THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

No. 55 July, 1952

QUEEN AT THE ROYAL SHOW

VISIT TO THE FORESTRY SECTION

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN spent some time in the forestry section at the Royal Show at Newton Abbot, Devon, early this month, and evinced much interest in all she saw. Her Majesty was received on the Forestry Commission site by Mr. A. H. POPERT, Conservator, South West England, and inspected our outdoor display, which showed the various stages of tree growth from seed to thinnings; in other sections of the display were examples of damage to trees from diseases and pests (including the wellknown two-legged fire-raising devastator); a wide variety of forest wealth in the form of produce; and a gun carrier which can be used not only for fire-fighting but for cone collection, being mounted with a long swivelling ladder.

Unfortunately time did not permit Her Majesty to pay more than the briefest of visits to that part of our display which was under cover. There we had hoped to show her, in particular, a small section which is attracting a great deal of attention; this interprets in simple fashion some of the major findings of the census of woodlands, and shows that the annual increment in our woodlands is accruing at the surprising rate of at least a cubic foot per second. It is, of course, made clear that this increment is occurring mainly in the younger age classes and thus makes only a limited contribution to our stocks of saw timber, but nevertheless is building up, impressively, our timber reserves as a whole.

Clock faces and moving hands, with the aid of flashing lights, emphasise in graphic form the increment as it occurs at intervals through the year. Credit for the construction of this exhibit goes to Forester E. J. D. WILKINSON and Ganger R. KEMP, who are in charge of the agricultural show unit. Incidentally, our display at the Royal Counties Show at Guildford the other week was awarded the silver medal.

**THE COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY CONFERENCE

OUR DELEGATES LEAVE THIS MONTH

TIME FLIES. It does not seem five years since the Empire, or Commonwealth, Forestry Conference was held in this country. But the next conference is almost due and, headed by our Chairman, LORD ROBINSON, our delegates are sailing this month for Canada, where the sixth gathering is to take place. In addition to Lord Robinson the Forestry Commission delegates are the Director General, Mr. A. H. GOSLING; the Chief Research Officer, Mr. M. V. LAURIE; and the Chief Education Officer, Mr. G. D. ROUSE.

An intensive and interesting programme has been arranged. The delegates will assemble on August 11th., and a day or two later the Conference will leave Ottawa for a six-day tour of the Province of Quebec, which will include visits to a provincial forest nursery, a school for forest rangers, Laval University Forest School and Laurentide Park. Delegates will not only see forest operations, but also sawmilling and the manufacture of pulp and paper products. A visit to the Federal Government's Petawawa Forest Experiment Station near Chalk River has been planned for August 20th-21st, after which the delegates will visit forest areas in Ontario. The Conference will then return to Ottawa, where the main sessions will commence on August 30th. and continue until the official conclusion on September 13th. Our delegates, however, will join a party which will make a trans-continental tour from Ottawa to Vancouver, visiting forests and National Parks in the Rockies, and seeing something of the timber industry in British Columbia. They will arrive back in this country on October 17th.

**THE FORESTER AND HIS BEARD

A SHOCK FOR THE SERGEANT MAJOR

FORESTER R. S. LEWIS, of Tintern, South Wales, has succeeded where legions of us have failed. He has "shaken" the Sergeant Major. It happened this way. Forester Lewis, as Corporal Lewis, reported to the 4th. Battalion, the Welch Regiment, for his Z training; and when he did so Corporal Lewis sported the flaming red beard which, as Forester Lewis, he has grown since he came home from Burma in 1946. THE BEARD, we are informed, curls all round his face and, in places, is four inches long.

The Reception Officer, as well as the Sergeant Major, was startled and, with that unsurpassable tact which is a characteristic of Army officers, asked Corporal Lewis if he intended shaving while he was doing his training. But Corporal Lewis had no desire to be parted from his beard. "I don't want to shave unless I have to," he said. "My wife likes the beard and so does my five-years old son - he wouldn't recognise me without it."

Followed a conference among the officers, and Corporal Lewis not only retained his beard but, it is thought, became the only bearded man in the British Army.

**BIRD WATCHING ON THE FARNE ISLANDS

FORESTER'S MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

BIRD WATCHING on the Farne Islands, a small, rocky group two and a half miles off the Northumbrian coast, is the subject of an interesting contribution from Forester W. L. McCAVISH, of Redesdale, North East England. These islands, he writes, are a bird sanctuary and one of them, Brownsman Island, was closed to the public so that a few pairs of the rare Roseate Tern might be left to nest undisturbed.

"We started", goes on Forester McCavish, "from the little fishing port of Seahouses, making by launch for Brownsman Island in order to pick up the official birdwatcher and our permits to land on the various islands. We later crossed a narrow channel to Staples isle, and there crept over the seaweed-strewn rocks to that famous point known to most bird lovers as The Pinnacles. Here there were hundreds of Guillemots, standing with that awkward stance that is so characteristic. Many were fondling a single egg, pushing it between their legs, and sitting on it in a semi-upright position. They just laid their eggs on the bare rocks and ledges, and we marvelled that the eggs remained on the precarious ledges without rolling off, and that each bird should know its own egg.

"Scores of Green Cormorants, or Shags, as they are termed, were sitting on their nests of piled up seaweed, and the parent birds were by no means friendly. Very impressive were the dainty little Kittiwakes which sat on nests spaced about nine inches apart, built on ledges and of sea grasses. Also nesting on this isle were the Fulmars, whose graceful flight was a pleasure to behold; there were also Razorbills, Gannets, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Herring Gull, Oyster Catchers, and the noisy little Puffins that honeycomb the isle with burrows in which they make their nests, making it difficult to walk, lest one should sink through the earth's surface, and destroy the nest below.

"As a diversion from bird watching we cruised around Longstone Isle, and were rewarded with a good view of the seals that abound and breed on this island; we saw at least a hundred, some basking on the rocks until we were within 30 yards of them, and then sliding unceremoniously into the water.

"We next landed on Lindis Farne, which is famous for its Arctic Terns. Their nests were constructed of seaweed on the drier parts of the beach; the male bird fed the hen, as she sat on the nest, with sand eels from four inches to 12 inches in length. This island is also renowned for its Eider Ducks, which were nesting everywhere - in old walks and ruins, and even in the birdwatcher's back yard. They were very tame, and the older birds took no exception to being stroked. They looked ragged, however, for they line their nests, which hold clutches of between eight and 12 eggs, with down from their own breasts. It was grand to watch the newly hatched ducklings waddling with their mothers down to the rocky pools for their first swim, but, sad to relate, most of the drakes took no outward interest in their families and congregated in one corner of the island as though enjoying an evening at their club.

"Our last visit was to the old Monastery and chapel on Lindis Farne, and this revived for us the story of Grace Darling; I cast my eye over the rocks, which must have seemed so much more sinister to those who served in sail, to see the remains of some of those long-forgotten ships, and I thought how cruel, yet how lovely, were these islands."

Footnote. Forester McCavish adds he is sure that District Officer SPENCER, at present in the South East, England, Conservancy, will be interested to know that his host and hostess for the day were none other than the District Officer's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. SPENCER, of Greenhaugh Hall, Tarset.

**RECRUITMENT TO THE SCHOOLS

APPLICANT 7ft. TALL

FOLLOWING REFERENCES in the Press and on the radio to opportunities for young men to enter our Forester Training Schools, the normal flow of enquiries (reports the Education Branch) changed to a flood. As a general rule about 15 to 20 enquiries are received each week, but recently the figure was as high as 145, and the staff of the Branch were hard pressed to reply promptly with copies of the booklet "Forestry as a Career" and the Schools prospectus.

Several "sidelights" helped to relieve the tension, however. There was, for example, the applicant who wrote enclosing a list of irrelevant personal details and embellished his letter with printed stamps bearing the figure of Hercules and the motto "Sacred Thy Body even as The Soul". Another enquirer, a schoolboy, asked how he could become a Forestry Commissioner, and yet another applicant mentioned he was over

7 feet tall. Whereupon we are prompted to ask whether, if he successfully passes through a School, this latter applicant will be our only employee of such a height?

It is fairly certain that there will be sufficient applicants from which to select men to fill the Schools this autumn. But there is no room for complacency in this recruiting drive, and we know that everything possible will be done to encourage men already in our employ to apply for entry to the Schools in future years.

**TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

District Officer G. K. MURRAY from Speymouth, E(S), to Glasgow. Foresters W. ARNOTT from Clipstone, NW(E), to Bramshill, SE(E); W. T. WATERS from Research, Alice Holt to Research, Cambridge; J. F. SCOTT from Slaley, NE(E), to Leithope, S(S); W. A. EVANS from St. Gwynno, S(W), to Dunraven, S(W); D. E. EARL from Research, Orpington, to Research, Alice Holt; F. J. VICKERY from Bramshill to Mildmay, SE(E); P. WOOD from New Forest to Oakamoor, NW(E). Foremen A. E. COATES from Research, Wallington, to Research, Cambridge; E. A. HOWELL from Research, Usk, to Research, Alice Holt; D. HOLDER from Thetford, E(E), to Rendlesham, E(E); A. H. D. PIPER from Kirroughtree, S(S), to Carrick, S(S); M. P. SCOTT from Leanachan, N(S), to Inverinate, N(S); R. J. REID from Slebech, S(W), to Brechfa, S(W)

Clerical Officers F. A. DRAPER from H.Q. to Woking; B. T. D. WARD from H.Q. to Chester.

Newcomers are: District Officer A. L. BENNETT to E(S).

Executive Officer J. B. COLLINS to Office of Director, England. Clerical Officers T. G. BLAND to Cambridge; C. ANDERSON to Aberdeen; Mrs. I. M. FLEMING to Inverness.

**DEATH OF MR. T. W. MORRIS

WE HAVE ONLY RECENTLY received news of the death of Mr. T. W. MORRIS, former Chief Clerk in The Dean. The passing of this erstwhile colleague will be deeply regretted by the wide circle of friends made during almost a lifetime of service in The Dean.

Mr. Morris retired in 1950 and for long while afterwards he continued regularly to visit the local office for a chat. The funeral service was held at Broadwell Church, where Mr. Morris had served for many years as a sidesman, and was attended by past and present employees of the Commission and by representatives of the British Legion, of which Mr. Morris was formerly an active member.

**THE KIELDER INVASION

THE SUNDAY MORNING quiet of Kielder, in Northumberland, was broken recently when there drew into the tiny Kielder Forest Station an engine and seven coaches. This in itself was an event, for Kielder normally has no Sunday train service, but this particular train disgorged no fewer than 150 ramblers intent on exploring Kielder Forest - at the height of the fire danger period!

But to be forewarned is to be prepared, and the ramblers were divided into five parties. And with each party went a Forestry Commission guide to ensure that no fires were lit, that gates were shut, and that no one got lost.

The train was a special one run in conjunction with the Ramblers' Association to stations in the area of the North Tyne.

**TABLE TENNIS STAR

GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

WE HAVE ALREADY REFERRED to some of the table tennis successes of PAUL BROOK, an Executive Officer at Headquarters. His latest achievements have included playing in the semi-finals of the men's doubles in the English championships; selection for the Surrey County team; and the winning, with his partner, of the North West Kent mixed doubles title, beating three current English international pairings in the process.

**AN EDUCATIONAL OUTING

VISIT TO TWO FORESTS

THE STAFF of the South West England Conservancy Office recently paid an educational visit to Dunster and Brendon forests. State Forest Officer J. B. STOCKS, Conservancy Engineer L. B. GLADWELL, District Officer D. N. WILLIAMS and Foresters T. C. BOWDLER and S. CHAPMAN combined with others to make the visit an outstanding success. Besides conducting the party, they arranged for demonstrations of the major

forest activities. At one point a demonstration of fire fighting was witnessed, reflecting much credit on all taking part.

"A truly valuable day," writes our correspondent.

**WHAT DOES THE DEWPOND DEPEND ON?

A FORESTER'S QUERY

FORESTER W. DEAL, of East England, asks if any reader of The Slasher can tell him how a dewpond is constructed. On Thetford Chase, in East England, which was once nearly all wild breckland, there are a considerable number of dewponds, says Forester Deal, the largest being about 50 feet long by 25 feet wide. "Even at the end of a long period of drought," he goes on, "they are still full of clear water and it is alleged that the moisture from the atmosphere is, in some way, attracted to them. Of one thing, however, I am certain - they are not fed by springs.

"On such a wide expanse of open heath and forest, with few rivers or watering places, these dewponds fulfil a vital need in the maintenance of bird and animal life. I am told that they were made for the owners of the one-time private estates by a firm in Norwich, mainly to provide drinking water for the game birds. It is believed that the beds of these ponds are laid with a mixture of chalk and straw, but no one seems to know the secret of their construction. I should be very interested to have the answer, and also to hear whether there are dewponds in any other parts of the country."

**TRAGIC DEATH OF A GANGER

KILLED BY TRAIN AT CROSSING

WE REGRET to have to record the recent tragic death of Ganger W. J. ANDRYEJEWSKI, of Thetford Forest, East England, who was struck by a train while wheeling his bicycle over Santon crossing. At the time of the accident he was on his way to report for fire patrol duties; he was taken by ambulance to hospital at Brandon, but was dead on arrival.

Ganger Andryejewski had used the level crossing every day, and at the inquest it was suggested that noise made by low-flying aircraft may have taken his attention away from the track and resulted in his not hearing the oncoming train. The inquest verdict was "death from misadventure."

**PERSONAL

CONGRATULATIONS to District Officers S. FORRESTER and P. J. LANGLEY, of North East England, each the proud father of a son; to Accounts Officer G. A. HICKLETON, also of North East England, who is just as proud of being the father of a daughter; and to Executive Officer Miss P. J. BENNETT, of the same office, who has received a presentation to mark the occasion of her marriage.

Congratulations, too, to Miss E. M. BOND, of New Forest, on her marriage to Mr. JOHN RUFFELL; she has received an oak workbox-table from her colleagues, presented by the Deputy Surveyor, Mr. E. WYNNE JONES.

**NEW CONTROLLER OF FINANCE

Mr. W. M. CORMACK has been appointed to the post of Controller of Finance made vacant by the retirement of Mr. VICTOR BATES, on grounds of ill-health. He will take up his duties on 1st. August.

Mr. Cormack, who qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1937, had some years commercial experience before going to the Ministry of Supply in 1940. He is at present Assistant Director of Royal Ordnance Factory Accounts in that Department.

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.