

"A PRIMEVAL ENGLAND"

GUIDE TO THE NEW FOREST

A GUIDE TO THE NEW FOREST has just been published and will not only meet a need which has been apparent for a very long while, but may well be voted the best of our publications to date. The guide is packed with interesting facts about New Forest history, forest operations and timber production and, in addition, is well illustrated and a veritable mine of information for the visitor who wants to know how best to reach and explore this unique area.

Of the total area of 144 square miles within the forest boundary no fewer than 100 square miles remain in public ownership; nearly all this Crown land, says the guide, is available for public access and recreation. The broad high roads by which the motorist or cyclist may reach the New Forest carry much traffic, "but if one leaves their unfenced edges to turn aside into the wood and moor, where oaks and beeches that number their years in centuries stand beside heaths that the plough has never broken, one returns almost at once to a primeval England. There are glades, moors and marshes, deep within the Forest, that have scarcely changed since William the Conqueror decreed, in 1087 A.D., that this region should henceforth be his royal domain, so giving rise to the name of 'New Forest', which it has held ever since."

Referring to the woodlands the guide says the extensive war fellings were made "with so careful an eye" to amenity, and "regrowth has been so rapid that the sylvan beauty of the plantations seems almost unimpaired." Trees of many different kinds and ages occupy relatively small stretches of ground and much of the regeneration of felled trees is achieved by the natural seeding of selected "mother" trees. Mr. D.W. YOUNG, a former Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, describes the woodlands and the foresters' work therein in greater detail. The total area of woodland on Crown lands, he says, is about 25,500 acres. There are nearly 7,000 acres of Ancient and Ornamental woods in which, under the New Forest Act of 1887, the Forestry Commissioners had no power to carry out operations. "This," says Mr. Young, "was rather tragic, because nearly every winter brings a number of the ancient monarchs crashing to the ground. Cattle and ponies, on the other hand, keep any natural regeneration closely grazed back. This means that the area of completely stocked woods has dwindled year by year. To allow these woods to disappear would constitute an irreparable loss. Under the new Act (1949), subject to the approval of the Verderers, the Commissioners may enclose an area not exceeding 20 acres in any one place and afforest it. Special care for amenities will be taken in this work and plantations will be kept closed until the risk of damage by animals has ceased."

Mr. Young rightly emphasises the contribution made by the Forest to the timber needs of the two world wars, and gives us this interesting point: In the last war the Forest provided twelve and a half million cubic feet of timber for war purposes, thus saving more than 400,000 tons of shipping space. If a bridge were built from Southampton to New York this timber would provide a decking for the bridge one inch thick and nine feet wide.

It is of interest that the Forestry Commission, in administering the New Forest, is the direct successor of the Lord Wardens appointed by the mediæval kings to preserve their personal domain, and its principal officer in the Forest (now Mr. F. WYNNE JONES) is still known by the ancient title of Deputy Surveyor. In addition to the production of timber the Crown's activities extend to the protection of wild life and the safeguarding of amenities.

In a foreword LORD ROBINSON says much thought has been given to the intricate problem of adjusting the Forest to modern requirements while paying due regard to existing rights and interests. An able Report by a Committee presided over by the Rt. Hon. H.T. Baker prepared the way for the 1949 Act, which takes full account of the varied uses of the Forest, namely for grazing by Commoners' animals, for timber production by the Commission, and for the enjoyment of the public.

Other contributors include District Officer H.L. EDLIN. It is evident that all writers have spared no effort to give us a wealth of information in the most readable form. This is definitely a publication to be read and enjoyed, irrespective of whether you know the New Forest.

****FRONT LINE FOREST**

FORESTER AND THE UNEXPLODED BOMB

belaboured hard-pressed Dover and Folkestone; the Battle of Britain was fought overhead, miles high and leaving a delicate tracery of white vapour trails in the sky; and the harsh stutter of the "doodle-bugs" was common as they flew low over the plantations to deal death and destruction in urban areas.

Today at Lyminge, as one walks through the plantations, one sees evidence of the conflict. A flying bomb still lies in the forest, and here and there are pieces of crashed planes. Forester S. WATKINS, who came to South East England 18 months or so ago from Kerry Forest, in North Wales, tells us that quite a lot of unexploded bombs have been discovered in Lyminge. The twenty-fifth of these was picked up by Forester Watkins on the very day last month on which we were talking to him. He felt something hard beneath his heel, bent down, and there was another bomb, small but deadly.

****TABLE TENNIS - A "STAR" IN THE MAKING?**

CONGRATULATIONS TO PAUL BROOK, Executive Officer at Headquarters, who is achieving distinction in table tennis circles.

In the Civil Service trials held in London recently Paul Brook, who was nominated by the Headquarters Table Tennis Club (Inforesta), succeeded in gaining a place in the Civil Service second team, which plays representative matches in the London area. His success is the more praiseworthy when one considers that there are more than 3,000 male players in the Civil Service London League from which selections could have been made.

Paul Brook took up table tennis in 1946, after witnessing a game between "star" players. While undertaking his National Service in the Navy he represented Portsmouth in inter-town matches and also played for Hampshire in a county match. At the time of writing he is hopeful of selection for Surrey County's second team.

****THE FOREST FOOTBALLERS NEWS OF KIELDER HEARTS**

It is well known that our Chairman, LORD ROBINSON, has always maintained the closest interest in the development of Kielder Forest, in Northumberland, the largest State forest in the country. On being made a Peer he chose to become Lord Robinson of Kielder and Adelaide. It is because of this long and close association with Kielder that Lord Robinson has accepted an invitation to serve as President of the Kielder Hearts Football Club, which includes among its players some Commission employees.

FORESTER G. STOKOE, the Secretary and Treasurer, tells us that the club was formed in the season 1935-36 with a dozen or so playing members. They paid their own expenses, which were heavy, for long distances had to be travelled. In the seasons 1936-37 and 1938-39 Kielder Hearts were runners-up in the North Tyne League, and in 1947-48 won the championship and League cup by defeating Wark. Prospects in the present season are not easily assessed but "we hope to bring one or two cups to Kielder," says Forester Stokoe. "I would like to put on record the wonderful support we receive from the ladies of Kielder," he goes on. "Some share the work of washing and mending jerseys and shorts, and also act as hostesses after home matches when tea is served. They are among the staunchest supporters we have and the weather does not deter them from attending matches both at home and away.

"The finance 'department' is the most troublesome to keep going. However, we raise funds by whist drives and dances and have a small balance at the end of the season".

****THE FORAGING RANGE OF RED SQUIRRELS SOME UNUSUAL PROPAGATION**

FROM FOREMAN H. STOKER, of Beddgelert, North Wales, comes an interesting query. "Can any reader volunteer information regarding the foraging range of red squirrels", he asks. "I recently found a healthy beech seedling in Cwm Du here, a full mile and a half from the nearest seed-bearing beech, a mile of this distance being open mountainside. The other possible source of seed lay one and three quarter miles away over both forest and field. As the husk of the seed showed no sign of having been through any digestive process I have concluded that a squirrel was the involuntary forester.

"Last spring I discovered a healthy beech seedling which was growing in a stand of Sitka spruce, and the seed had been sown by a dead wood pigeon. The unfortunate bird had been struck down by a bird of prey and the young tree was growing from its crop. In such strange ways do trees grow, and perhaps readers may be able to tell us of other unusual instances of propagation."

(Editor's note. It is, of course, likely that the seed of the first seedling mentioned by Foreman Storer was transported by a Carrion Crow or Jackdaw. Crows, and rooks, too, frequently pick up acorns and drop them in places where they may germinate, and no doubt they do the same with beech mast).

**** TRAINEE AND OARSMAN**

A NEWCOMER to the Forester Training School in the Forest of Dean is H. COPPING, Senior Four and South Coast senior sculler. He has been described as "one of the finest oarsmen Folkestone has ever had".

Until recently Mr. Copping was employed at Lyminge Forest, South East England, and every day he cycled the 16 miles return journey to his work, considering it excellent training to keep himself in trim for sculling and rowing.

**** TRANSFERS**

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS were reported to Headquarters in October: District Officers W.F. FRENCH from Fochabers, E(S), to Kemnay, E(S); G.A. DAY from Inverurie, E(S), to Keith, E(S); I.F. MacIVER from Ledbury, SW(F), to Malvern, SW(F); P.H. MANNING from Santon Downham, E(E), to Cambridge; I.R.B. MARSHALL from Widehaugh, NE(E), to York.

Foresters W.T. WATERS from Fakenham (Research) to Alice Holt (Research); A.L. MITCHELL from Methwold, F(E), to Kesteven, E(E); D.J. MacRAE from Kilmichael, W(S), to Inverliever, W(S); R.G. MURRAY from Inverliever to Glenbranter, W(S); R. McFAN from Garadban, W(S), to Kilmory, W(S); C.A. BLOOR from Wendover, E(E), to Fineshade, E(E); A. McFAN from Glenbranter to Kilmichael; J.A. JONES from Rheola, S(W), to Brecon, S(W). F.S.V. BURTON from Woodchurch, SE(F), to Winchester, SE(F); J.E.A. KFFN from Winchester to Woking; I.O. ROBERTSON from Edinburgh to Glentress School.

Foremen T.J. SPANTON from Apethorpe, F(F), to Walden, E(E); J.R. DAVIDSON from Ae, S(S), to Duns, S(S); R.S. LEWIS from Talybont, S(W), to Tintern, S(W); E. LEYSHON from Alice Holt (Research) to Grizedale (Research); W.D. MacPHERSON from Glenurquhart, N(S), to Aigas, N(S).

F.O. K. BALDWIN from Aberystwyth to Cardiff. C.O.'s J.C. O'HARA from Glasgow to Edinburgh; Miss B. STEWART from Dumfries to Glasgow.

Newcomers to the Department are: District Officer B.B. MAYES, to S(S). C.O.'s W.C.J. ABLITT, F(F); J. ANDERSON, S(S); W.M. McALPINE, NW(F); C.A.T. SADLER, SE(E); K.H.C. TAYLOR, NE(E); D. MacPHAIL, Edinburgh; K.G. HARRATT, Education; H. CLARK, D.A.A. ISFONGER, D. REEVES and R. WOTTON to Headquarters.

**** TWO BIG POPLARS**

WRITING ON THE SUBJECT of big trees, a correspondent says it has been suggested that a 25-years old Populus trichocarpa (Balsam poplar) in Waterloo Wood, Gwydyr Forest, North Wales, is the largest tree planted by the Forestry Commission; it measures $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches at breast height, quarter girth over bark. This tree, however, (goes on our correspondent), must yield pride of place to a 23-years old Populus robusta (a hybrid poplar) in Meresway Wood, Tidenham Chase, which is an outlier of the Forest of Dean. This tree is $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches quarter girth. Can any reader tell us of a tree planted by the Commission which is bigger than either of these?

**** SERVICE WITHOUT SICK LEAVE**

FOREMAN C. LEWIS, now engaged on nursery research work at Wareham Forest, South West England, took up employment with the Forestry Commission in November, 1925, and has never had a day's sick leave. Congratulations, Foreman Lewis!

**** VISIT TO INCHNACARDOCH**

MEMBERS OF THE STAFF of the Inverness Office recently visited Inchnacardoch Forest and nursery, where special interest was taken in the nursery research work. The party also visited the Scots pine Provenance plots, in which European and American strains have been brought together in order that their development may be compared with the native strains. While visiting other plantations particular attention was paid to some 37-years old Sitka spruce which stand beside Loch Ness and are more than 100 feet in height.

The visitors were indebted to the ~~escorting officers, District Officers~~
R.O. DRUMMOND and D.T. SEAL and Head Forester D. MacDONALD, for a most instructive tour.

****FORESTERS AND GARDENERS**

SOME MORE HORTICULTURALISTS

WE HAVE HEARD of others who, like Education Officer T.A. ROBBIE, of Glentress Forester Training School, are no mean exponents of horticulture. Take Ganger JOHN JONES, of

Brechfa, South Wales, for example; his Forester, Mr. D.M. MORGAN, writes:

"The flower garden around his cottage by the Cothi is a blaze of colour in the summer months, and a great variety of produce comes from his vegetable garden. Good quality vegetables, too, for to date this season, in the face of keen competition, he has walked off with more than 40 prizes from local shows, and holds a fine silver challenge cup for the second year in succession."

Mr. R. BUTLER, Forester at Chiddingfold, South East England, from 1922 to 1937, is still a keen gardener although he is 81. At this year's flower show at Chiddingfold village he received first prize for his vase of asters, beating the present Forester, Mr. R.E. FRANCIS, who gained second prize.

Incidentally, Forester Morgan and Ganger Jones would like more detailed directions for growing the giant leeks mentioned in an earlier issue. WILL SOME NORTH-COUNTRYMAN OBLIGE, PLEASE?

**** A STRANGE FIND AT SLEBECH**

MANY AND VARIED are the finds that are made in our forests, but few are more unusual than

a recent discovery in Slebech Forest, South Wales. There a Forest Worker was clearing a fence line in thick blackthorn bushes when he discovered -- a machine gun. The stock of this was half buried in the ground and somewhat bent, as though it had fallen from a good height. It may have been jettisoned from a 'plane, or accidentally fallen from one.

The gun is believed to be of a type used in aerial warfare in the 1914-18 war.

**** IN WEST CONSERVANCY, SCOTLAND**

CONGRATULATIONS to Forester KEN BEATON and Miss C. MacINNES, Forest Clerk, who have wed.

Also to IAN BRUNTON, Clerical Officer at Glasgow and Mrs. Brunton, on the birth of a daughter; and to District Officer S.U. ROBERTSON and Mrs. Robertson on the birth of a son. Finally, (writes our correspondent) a sympathetic tear for a worker who wrote to the Glasgow office intimating that he was about to be married and wished to apply for compassionate leave.

**** NEAR-TRAGEDY AT SAVILE ROW**

AN ACCIDENT which might well have been fatal occurred at Headquarters the other day. A

painter was at work on windows of the second floor of the tall building when, it appears, a mishap occurred to the cradle in which he was suspended. In falling he struck a car which was parked nearby and was subsequently taken to hospital and detained.

**** TREE GROWS FROM TOWN GATE**

OUR ATTENTION has been drawn by Forester A.J. TACKNEY, of Bodmin, South West England, to yet another unusual site of tree growth; this is on one of the stone piers of the arch of the sole remaining gate at Launceston, in Cornwall, and the tree in question is a sycamore.

**** DEATH OF DISTRICT OFFICER**

AS WE GO TO "PRESS" we learn with very great regret of the death of District Officer

D.S. SPRAGGAN, of South Scotland. Mr. Spraggan had served the Department for more than 30 years, having joined the Commission as a Foreman in 1920. He was 57.

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