horses which had got the Forester out of bed that Sunday morning at 5.30, of course.

** "MY JOB" TALKS AT GLASGOW

COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING COURSE

A TRAINING COURSE for the staff of the West Scotland Conservancy Office is now in progress. It covers a number of interesting and important topics, and a praiseworthy innovation is a series of 10-minute "My Job" talks by members of the staff. Also included in the course is a visit to Strathgryre Forest. Among those who have been asked to contribute to the course are:

The Conservator, Mr. J. E. JAMES (utilisation and marketing); Mr. FINLAY WILSON (sawmill operations); Mr. J. STEELE (forest produce accounting; nursery records; plant supply procedure); Mr. H. WATSON (Forester Training Schools); District Officer M. Long (Census); E. O. J. G. F. SIFTON or E. O. W. STEWART (clerical records and procedure, P.W. section); Stationery Clerk G. B. McALLISTER, Cashier N. M. MACDONALD, Messenger H. RUSSELL, Shorthand Typist Miss E. W. McMILLAN and Engineer Clerk J. GRIFFIN (My Job talks); Mr. T. FARMER (Regional Advisory Committee, duties of a committee secretary); Divisional Officer J. WEBSTER or District Officer P. A. INNES (housing or farming); E. O. W. McMILLAN (acquisitions, procedure and utilisation of land record); Divisional Officer H. V. S. DIER (silvicultural operations); District Officer W. P. THOMPSON (nursery operations).

** A HAPPY ARRANGEMENT

DIRECTOR, SCOTLAND, OPENS NEW HOSTEL

IN THESE DAYS of intensive land utilisation it is not surprising that we should hear, allegations of forestry conflicting with other interests. That this need not be the case was eloquently explained by Sir HENRY BERESFORD PEIRSE, Director of Forestry for

Scotland, when he performed the opening ceremony at the new Scottish Youth Hostel Association at Glen Doll. This hostel was until recently a shooting lodge and was bought by the S. Y. H. A. from the Forestry Commission when the deer forest at Glen Doll, situated at the head of Glen Clova, in the County of Angus, was acquired for afforestation.

Sir Henry pointed out that the establishment of the hostel was of historic importance, since it showed that the relatively new pastime of rambling, which was doing so much to enable the young folk of the cities to understand the country way of life, need not conflict with the older forms of land use. These are forestry, agriculture and the ancient and honourable sport of deer stalking, all of which, said Sir Henry, had been fairly catered for at Glen Doll.

The Glen Doll Hostel stands at the eastern end of the footpaths which lead over the hills to Ballater and Braemar on Deeside and is, therefore, at the gateway of some of the most magnificent scenery in the Scottish Highlands. The freedom to enjoy such beauty and to

wander at will is something which must be cherished and preserved, and, as Sir Henry pointed out, such freedom lays obligations on those who enjoy it. The carelessly dropped cigarette could destroy many acres of forest and cause great financial loss, and also deprive the country of much needed timber.

"Those of us whose pleasant task it is to plan and guide the afforestation of this lovely, if lonely glen," writes District Officer H.A. MAXWELL, "share the Director's enthusiasm for co-operation with all who have the interest of the land at heart. We shall welcome hostellers to Glen Doll and, if they are interested in our craft, we will gladly describe our work in restoring the sylvan beauty of these hills."

** WHO GOES WHERE?

RECENT TRANSFERS

TRANSFERS REPORTED TO HEADQUARTERS by 31st. October:
District Officers L.C. TROUPE from Gravetye, S.E.(E), to Farnham, S.E.(E); J.C. HARRISON from Santon Downham, E.(E), to Cambridge; J.W. ANDERSON from Santon Downham to Cambridge. Head Forester C.V. SQUIRES from Coed Caerdydd, S.(W), to Libanus, S.(W). Foresters A. BIRKETT from Hockham, E.(E), to Santon Downham; S. HYETT from Bere, S.E.(E), to Shipbourne, S.E.(E); F. PEMBERTON from Gisburn, N.W.(E), to Kershope, N.W.(E); D.R. SMITH from Inchnacardoch, N.(S), to Eilanreach, N.(S); E. MACPHERSON from Eilanreach to North Strome, N.(S); E.R. FRANCIS from Mortimer, N.W.(E), to Dalton, N.W.(E); D. NELSON from Longtown, N.W.(E), to Ennerdale, N.W.(E); A.S. NORMAN from Cwmogwr, S.(W), to Tintern, S.(W); F.C. WATTS from Bramshill, S.E.(E), to Bere, S.E.(E); D. CARMICHAEL from Knapdale, W.(S), to Glencoe, W.(S); K.E. COX from St. Gwynno, S.(W), to Ebbw, S.(W); C.A. HODGSON from Ennerdale to Bawtry, N.W.(E); F.G. HANN from Lyminge, S.E.(E), to Hursley, S.E.(E); J.R. MACMILLAN from Grisedale, N.W.(E), to Mortimer; C.A. TAYLOR from Strathnairn, N.(S), to Battan and Boblainy, N.(S); D.R. THOMAS from Dalton, N.W.(E) to Clipstone, N.W.(E); W.J. WILSON from Walcot, N.W.(E), to Bagot, N.W.(E).

Foremen W.J. McINTOSH from Strathord, E.(S), to Ledmore, E.(S); J. THOMSON from Edgarhope, S.(S), to Glen Trool, S.(S); D.W. AXTELL from Clipstone to Kinver, N.W.(E); S.J. BETTERTON from Education, Northerwood, to Dean School; G.M. OWEN from Kerry, N.(W), to Pentraeth, N.(W); E.G. REES from Michaelstone, S.(W), to Margam, S.(W); J.H.M. GUTCH from Bonnan, S.(S), to Stenton, S.(S); J.D. WATSON from Tintern to Irton and Gamhiw, S.(W); R.C. HARRIS from Laurieston, S.(S), to Glengap, S.(S); J.D. ROSE from Delamere, N.W.(E), to Longtown; C.R. AMBLER from Dyfnant, N.(W), to Aberhirnant, N.(W); Clerk of Works R.E. YABSLEY from Wareham, S.W.(E), to Bruton, S.W.(E).

H.E.O. J. STEELE from Glasgow to Headquarters; Clerical Officer J.S. THREADGILL from Headquarters to Cambridge.

Newcomers to the Department are: District Officers E.J.B. HARDCASTLE, N.(S); A.C. CHRISTIE, N.W.(E); R.C. STERN, Research; G.J.N. TAYLOR, Dean; J.G. DEVITT, S.(S); R.E. CROWTHER, N.E.(E); J.R.B. ROWNTREE, N.E.(E). Clerical Officers R. GARWOOD, Headquarters; W. GLEICHER, Office of Director, England; Mrs. M. ROBINSON, S.W.(E); L.W. FENN, E.(E); E.N. PAULEY, E.(E).

** "PROGRESS" IN THE FOREST

FOREST OFFICERS AND FORESTERS of earlier years will recall several old employees who signed the pay-sheet with an "X", which was followed by the name of a witness. Despite the fact that time marches on there still appear on New

X STILL MARKS THE SPOT

Forest pay sheets the names of eleven employees who acknowledge their pay with the same symbol. To the learned this may, in 1950, seem incredible, but those who know "The New" will recall that "X" is the mark of the Romany who has been engaged on work in the forest for generations. Just how long it will be before it finally disappears is a matter for speculation. It is an interesting fact that nearly all today's recruits from the Romany have attended modern secondary schools; altogether there are 30 such employees.

** FORESTRY SOCIETY'S TOUR OF DENMARK

COMMISSION STAFF TOOK PART

FOUR MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION'S staff, namely District Officers S.R. PAYNE (East England) and J.F. WILSON (South East England,) and Foresters W.T. WILDASH (South West England) and G. CLAYDON (North Wales), took part in the recent tour of Danish forests which was made by the Royal Forestry Society of England and Wales. With headquarters in Copenhagen, five days were spent in touring State and private forests. The Government "tree breeding" station was also visited. Although forestry was the main object of the tour it did not occupy the whole of the time, for hospitality was lavish. A highlight of this was the dinner given to the visitors by the Danish Forestry Society; this took place in the suburbs of Copenhagen at a hostelry owned by the State Forest Service and known as the SKOVRIDERKROEN - which, freely translated, is equivalent to "The Conservator's Arms".

For all who participated the visit was most enjoyable and instructive. Many new friendships were made, and old friendships cemented.

**** RETIREMENT OF HEAD FORESTER A.B.WEIR.** ~~OUR BEST WISHES go to Head Forester A.B.WEIR,~~ of Kielder, North East England, who has retired after 24 years service with the Commission. On promotion to Forester in 1932 he was transferred from Brechfa Forest, South Wales, to Kielder, and became Head Forester in 1938. During the war and after, Mr. Weir was seconded to H.T.P.D., and returned to Kielder in 1947. In the following year he received the B.E.M. in recognition of his meritorious services on behalf of the Commission.

**** THE DOG AND THE FISH**

(THE ONE THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY)

FORESTER D.M.MORGAN, of Brechfa, South Wales, relates a story about his dog which shows that where sagacity is concerned the animal is in the front rank. The other day, writes Forester Morgan, I flicked the fly into a quiet water behind a protruding boulder; there was a swirl and a splash and immediately the nylon cut the water like a knife as the fish bolted downstream to the tune of a screaming reel. I was in to a beauty, and after a fight lasting about 10 thrilling minutes I had the fish, a good sewin, rolling on the surface and answering to every pull on the line as I hauled him gently towards a good landing ground. By this time, however, my dog (a black Labrador Retriever) had entered the water and was heading straight for the fish, and none of my agitated commands or threats could persuade him to return to the bank. He took a grab at the fish and lost it and then made a second attempt, this time being successful, for his teeth found a firm hold behind the gills. There followed some vigorous tail flapping by the fish and some tail wagging by the dog as he put the three-pound, silvery fresh run sewin at my feet. That was the dog's first attempt at landing fish; he has since been encouraged in the art and is now extremely proficient.

(Editor's note: Our last "sagacious dog" story told how a black Labrador owned by Forester Hammond, of Collingbourne, S.W.(E), catches moles, probably after hearing them at work underground. We shall be interested to hear of any other dogs which display exceptional intelligence. Our own dog - original price 5s.6d. - begs; "dies for the King"; climbs up ladders but can't reverse; and jumps through hoops).

**** ACROBATIC RABBITS**

FOUR-FT. FENCE NO OBSTACLE

FOR SOME TIME the Warrener at Ferndown Forest, New Division, was puzzled by evidence of rabbits in a newly planted area. These were doing no serious damage to the crop, but it was clear by the nibbling of the lower leaves of laburnam planted round the area that the pests were present. Daily the Warrener examined the fence without finding any trace of how access was obtained. One morning, however, just after dawn, he saw a full-grown rabbit actually climb the four foot fence. At the time the Warrener kept his dogs to heel, but he later confirmed that a rabbit, on being chased by the dogs, would never attempt to jump or climb the fence but, in its panic, always unsuccessfully tried to find a way through the wire at the base of the fence.

**** VISITS TO FORESTS**

MEMBERS OF THE HEADQUARTERS staff recently visited Bedgebury Forest, S.E.(E), for educational purposes. The party was conducted round the forest and the pinetum by the Conservator, MR.R.H.SMITH and District Officer J.M.ROSS, together with Head Forester NEMES and Forester A.W.WESTALL. A vote of thanks to the Conservator and others was proposed by the Secretary (Mr.H.A.TURNER) and the party left with the feeling that much had been learned from the visit.

The staff of the Office of Director, England, recently visited Chiddingfold and Goodwood forests, the morning being spent at the former, where a number of forest operations were witnessed. The tour included a visit to an area recently acquired from the Goodwood Estate, in which were seen what is probably one of the finest stands of beech in the country. The trees are about 90 years old and are 90-100 feet high. Thanks to the efforts of the Conservator and his staff the visit was extremely enjoyable and instructive.

**** FLASHES**

WE ARE GLAD TO HEAR that Forester W.H.PAULLEY, of Dunwich Forest, E.(E) now appears on the road to recovery after a major internal operation in Ipswich Hospital. We hope he will soon be fully restored to health.

THE MARRIAGE OF Mr. "BILL" HENRY, of the Office of Director, England, to Miss OLIVE BLEAK, of the Foreign Office, took place last month. Colleagues and friends at Cadogan Square supported their good wishes with a handsome set of cutlery. Approval of Bill Henry's "acquisition" was conveyed to him by telegram on the day of the ceremony. Miss THELMA HOLMES, Clerical Officer at H.Q., has married Mr. R.DAVIS; they too, receive our best wishes. Bride was presented with cutlery by Mr.A.D.PALMER, on behalf of colleagues. The honeymoon is being spent in the Lake District.

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. W.STEWART, Executive Officer, West Scotland Conservancy Office, Glasgow, and Mrs. Stewart on the birth of a son; to Mr. JAMES LAW, clerk in the same office and Mrs. Law, who have also become the proud parents of a son; and to Forester D.J.MacRAE, of Kilmichael, West Scotland, and Mrs. MacRae on the birth of a daughter. Well done, West Scotland!

L.P.BEGAN, formerly a messenger at Headquarters, and well known to numerous visitors, has left for other employment.