

THE FLASHER

**FORESTRY
COMMISSION**
News & Views

Issued by
**INFORMATION
OFFICER**

No. 201

September, 1964.

RETIREMENT OF MR. FRANK OLIVER "ZEALOUS MAN AND GREAT FORESTER"

standing forester and one of its most notable personalities.

WITH the retirement of Mr. FRANK OLIVER, Conservator for East Scotland for the past 17 years, the Commission has lost an out-

Mr. Oliver commenced his career with the Commission in 1926 in the old North Division and, in 1938, moved to Dumfries as Divisional Officer. From 1939 to early 1946 he was with the home timber supply department and then, until March of the following year, he served with the Timber Control in Germany. He spent a short while as Conservator at Dumfries and then, in May, 1947, became Conservator, East Scotland, and during the long period that he held this office he did much to build up the Commission's estate in the Conservancy to some 300,000 acres, of which about two thirds are under trees.

In the early 1950's there arose for Mr. Oliver a problem of great magnitude, probably greater in its urgency than any that has ever confronted any other Commission officer. This was the outcome of the great gale in January, 1953, in which something like 50 million cubic feet of timber in private and Commission woods was blown down in eastern and north eastern Scotland. Mr. Oliver tackled the immense task of organising the clearance of this to such purpose that, by the end of the following year, all but a quarter had been removed. Special schemes for marketing and transporting had had to be introduced and, towards the close of 1955, "Operation Windblow" was largely completed.

Mr. J. A. B. MACDONALD, Conservator, South Scotland, sends us this tribute to Mr. Oliver. He writes:

"Frank Oliver joined the Commission after having first - in Canada - knocked the edges off the lanky youth from Stonehaven who had graduated in Forestry at Aberdeen. He was posted to Inverness where Frank Scott was his first chief. Possibly something of Scott's quite unbounded enthusiasm for afforestation and for the Highlands, and of his ceaseless energy, entered the soul of his young protege', for it burns there still. Later Oliver came under James Fraser - a zealous Forestry Commission man and a great forester - whose puckish sense of fun and devilment, and circuitous Highland approach to a situation, delighted Frank and undoubtedly did a lot to develop both the understanding and the pawky sides of him which have endeared him to so many.

It is fair to say that he was immediately outstanding as a District Officer, earning the respect and admiration of his seniors which waxed even more when he joined them later as a Conservator. As a speaker and debater he has an unusually simple and disarming style which the unwary may too readily misinterpret. Once at a meeting a colleague, glancing down a table of Conservancy data, clumsily remarked that certain sanitary arrangements in the East Conservancy appeared to be on the primitive side. Frank, however, immediately noticed that the Conservancy responsible for this observation had fewer batns than his own, and remarked devastatingly: "Well, at any rate we wash".

A great sportsman, he remains a keen golfer but it is worth noting that he was one of three Vice Presidents of a unique organisation named the Inverness Ski-ing, Mountaineering and Glee Club which had only one ordinary member! He was also a founder-member of the Inverness Gliding Club.

Imagination has perfected some of the reminiscences he related, such as the time when he foolishly asked a research officer in Edinburgh to transport him rapidly to a meeting at the Royal Botanic Garden. On the way, Frank avers, the small sports car into which his long legs were folded out through the traffic like a shuttle and at one point actually nipped under the belly of a contractor's horse! Another tale, told with a long face, relates how a junior officer forestalled him and his fellow lodger for days on end at the breakfast table in their digs and wolfed the entire bacon supply in the belief that it was merely his own portion. Apparently Frank hadn't the nerve to disillusion this hearty young officer from Ireland.

But high spirits, youthful outlook and a fine sense of humour never detracted from Frank's complete dedication to good and economic forestry. First and foremost an outdoor man who, through long study, knew intimately all the conditions to be contended with in his woods, he sometimes found well-meant instructions from Headquarters very trying indeed, although they were, he knew, intended to be a reasonable compromise for general application. All his life Frank has believed in facts and has employed simple records well, but to him the most important thing is that the forest be kept right; it was of secondary importance to have the records, tables and even maps meticulous and up to the minute.

No one is a better forester than Frank Oliver and a more thorough all-rounder, but silviculture probably tops the bill of his interests. In his long study of thinning, for instance, he has reached heights not yet generally realised by quietly practising over the last ten years a consistent removal of the largest trees from fast-growing woods, in the process providing ample growing space for straighter, finer and smaller trees. Before seeing the results of his work for themselves conventional foresters would be horrified by a prescription which licensed the ravaging of all the largest trees. Let them be cautious of condemning a development which may yet revolutionise not only thinning technique but forest economics in our time.

Frank may be the last of a great old school of senior Forestry Commission officers, for he long held on to some beliefs which were becoming outmoded. One was that the Forester should essentially be an outdoor man and should therefore be discouraged from sitting too comfortably in a cosy office. Once this made him declaim against providing forest offices with linoleum.

Complimentary Dinner

Mr. Oliver was the guest of honour at a dinner in the Douglas Hotel, Aberdeen, early this month. Seventy-three of his colleagues and friends foregathered to do him honour and among them were Mr. J. DICKSON, Director of Forestry for Scotland; Professor H. M. STEVEN (until recently Professor of Forestry at Aberdeen University); Mr. W. J. RIDDOCH, a very well known figure in the Scottish Timber Trade; Mr. J. A. B. MACDONALD, Mr. H. A. MAXWELL, Mr. J. W. L. ZEHETMAYR, Conservators South, North and West Scotland respectively; and Mr. G. E. GODWIN, Conservator in the Scottish Directorate Office. On behalf of wellwishers, Mr. W. G. MILNE, Head Forester, presented Mr. Oliver with a camera, a watch and some etchings and wished him a long active and happy retirement.

** SUDDEN DEATHS OF HEAD FORESTER AND FORESTER

THE sudden death in the course of an ordinary working day of Mr. ROBERT (BOB) FRASER, Head Forester at Loch Ard, West Scotland Conservancy, came as a great shock to his colleagues and friends.

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Mr. Fraser, who was 59, was highly respected for his professional knowledge and sound judgement and was deeply admired for his qualities of character. He went to Benmore Forester Training School in 1930, after working on a private estate at Jedburgh, where his father was Head Forester. Following a short period of service as a ganger at Ae, in 1935 he went as foreman to Glenbranter. In 1938 he took charge of the Achray section of Loch Ard, where he remained for ten years, until being posted to Inverliever. He was promoted to Head Forester soon after taking over Inverliever, and managed that forest during an interesting though onerous period in which techniques of exploitation were pioneered. In the spring of 1959 he returned to Aberfoyle, this time to take charge of the 15,000 acre main section of Loch Ard.

He was a member of the Committee of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society and an Elder of Aberfoyle Church. Mr. FRASER leaves a widow, a son and daughter to whom we extend our sympathy.

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Forester E. FAIRMAN

We are also profoundly sorry to have to record the death of Forester E. FAIRMAN of Walsham, East England Conservancy. Mr. Fairman was to have retired from the Commission at the end of August but little more than a fortnight before, while showing his successor, Forester RAYNER, round the forest he collapsed and died before reaching hospital.

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Mr. Fairman, like Mr. ~~Pease~~, was trained at Benmore Training School (1927-1928) and on leaving served with the Commission for about a year before going to Patagonia and, later, to Canada.

Returning to this country, Mr. Fairman rejoined us in 1936 as a foreman and was promoted Acting Forester in 1941. Much of his service was in South West England where he was stationed at various times at Collingbourne, Bodmin, Quantock, Wyre and Mendip. Unfortunately Mr. Fairman suffered with ill-health and in 1959 he moved to the drier area of East Anglia and took over the Walsham Section of Wensum Forest. The move proved beneficial and in later years his health had been much improved. He leaves a widow and three children.

A further tragic development was that late in July his colleagues gathered to make him a presentation to mark his impending retirement, the gift being presented by Mr. G. F. BALLANCE, Divisional Officer, under whom Mr. Fairman had also served in South West England.

**** STRUCK BY LIGHTNING - LIVES**

LAST month two machines, a D.7 joined by a winch rope to a D6, were being operated by Drivers T. HAMILTON and T. MORRIS on Rhigos Mountain near Hirwaun, South Wales. Roads Foreman D. R. JONES had just given working instructions to the drivers when lightning struck Mr. Jones or something close to him. He collapsed; Mr. Hamilton, who was holding the winch rope between the machines, was thrown backwards and lost consciousness; Mr. Morris, who had just climbed into his cab, felt the effect of the lightning and jumped down suffering from shock. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Morris recovered and found Mr. Jones lying on the ground. They massaged his body but after a quarter of an hour there appeared to be no sign of life and as they thought he had passed away they covered him over. Shortly afterwards they heard sound of choking and found that Mr. Jones was alive, but swallowing his tongue. This Mr. Hamilton then held, thereby allowing Mr. Jones to breathe and, gradually, to regain consciousness. He was found to be paralysed from the neck down. The local police were contacted and an ambulance sent for; by good fortune a doctor was at the police station at the time. Due to the rough nature of the ground Mr. Jones had to be taken down to the ambulance on a stretcher, and was detained overnight in hospital and then allowed home. One effect of his experience was a red weal from his neck, across his heart and down to his thigh.

Mr. Jones has said that but for the attention given to him by Messrs. Hamilton and Morris he believed he would have lost his life.

**** VISITS ABROAD**

OUR Chairman, LORD WALDEGRAVE, together with the Director General, SIR HENRY BERESFORD-PEIRSE and Mr. B. HOLTAM, of the Utilisation & Marketing branch, recently visited Sweden, where they saw some interesting forests and forest industries.

This month Lord Waldegrave and Sir Henry have visited Rumania, at the invitation of the Government of that country and by way of returning the visit to Britain last year of Mr. MIHAI SUDER, Rumanian Minister of Forest Economy. Their programme provided opportunities to see various research establishments and forests, as well as the Game Protection Settlement in the Danube Delta. They were joined for this Rumanian tour by Mr. E. G. RICHARDS, of the Utilisation and Marketing branch, who journeyed on from Hungary to which country, with Mr. P. F. GARTHWAITE, he had been on a visit under the cultural exchange programme. There he was to see something of forest management while Mr. Garthwaite, who is responsible for the Commission's policies in relation to the management of wild life, wished to study the work of his Hungarian counterparts.

**** COMMISSIONER IN DEBATE**

ALDERMAN GWYNFRYN DAVIES, one of our Commissioners and Chairman of the National Committee for Wales, took one of the leading roles in an interesting debate in the Welsh B.B.C. programme Heddin (Today). The subject was "Automation" with particular relation

to the steel industry, and this was debated by Mr. Davies and Mr. Gethin Williams, a Welsh economist. Mr. Davies was introduced by Owen Edwards, the "Compere", as a steel worker with 40 years' service in the industry, and made the point that the introduction and development of automation was the joint responsibility of workers, management, trade unions, the companies concerned, and Government.

**** ANOTHER WOODCHOPPERS' GALA**

SANTON DOWNHAM, Thetford's forest village, has held its third Woodchoppers' Gala, writes Forester A. C. DOVER. One of the highlights of the grand ring display, worthy of a major agriculture show and attracting the interest of forestry and non-forestry spectators alike, was a tree-felling and tractor haulage competition. Pine trees, 35 ft. tall, were set up in the ring and chain-saw operators had to fell and trim them out, ready for tractor extraction through obstacles of fence stakes to a loading point.

The children had the chance of a life-time when, at a side-show, they were invited to throw hugh P. radiata cones at their Headmaster, Mr. M. Brighthouse, who was acting as Aunt Sally. Again, the aerial rope-way, suspended between village green trees, and operated by Ganger A. McQUARRIE, proved a tremendous success, there being a never-ending queue of children ready for the thrill.

A fire-fighting display, demonstration by the West Suffolk Dog Training Association, maypole dancing by children of the Brandon Junior School, fancy dress parade by the children of the village, a tug-of-war contest, a netball match and "pop" music by the village group, and side-shows, comprised the numerous attractions.

The tiny village church of St. Mary was decorated for the occasion. Apart from massed banks of the more usual flower arrangements, the font was arrayed with flowers of the Breckland by the children of the Sunday school. Mr. H. LARGENT and Mr. F. SAYER, Forest Workers, built a miniature forest, which attracted much attention. During the weekend hundreds of people from a wide area of East Anglia visited the church and from the weekend's activities £160 was raised towards the Restoration Fund. The Church Council, including members from all grades of Forestry Commission staff, organised the Gala, which was opened by Mr. TIPLADY, Deputy Chief Constable of West Suffolk, and Mrs. TIPLADY.

**** TRANSFERS**

THE following transfers have been notified to Headquarters. District Officer J. H. HUNTLY from Dornoch, N(S) to Stirling W(S). Foresters J. A. CAMPBELL from Working Plans, W(S) to Working Plans H.Q.; R. O. PRICE from Aber, D(W) to Myndd Ddu (S(W)); B. S. THOMSON from Greystoke, H.Q. to Gwydyr School. Assistant Foresters D. ELGY from Alice Holt, D(R) to Wark, NE(E); J. D. E. WAINWRIGHT from Working Plans, D(E) to Fineshade E(E); R. B. ROSS from Inverness, N(S) to Work Study, Edinburgh. Higher Executive Officer C. RIDLEY from Alice Holt to London. Executive Officers A. W. MEYER from London, D(E) to H.Q.; Miss C. M. DAVIES from Chester, NW(E) to Alice Holt.

New Postings

Following is a list of postings, from the Forester Training Schools, of Assistant Foresters:

To North West England Conservancy: C.H. BLACKWOOD, Dunnerdale; T. J. LAKER, Kershope; B. D. SYMES, Thornthwaite; D. W. WATTS, Mortimer. NE(E): M. J. DAY, Tarsset; M. HANAFIN, Kielder; A. G. LITTLE, Bickley; N. R. MORLEY, Wark; J. S. SMART, Pickering. E(E): D. T. A. HENDRIE, Honeywood; R. A. NICKERSON, Lavenham; P. M. REYNOLDS, Brandon Central Depot. SW(E): P. J. HUMPHRIES, Bodmin; T. R. SAWYER, Hereford; D. E. YEARSLEY, Brandon. New Forest: J. L. BUDD and G.W. NICHOLLS. Dean: M. RICHARDS and M. F. WEARING. North Scotland: A. R. BROWN, Strath Dearn; J. DAVIDSON, Leanachan; R. S. OGILVY, Torrachitty; A. SANDILANDS, South Strone; M. J. A. SMITH, Shea. E(S) D. COTTON, Clashindarroch; D. L. FOGGO, Speymouth; I. J. KEEN, Durris; A. G. KINNES, Rannoch; J. D. LINDSAY, Rannoch. S(S): J. C. ANDERSON, Newcastleton; P. R. DEWEY, Glentress; W. I. ROBINSON, Greskine; H. SCHREIDER, Kirroughtree. W(S): E. K. BARKER, Inverliever; P. DELAP, Ardgarten; D. A. T. DOUGLAS, Garadhban; R. G. RAE, Glenrickard; P. R. RATCLIFFE, Inverinan. North Wales: B.R. EVANS, Dovey Corris; C. E. G. LAWES, Coed-y-Brenin; P. J. WETTON, Clwyd; D. J. WHITMARSH, Hafren. S(W): J. HUNT, Glasfynydd; P. J. NOOT, Rheola; D. W. PRICE, Brechfa.

**** PERSONAL**

A presentation was made by the Secretary, Mr. H. A. TURNER, on behalf of colleagues to Mr. R. J. AFFLECK and Miss J. B. PRIEST, both of Headquarters, to mark the occasion of their marriage. The gift took the form of cutlery chosen by the couple.