

THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

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AU REVOIR TO SOME OLD FRIENDS
RETIREMENT OF MR. HARRY WATSON
AND MR. H. S. HANSON

SO IT IS FAREWELL to two more well known and well liked colleagues. In West Scotland MR. HARRY WATSON, who for 23 years was in charge of the Forester Training School at Benmore, has taken his leave; in England Mr. H. S. Hanson, Entomologist at the Forest Research Station since 1941, has also departed. Both have retired, and we take this opportunity to wish them all possible happiness in the future.

Mr. Watson served the Forestry Commission for 33 years in all, and in 1949 received an M.B.E. for his work on behalf of the Department's educational services. A large party of Forest Officers, Foresters, estate tenants and friends from far and near assembled at Benmore School to pay tribute to both Mr. and Mrs. Watson. Divisional Officer J. WEBSTER presided over the gathering, which included Mr. JAMES MACDONALD, Director of Research and Education, MR. J. E. JAMES, Conservator, West Scotland, Mr. G. D. ROUSE, Chief Education Officer, and State Forest Officer H. V. S. DIER.

Mr. Macdonald read a personal message from LORD ROBINSON, our Chairman, who referred in terms of high appreciation of Mr. Watson's work. Mr. Macdonald spoke warmly of the important part Mr. Watson had played in developing Benmore School, and also paid tribute to Mrs. Watson. He concluded by handing to Mr. Watson a cheque for a substantial sum, subscribed to by numerous well-wishers. Mr. BROWN, factor for Messrs. Bryant and May, of Ballochyle, spoke on behalf of the tenants of Cowal and in appreciation of Mr. Watson's work in a wider sphere, and District Officer RODERICK MACDONALD, who takes over as Education Officer at Benmore, added his tribute as a former student at the school.

The whole party was entertained to tea by Mr. and Mrs. Watson.

Mr. Hanson has done outstanding work, and a gift from the Research Branch was presented by Mr. M. V. LAURIE, Chief Research Officer. Mr. Hanson has had an interesting career. He was for a time an Inspector of Plantations in the Belgian Congo; from 1916-1919 he was an Assistant Acquisition Officer with the Timber Supply Department in this country, and then followed a long period as a timber valuer and forestry consultant in Devon and Cornwall. He carried out investigations for the former Imperial Institute of Entomology and was subsequently employed by the Institute from 1928 to 1940 as Entomologist.

** CONGRATULATIONS TO SILVICULTURIST, (S)
AWARDED A NUFFIELD FELLOWSHIP

READERS WILL BE PLEASED TO LEARN that MR. R. F. WOOD, Silviculturist, (S), in the Directorate of Research and Education, has been awarded a Fellowship for one year on the Nuffield Foundation.

Each year a small number of Fellowships is awarded to permanent Civil Servants for the purpose of allowing them to become better acquainted with the administration, problems, experience and opportunities of the overseas parts of the Commonwealth. A small number of similar Fellowships tenable in the United States is awarded by the Commonwealth Fund of New York for similar purposes. Hitherto the Commission have not put forward any names for any of these Fellowships, largely because competition is very severe and most applicants are senior members of the administrative grades.

It is gratifying, and is also evidence of the high reputation of the Commission, that one of the six Fellowships awarded should go to one of our staff. Mr. Wood is the only professional officer awarded a Fellowship, the remainder being Principals or Assistant Secretaries.

Mr. Wood proposes to visit Canada, to study in their native habitat a number of the coniferous species which are now extensively used in British forestry.

**** CALLING READERS IN EAST ANGLIA**

HAVE YOU SEEN A PUDDING STONE?

Anglian Magazine records that Dr. E. A. Rudge, Principal of West Ham Municipal College, has found evidence of the existence in pre-historic times of a trackway 200 miles long, running from the Wash through East Anglia into Berkshire.

ALTHOUGH MAINLY CONCERNED with visualising the shape of things to come, man frequently casts an over-the-shoulder glance into the past, with interesting results. The East

The evidence consists of large "pudding stones" - flint and pebbles set in sandstone - which marked the course of the trackway, and to date, says the magazine, 125 of these stones have been discovered "in all sorts of places and spaced in a very variable manner". A number of pudding stones have been found in or near churches; some would have marked the crossing of a ford, while others were on hilltops, and without doubt many hundreds of such stones were originally set beside the track. According to Dr. Rudge, we cannot but marvel at the ingenuity of the primitive savage who, with no written language to guide him, hit on this infallible method of keeping to his path.

The track is thought to have run from Heacham, on the Wash, through Gayton, Grimes Grave, Thetford, St. Livermere, Thurston and Kersey, and then to have swept north of Chelmsford and on through Cheshunt, St. Albans and Chesham to Pangbourne, near Reading. Thus this pre-historic thoroughfare passed close to what is now our forest of Thetford Chase and some of our readers may know of the existence of pudding stones in that vicinity.

It is believed that the track was in use nearly 5,000 years ago and, to quote that informative little publication, the East Anglian Magazine, it "was almost certainly a trading route along which the precious flint (from the prehistoric mines at Grimes Graves) was carried to the settlements of the Stone Age peoples centred around the site now occupied by the Buckinghamshire town of Chesham."

**** DISTRIBUTION OF STATE FORESTS**

FEW COUNTIES LACK THEM.

HOW MANY COUNTIES have State Forests? Well, it's a lot easier to count those that have not. In the Commission's early years our work tended to be concentrated in certain

regions, and it looked as though quite a lot of counties around industrial areas would have no forests for an indefinite time. But nowadays, with so many acquisitions of felled woodland, very few counties lack at least one State forest. New units established in the Forest Year 1951 brought three more counties, Leicester, Warwick and Bute, into the picture. The only counties lacking forests when this check was made were: In Scotland, Renfrew, West Lothian, Midlothian and Lanark; in England, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Middlesex and London. No doubt our acquisitions staff have in mind doing something about the first few on the list - but as for the last, we fear Headquarters staff will have to be content with a stroll through Hyde Park.

But to answer our question, the total number of counties with forests at 30th September last was 76, made up of England 36, Scotland 27, and every one of the 13 counties in Wales.

**** DRAMA IN THE WOODS**

AN UNUSUAL FOREST OPERATION

THERE WAS AN UNUSUAL FOREST OPERATION in West Woods, South West England Conservancy, not long ago, when the Wiltshire police sought the assistance of Forester H. C. DYER and his forest workers in their

search of the woods for a man they wished to interview in connection with the murder of an elderly local woman. Police and forest staff formed a ring round the forest while 500 troops, equipped with "walkie-talkie" apparatus, combed the entire area.

The Forest consists mainly of young beech plantations and although some 1,000 acres were covered the wanted man was not found and the search was called off. It was reported that a man was later found dead in a wood near to where the murdered woman lived.

**** QUESTION** WHY IS IT that the leaves of the White Poplar, or Abele, always lie on the ground with the underside of the leaf uppermost? This is invariably the case, even in a gale.

The question is posed by Divisional Officer A. R. CRAWFORD, of North Scotland.

* *OUR INDUSTRIOUS FORESTERS TIME AGAIN for hard work in the garden, and that makes the first part of this paragraph topical. Forester C. MACDONALD, of Glenbrittle, North Scotland, may be bracketed with other Commission employees whose gardening ability has been the subject of special mention in the Slasher. At the Skye Society's show he won the cup for obtaining the highest number of points, and he is also the winner of the medal presented by a well known horticultural journal for the best effort by an amateur gardener.

The industry of our Foresters and diversity of their spare-time occupations is emphasised by the work of Forester A. MacLEMAN of South Strone, North Scotland. He belongs to the Garve Work Society, members of which specialise in the making of handicrafts from deer skin and deer horn; the Society exhibits at the Royal Highland Show, where it has been patronised by members of the Royal Family, and on one occasion the Queen Mother accepted a leather purse from Forester MacLeman.

* *TRANSFERS THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters.

District Officers J. H. CURRIE from Neath, S(W), to Cardiff, S(W); R. G. SANZEN-BAKER from Cardiff to Ulverston, NW(E); G. A. DEY from Keith, E(S), to Auchenblae, E(S); F. J. DONALD from Aberdeen, E(S), to Fochabers, E(S); E.J.B. HARDCASTLE from Fort William, N(S), to Hawick, S(S).

Foresters W. J. HUMPHRIES from Dunster, SW(E), to Nether Stowey, SW(E); W. E. DYE from Fearnoch, W(S), to Glenduror, W(S); D. M. KIRK from Laurieston, S(S), to Dreva, S(S); G. H. MacMILLAN from Dovey Corris, N(S), to Commins Coch, N(W); R. D. ANDERSON from Kershope, NW(E), to Greystoke, NW(E); F. H. GUTHRIE from Greystoke to Helmsley, NE(E); W. H. JONES from Commins Coch to Kerry, N(W); E. C. W. EVERITT from Savernake, SW(E), to Stanway, SW(E).

Foremen J. S. MAXTONE from Mabie, S(S), to Loch Ard, W(S); C.L.S. HARRISON from Coed Sarnau, N(W), to Radnor, N(W); A. S. COCHRANE from Greskine, S(S), to Clauchrie, S(S).

Assistant Engineer D. J. TICKELL from H.Q. to D(E).

Newcomers are District Officers H. A. E. TILNEY-BASSETT to Education; C. J. LAPAGE, N. S. MUNRO and T. W. G. COULSON to NW(E); J. M. GWYNN to W(S); M. CROOKE to Research; F. G. DAVIS to S(W); N. BANISTER to SW(E); F. D. BARRETT and B. J. ALLISON to NE(E); H. J. HOOPER to N(W); J. E. MASSEY to N(S); R. A. PULLINGER to SE(E). T/District Officer L. REYNOLDS to D(R. & E.). Clerical Officers Miss J. MARSHALL to Education; R. F. GOOCH to Research.

* * SNOW, SNOW, SNOW HAFFREN FOREST, which lies on the eastern slopes of Plynlimmon, six miles west of Llanidloes, in Montgomeryshire, AND A HEAVY RAINFALL is noted for its heavy snowfalls of long duration and for its high rainfall. So much so, in fact, that we wonder if Haffren can claim a record or two.

During the winter of 1950-51 the first snowfall occurred in November and the last of the snow did not disappear until June 6th. The upper slopes of the forest were under snow for four months. "This year", says Head Forester J. T. JONES, "we have had snow from 17th January. During 1950 we had only 135 days without rain, and last year we had only 146 rainless days, which means that there were relatively fewer days than we would have liked for forest operations."

Any comments from Foresters who have also to contend with exceptional climatic conditions?

* * FIRST THE ROAD: NCW THE LIBRARY PLASHETTS IS A NORTH TYNE VILLAGE in which live workers employed in Kielder Forest, ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT AT PLASHETTS biggest State forest area in the country. Readers will recall that until fairly recently, when we built a road through the forest, the only way to reach, and leave, Plashetts was by rail.

There is news of another development in Plashetts - a small development, it is true, but important enough to the social life of a small community. Forester G. W. PARKER tells us that he has been able to form a separate branch of the Northumberland County Library for the benefit of residents. This is open for

one hour on one night of the week, and on average 30 books are exchanged weekly. The choice of books is wide and the service free, and other Foresters who live in remote areas may consider introducing a library to their localities, if they have not already done so.

By coincidence, there is mention of Plashetts in a communication from Clerk of Works E. BASSETT. He asks whether the road he has constructed in Kielder Forest is the longest made to date by the Department's Engineering Branch. This, of course, is the road we have already mentioned; it runs from Waterhead to Plashetts and is nine miles in length.

* *LETTER FROM MRS. FEATHER? THE FOLLOWING IS A LETTER received from a lady seeking information, on behalf of her son, about Forestry as a career:

"I have mislaid your letter sent with the pamphlet in answer to my request for particulars of the Forestry Commission. (I very often mislay things!) I'm writing to thank you for replying so quickly especially as the address on the envelope was rather vague, I couldn't wait and did not know where to look, for the proper address. (My writing is peculiar because I'm doing it on my knee). Before you go into this sort of job what subjects would it be best to concentrate on - maths and biology? My husband is not at all keen for our son to take up forestry but he would hate being just a clerk from 9 until 5 every day.

Besides, if anyone can find any more of the glamour and romance and the beauty and sweetness of life in any other place than in the woods and country lanes (except of course the sea and the shore) I'd like to know where. You'd think, wouldn't you, at 42 my grammar would be a little better? My relatives have hooted with laughter at this idea of mine with remarks about gorillas and long hair (a year in the woods!) but I don't care.

I'd better stop, I think, I feel strongly about woods and mist and squirrels and jays and hawthorn hedges in the spring but I suppose there is a time and place for everything.

P.S. I have just read my letter through - please don't think that I imagine there is no hard work attached to this sort of job - my son can already cook and light fires and vacuum things, loves out of doors and animals. (We have eight hens a dog and two goldfish). We kept pigeons until they came into the bedroom before we were awake in the mornings and made themselves at home in the house if we went out during the day. The first two were lovely - Sigurd and Brynhild. We once had ten dogs - two bitches and eight puppies - I think we should be better in the woods."

* *NOTE FOR ORNITHOLOGISTS MANY OF OUR FIELD STAFF are keen bird watchers, and the following is specially directed to them.
APPEAL FROM BRITISH TRUST DR. BRUCE CAMPBELL, Secretary of the British Trust for Ornithology, is conducting an enquiry into the breeding distribution of the Pied Flycatcher in British woodlands in the spring of this year. He tells us he would be very pleased to hear from any Forest Officers or Foresters or others who could help him to secure a complete cover of the parts of Britain where the bird breeds, namely Devon and Somerset, Wales and the Welsh border, from the Peak northward in England and all over Scotland, where an interesting spread has recently been taking place.

Dr. Campbell asks that anyone who can help should send a card to him at Hordley, Woodstock, Oxford, whereupon he will issue a questionnaire.

* *PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS to Ex-School Ganger PAT MOORE, of Alice Holt, and Miss PAT BLIGHT, Leading Surveyor, on their engagement; to Forester A. ROSS (Private Woodlands) West Scotland, and Mrs. Ross, on the birth of a son; and to Clerk of Works J. AULD, of the same Conservancy, and Mrs. Auld, who are also the proud parents of a boy.

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