

# THE SLASHER

## Forestry Commission News

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### THOSE FLYING SAUCERS

#### PHENOMENA SEEN FROM S. WALES FOREST

AN INTERESTING "FOLLOW-UP" has been received to last month's story about Flying Saucers. Mr. J. W. BOWDITCH, clerk at Brecon Forest, South Wales, tells us of an unusual sight witnessed at one and the same time by no fewer than twelve Forestry Commission employees. "While travelling to work to-day (24th November) on the transport lorry" (writes Mr. Bowditch), "my attention was drawn by a member of our party to a strange object travelling in the sky towards Brecon. It was flying at about 1,000 feet and moving at a great speed, and was similar in shape to an airship, except that it seemed to have a flat top. The lorry was stopped and the whole twelve of us were able to see the object and to keep it in view for what must have been a distance of five or six miles. Whatever the object was, it emitted no sound."

#### KILLED IN KOREA

It is with profound regret that we have to announce the death of ALASDAIR MacDONALD ANNAN, Forest Worker at GLENBRITTON, North Scotland, who has been killed in Korea.

Forest Worker Annan commenced his employment in the forest in July, 1948, and was called up in the autumn of the following year. He was educated at Portree Secondary School and intended making forestry his career. His fellow workers knew him as a keen, intelligent lad, and he is mourned by the entire forest staff.

We take this opportunity to pay our own humble tribute to one who, although so young in years, has been called upon to make the great sacrifice.

Our correspondent points out that Brecon is nearly 3,000 feet above sea level, and adds: "The majority of the party is strictly teetotal." In view of the time of day that the incident occurred the last sentence of Mr. Bowditch's statement may, we feel, be regarded as somewhat superfluous!

#### RARE PLANTS IN PEMBREY FOREST

##### NEWS OF OTHER "FINDS"

WE REFERRED LAST MONTH to the discovery at Pembrey Forest, South Wales, of a plant - SISYRINCHIUM ANGUSTIFOLIUM MILL - which, it was thought, had not previously been recorded elsewhere in the country. Now Head Forester G. W. HOLLIS, of

Arundel Forest, South East England, tells us of other rare finds which have been made at Pembrey. I spent 10 years at Pembrey, he states, and carried out the initial programme of fixation and afforestation. During that period I found four quite rare plants, namely:

GAURA COCCINEA. A native of Texas, naturalised in eastern areas of U.S.A., but never before recorded in the British Isles.

MUSCARI COMOSUM or Grape-hyacinth. A native of Southern Europe and hitherto unrecorded in Carmarthenshire.

LITHOSPERMUM OFFICINALE or Gromwell. Not previously reported from within the county of Carmarthen, yet quite common at Pembrey.

EUPHORBIA CYPARISSILIS. A feathery foliage spurge, not previously reported in Carmarthenshire.

Other rare flowers to be found at Pembrey were ERIGERON CANADENSE, or Canadian Fleabane, and SILENE CONICA, or Striated Catchfly. The species Gaura coccinea was, at the request of the Chief Research Officer of the time, transferred to Culbin Forest, East Scotland; it would be interesting to know if the removal proved successful.

#### FOREST WORKERS' SUCCESS

##### TWELVE KIELDER MEN GAIN WOODMAN'S CERTIFICATE

A. TAURINS and A. H. WEIR; Whickhope - J. W. COWLEY; Plashetts - A. TAYLOR, R. W. BLACKWELL.

NO FEWER THAN eleven forest workers at Kielder, North East England, learned recently that they have obtained the Woodman's Certificate of the Royal Forestry Society of England and Wales. They are: Kielder beat - M.J. ROBSON, W.B. CHILTERS, W.D. FORSTER, N. CURRY, R.S. LEE, A. STEEL,

The men's success was the result of much study, undertaken voluntarily out of working hours. A course was run on two evenings a week and was organised by Forester M.T. TURNBULL, who was ably assisted by all Foresters at Kielder, and by the District Officers. The

classes were regularly attended by 40 workers, and of the twelve who decided they knew enough to take the examination eleven, as already stated, were successful.

There can be no doubt that the course has stimulated interest in forestry as a way of life as opposed to a means of livelihood, and those workers who took part have helped considerably towards the establishment of a cadre of trained woodmen, which British forestry so badly needs. Six of the successful men hope to obtain the Forester's Certificate of the same Society, and it is proposed to run a further course for the Woodman's Certificate next summer. It remains to be said that the whole scheme has been developed and encouraged by District Officer P. F. GARTHWLITE, of Kielder.

**CONSTRUCTION IN THE LEAN** THE TELEPHONE INSTALLATION at Whitemead Park, in the Dean, was being changed because of a switch-round of office rooms.  
**SHORT STORY ABOUT A TELEGRAPH POLE** One afternoon the Deputy Surveyor (Mr. J. Q. WILLIAMSON) went out into the forest, knowing that on his return the change-over would be completed. Imagine, then, his horror on his return to find, opposite the office, a brand-new sparkling metal telegraph pole. Visions of "leg-pulls" innumerable ("You don't trust your own poles, eh?") flashed through his mind. Fortunately the Telephone Manager had a sense of humour and agreed to replace the metal monstrosity with a good-looking, well-pickled but otherwise respectable Scots pine.

**ANIMAL CASUALTIES ON THE ROAD.** MUCH PUBLICITY has been rightly directed towards the prevention of road accidents in which humans are involved, but the extent to which mortality occurs among animal road users is not generally realised. In the New Forest fairly large numbers of cattle and forest ponies are depastured on the 46,000 acres or so of Open Forest and Unclosed Woodland, and as many of the roads are unfenced it is not surprising that these animals are sometimes killed by motorists.

Our wild deer, writes Mr. O. HOOK, a Clerk in the New, include Red, Fallow, Japanese Sika and Roe, and these, too, sometimes suffer a sad fate on the road; last year seven deer are known to have been killed. I have records of the following road deaths in the New Forest during the past three years - three otters, killed near bridges; four badgers, one of which (a boar) I found to weigh 27 lbs; and two foxes, at least. In addition, many Grey squirrels - those unwelcome intruders whose invasion of the New Forest commenced early in 1940 - were killed, and in 1947 I found a single "road-side" specimen of the now scarce Red squirrel.

Hedgehogs, with us, are a strictly local species, occurring in the main near villages and other built-up areas, and I have a record of 14 casualties in the three years. Mice are quite often killed, and once I found a dead Lesser Shrew, and once a Pipistrelle Bat. Rabbits, especially young ones, are frequent casualties, but hares only on rare occasions. Birds, especially the smaller passerines such as Chaffinch, Sparrow, Blue Tit and Goldfinch, often fall victim to modern road transport vehicles, usually during the mating season.

Among reptiles killed on the roads in the last three years I have found three Adders and three Grass Snakes, while every Spring the amphibious Toad suffers heavily along a certain stretch of road which borders some shallow ponds, to which in March they migrate in strength. In 1947 I counted no fewer than 123 dead in only 200 yards or so of road.

It would be interesting to learn from readers of The Slasher whether animal casualties in their localities appear abnormal, and whether they can add to the species listed above.

**HEAD FORESTER WEIR** LAST MONTH we referred briefly to the retirement from the Department of Head Forester A. B. WEIR, who at the age of 65 leaves the Forestry Commission after 25 years service, and with 50 years experience as a practising forester. Coming to Kielder in 1932, he has seen the plantations expand from the early tentative plantings at Smales to a forest of 30,000 acres. Thus his work as Forester, and from 1938 as Head Forester, has coincided with the formative phase of the forest, but as he leaves he sees new villages springing up and a network of new roads being made to usher in the productive phase.

Before going to Brechfa Forest as a foreman in 1926, Mr. Weir was employed in private estate forestry in South Wales. As stated last month, he was with H.T.P.D. during the war and, for his meritorious services generally and to the Commission in particular, he received the B.E.M.

It is good to know that although Mr. Weir has left the Commission his work as a forester is by no means ended, for he is taking up a job as Forest Consultant with Northern Forest Products; with Dedication in full swing his "retirement" is likely to be a busy one. We are at one in wishing he and Mrs. Weir all happiness in the future. Incidentally their son, Alfred, is now at Glentworth Forester Training School.

**ACCIDENT IN THE FOREST** HEAD FORESTER T. E. ANDERSON sustained a fractured leg in an accident which occurred recently in Wykeham Forest, North East England; a feature of the unfortunate event was the difficulty experienced in obtaining help and in removing Mr. Anderson over hilly country.

**HEAD FORESTER HURT**

Foles were being "tushed" down a steep slope at the time of the accident. The hook of the cable slipped out of the tushing chain ring, and hit Mr. Anderson, causing a fracture below the knee. Leaving him in the care of two forest workers, Forester W.R. GOUGH climbed a one-in-three gradient to his van half a mile away, and drove to the forest office a further mile distant. He 'phoned the homes of both local doctors, only to find they were out, and then the telephone refused to function. From the local Post Office, another two and a half miles on, he was able to telephone for an ambulance from Scarborough, and arranged to meet it seven miles away at Hackness. On arrival at the forest it was possible for the ambulance men to back their vehicle to within about three quarters of a mile of the scene of the accident. After being made as comfortable as possible Mr. Anderson was carried by stretcher to the ambulance, the journey being made over a route which involved the taller carriers walking on one side and the short men on the other, in order to keep the patient on an "even keel". Mr. Anderson was eventually conveyed to Scarborough Hospital and, we understand, is now making a good recovery.

**STAFF MOVEMENTS** TRANSFERS REPORTED TO HEADQUARTERS by the end of November were: Head Foresters W. J. HALE from Dean School to Hazelborough, E(E) J. D. ROBBIE from Speymouth, E.(S), to Blackhall, E(S); G. F. BEASLEY from Hazelborough to Kielder, NE(E). Foresters R. A. ALLISON from Pitmedden, E(S), to Speymouth; W. J. HUMPHRIES from Quantocks, S.W.(E), to Dunster, S.W.(E); D.M. MCLEOD from Assich, N(S) to Farigaig, N(S); D. B. CRAWFORD from Tentsmuir, E(S), to Pitmedden; R. H. PACEY from Blackhall to Blackeraig, E(S); J. K. REID from Blackeraig to Glenarrochty, E(S); C. M. WHITE from Rannock, E(S); to Reillour, E(S); D. MARNOCH from Kiellour to Alltoailleach, E(S); M. MACRAE from Farigaig to Assich, N(S); J. F. BOWEN from Monmouth, S(W), to St. Asaph N(W); J. DAY from Bawtry, NW(E), to Clipstone, NW(E). Foremen E. LEYSHON from Holden, SW(E), to Alice Holt; A.J. DUNCAN from Craigvinean, E(S), to Monaughty, E(S).

Assistant Engineer J. M. WILLSON from Director, England, London, to Lightmoor Depot. Clerk of Works R. E. TABSLEY from Bruton, SW(E), to Wareham, SW(E). Executive Officer L. H. GRINSTED from Shrewsbury to Bristol.

Newcomers to the Department are: District Officers D. A. MITHEN to Gravetye, SE(E); A. MOSS to Benmore W(S); J. P. NEWTON to Devizes, SW(E); P. J. LANGLEY to Santon Downham, E(E); J. P. McNAMARA to Chester, NW(E); G. A. DEY to Aberdeen, E(S); P. H. MANNING to Cambridge, E(E); V. B. SIDE to Woking, SE(E); F. J. DONALD to Aberdeen, E(S). Foreman I. A. FALCONER to Dean. Assistant Engineer D. C. ROSS to Benmore. Clerical Officers G. E. C. BEACHAM to Bristol; R. R. CARRICK, R. C. McLEAN, J. R. MAXWELL and Miss B. STEWART to Dumfries; J. G. FRITCHARD to Chester; R. W. TESTER to New; L. R. EVESDEN to York; K. E. KINTERIDGE to Cambridge; J. B. S. AUDY to Headquarters; Miss T. A. WYATT to Woking; Miss J. WILCOCK to Chester.

**AN UNUSUAL SITE** A BIRCH TREE, 10 feet high, can be seen growing from the side of an old disused, stone-built windmill near Shouldham village, in Norfolk. Do readers know of any other unusual sites?

**TREE GROWS FROM WINDMILL**

**WATCH FOR IT** VISITORS TO THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN exhibition, to be staged in London on the South Bank of the Thames, should look out for a flagpole provided by the Forestry Commission. This comes from a fine specimen of larch which was planted in the New Forest in 1868, only 17 years after the first Festival. The dimensions of the pole are: length, 70 feet; butt, 11 inches; top, five inches. It contains 21 cubic feet of timber.

**RAINFALL AT HARDKNOTT** THE TOTAL RAINFALL over Hardknott Forest, North West England, in F.Y.50 was 116.1 inches. For this information we are indebted to Forester M. MURRAY, who gives us some further interesting facts. For example, the highest rainfall on any day was 4.25 inches (September 7th). September was the wettest month, with a total of 20.1 inches; May was the driest month, with only 3.15 inches. There were 116 days without rain.

Believe it or not, the year's rainfall at Hardknott represents 2,631,692 gallons (11,616 tons) per acre.

Now, readers, are there any unusual features about the rainfall at your forests? Which, in F.Y.50, had the highest rainfall, and which the lowest? We believe Culbin, the forest formed on sand dunes on the southern shore of the Moray Firth, may have

established something of a record, for there sunshine is particularly generous, and the average fall is of the order of only 25 inches a year.

**\*\* HOT JOB** RECENTLY A NUMBER OF EX-R.A.F. HUTS, in need of repair and renovation, were received at one of the Commission's Depots. There was some speculation among the personnel as to the future of these huts, and someone decided that the Commission intended to set them up in the forest and use them as Swiss chalets. So instead of being called huts they were popularly referred to as chalets.

The foreman detailed someone to paint them; there must have been a misunderstanding somewhere, however, because when the time sheet of the workman was received it read: "To painting shallots - 3 hours."

**\*\* TRY THIS AT YOUR PARTY** A CORRESPONDENT has sent along the following little competition, the idea being to fill in the gaps with the names of Forestry Commission officers. In certain instances one name denotes two words. Each dot signifies a letter. Solution will be given next month. The suggestion is made that similar competitions, with the substitution of Conservancy names, might be held at office parties this season.

"Good ....", ..... Crusoe exclaimed as he inspected the hundred .... lamp that he discovered among some drift .... on the shore. "This will add to my ....., and will certainly ..... the interest of that not so .... Man Friday."

Now Friday was as black as that ... of omen, the ....., and could at .... but ..... the unfamiliar object in his hand in wonderment. At this juncture his attention is distracted by a .... - .. the ground and, tripping over a piece of ..... the ..... man ..... the bulb to smithereens. This clumsiness serves only to .... his companion who, although whistling "Annie .....", is secretly hoping that he will, with the help of ... through his difficulties. To Friday's protestations he comments in simple, almost pigeon, English "You go .... !"

**\*\* CONSERVANCY STAFF VISITS A FOREST** MEMBERS OF THE STAFF of the North East England Conservancy office recently visited Allerston Forest, and spent an interesting and instructive time. The Conservator, Mr. A. C. CONNELL, was helped by District Officer E. M. CONDER in showing the party round. Various forest operations were seen, and considerable interest was shown in the Forest Workers Holdings. For many this was the first sight of a State forest, and the opinion was unanimous that the visit would prove of great help to the staff in carrying out their normal duties.

**\*\* GOSSIP** WE HEAR THAT Miss MARGARET ENEVER, of the office of Director, England, is sporting an engagement ring; the prospective bridegroom is TONY PETTITT, of the same office. We tender our best wishes to them and in so doing are reminded that Tony Pettitt and his fiancée were the 1949-50 Chairman and Vice-chairman respectively of the Forestry Commission branch of the Civil Service Clerical Association.

CONGRATULATIONS to Forester D. R. HARVEY, of Ringwood, on his marriage to Miss D. HAYNES.

**\*\* DRIVER JOINS VETERAN MOTORISTS' CLUB** A DRIVER AT AMPLEFORTH FOREST, North East England, has joined the Veteran Motorists' Club after driving for 24 years without an accident. He is Mr. W. BROWN, whose record includes nearly four years' driving with the Forestry Commission, six years with haulage firms, seven years as a private chauffeur, four years' public service driving and three years' driving as a garage hand. Has any other forest driver who can equal this record?

**\*\* ANOTHER FISH STORY** A STORY OF A FISHERMAN'S FRUSTRATION comes from Forester W. L. McCAVISH, of Whickhope, North East England. For the past two years, he writes, an old trout living in a pool in the Whickhope Burn has managed to evade my efforts to land it, although I have hooked it twice. It was therefore with keen anticipation that I started fishing this season, believing that there might be a case of "third time lucky". But alas, new and scientific methods of fishing were brought to us in the form of the road-making excavator. This just lowered its grab into the pool and, in the third grab-load, took out the trout. The fish was loaded with the gravel into a lorry, transported for a mile or so and then, still full of life, was deposited at the feet of an astonished Polish road-worker who immediately confiscated it for his supper. It weighed about a pound and measured 12 inches from head to tail.