

THE WINDBLOW IN SCOTLAND

FOREST WORKERS' NARROW ESCAPE

are well advanced and are being formulated and put into operation by a special committee under the chairmanship of the Conservator for East Scotland, Mr. FRANK OLIVER; membership of the committee covers forestry interests and those of the timber trade.

This is an appropriate place to mention the alarming experience during the "blow" of certain of our workers at Ardross Forest. They were in a lorry, on their way to work on the Saturday morning, when a tree was blown down in front of the vehicle. While the lorry was being reversed a second tree crashed down behind it; the workers then dispersed in search of saws and axes and returned to

find that a third tree had blown down on the lorry, completely wrecking it. "Had any workers remained on board they must have been severely injured or killed", writes our correspondent.

RETIREMENT OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

MR. W. H. GUILLEBAUD, our Deputy Director General, is to retire in July. He will be succeeded by SIR HENRY BERESFORD PEIRSE, Director for Scotland.

Mr. Guillebaud has given nearly 40 years' service to forestry and has played a great part in the successful development of forest research. He joined the Forestry Branch of the former Board of Agriculture in 1914 and, after important work with the Interim Forest Authority, joined the Forestry Commission as Research Officer on its inception in 1919. He served for a short period as Divisional Officer in south east England and East Anglia, and later as Chief Research Officer. He became Director of Research and Education in 1946 and Deputy Director General in July, 1948.

Sir Henry Beresford Peirse joined the Commission in 1929, serving as District Officer, and later as Divisional Officer, in Scotland. As a Territorial Army officer he was for a time a major in the Lovat Scouts, serving from the outbreak of war until released for duties with H.G.T.P.D. He returned to the Commission in 1944 and from 1946 to May, 1947, was Conservator, East Scotland. He was then appointed Director, Scotland.

To conclude in lighter vein, a Slasher correspondent writes: "Everyone knows that the recent gale havoc in Scottish woodlands created rather a 'sticky' situation, and a well known national newspaper assured its readers:

'Thousands of acres of growing timber in Scotland's forest conserves were devastated by the weekend gales'.

"True enough, but our dictionary defines a conserve as: 'preserved fruit; jam'. We would not press this point too far, but we suspect that a 'conservancy' must be a place where everybody is either constantly making jam or getting stuck in it!"

**OUTLAWING THE GREY SQUIRREL

BONUS FOR TAILS

WAR HAS BEEN DECLARED on the grey squirrel and an intensified campaign against this woodland pest is about to commence.

As a first step, the Forestry Commission has announced an incentive which should appeal to present and

potential hunters of the little beast, for it takes the form of a cash payment of one shilling per tail. The "drill" in England and Wales is for the people (we are not referring to our own staff) who make the kills to send the tails to the County Pests Officers, who will make payment on our behalf; a minimum of six tails is required at a time. In Scotland, our own staff will receive tails and also attend to the matter of payment.

The extent of public ignorance of the grey squirrel's capacity to cause damage is amazing, and many people persist in regarding it as a furry, lovable little creature. The sooner this sentiment is discarded the better, for there is no doubt that the grey squirrel is increasing rapidly and is causing enormous havoc in woodlands, as well as orchards and gardens. It shows a preference for sycamore and in some districts damage to this particular tree is so great as virtually to rule it out as an economic crop. It is also very destructive to beech, which is an even more serious matter.

It may interest some readers to know that returns for the year ending September, 1952, show that no fewer than 141,300 grey squirrels were killed in England and Wales by Squirrel Clubs, the staffs of County Agricultural Committees and occupiers of land. A further 27,739 were killed in Forestry Commission woodlands. It is, of course, in the aforementioned two countries that the beast is established widely and in great strength; in Scotland it is present (so far!) only in a fairly narrow central belt.

Those who harbour qualms about killing this "harmless little fellow" should remember that it is not even a native of this country, having been first introduced here about 60 years ago. It is believed that not more than 400 grey squirrels were released, yet they have increased to their present tremendous population; exactly what this is, no one knows, but it has been estimated at one and a half millions.

**THE CENSUS OF WOODLANDS

FULL REPORT NOW PUBLISHED

The FULL REPORT of the 1947-49 Census of Woodlands, which covered all woods of five acres and over in extent, has now been published. Separate figures are given for the forests administered by the Forestry Commission and for those in private ownership. These are again classified to show how much woodland of each description is found in England, Scotland and Wales; and all the woodlands are classified further according to their main Type; other facts given in tabular form are the ages of the tree crops, the kinds of

trees that comprise them, and their general suitability for economic timber production. Taking Great Britain as a whole, the main conclusions reached include the following:

CONSCIENCE MONEY

AN ANONYMOUS writer has sent the following letter to Headquarters:

"I regret that I took two small fir trees from an estate some time ago. I am enclosing P.O. for 17s. 6d., which I hope will cover the cost and clear my conscience."

Total Area of Woodland: The total area of woodland in Britain (excluding woods under five acres) at 30th September, 1947, was 3,448,362 acres, or .073 of an acre per head of the population. Scrub, Devastated or Felled Woodland: This amounted to 1,309,569 acres and is largely unproductive as the result of over-felling in the two world wars. Coniferous High Forest: This, together with some Mixed High Forest which is

mainly coniferous, occupied 944,947 acres, of which Scotland, with 454,721 acres - or 48 per cent - has the largest share. The Forestry Commission holds 468,006 acres, or 50 per cent. Broadleaved High Forest: This (with some Mixed High Forest which is mainly broadleaved) covered 843,852 acres, of which 642,557 acres, or 76 per cent, are in England, mainly in the south and the Midlands. Although 92 per cent is privately owned, in recent years the Forestry Commission has planted rather more broadleaved species than have the private owners. Coppice and Coppice-with-Standards: The coppice woods occupy 339,774 acres, nearly all of which are in England and under private ownership. Coppice is most frequent in the south-eastern counties.

The volume of timber standing in the High Forest woodlands, together with that of the Standard trees in the Coppice-with-Standard woods, was ascertained by a sampling procedure, which gave a figure of 2,658 million cubic feet (quarter-girth measure over bark). 1,544 million cubic feet are hardwood, and 1,114 million softwood. The greater part (2,280 million cubic feet) is in privately owned woods.

Details of the areas of each main description of woodland in every county are published for the first time, and shown graphically in a series of maps.

The Report costs 12s. 6d. and will be beyond the pocket of some of our readers. A limited number of copies of the Press notice issued with the Report, and which contains a summary of the main conclusions and figures, is available. These will be supplied to readers on application to the Information Officer, on the basis of first come first served, so long as supplies hold out.

**THE MAIL COACH PILLAR

A WARNING TO COACH DRIVERS

OF ALL the ancient monuments standing on or near our property, that to be seen near a new acquisition known as Monument Wood, Cilgwyn Forest, near Llandovery, in Carmarthenshire, is probably the most intriguing. It is sited on the side of the road on a hill, and the inscription tells the story:

"This pillar is called Mail Coach Pillar and is erected as a caution to Mail Coach drivers to keep from intoxication and in memory of the Gloucester and Carmarthen mail coach which was driven by Edward Jenkins on the 19th day of December, 1835, who was intoxicated at the time and drove the

mail on the wrong side of the road and going at a full speed or gallop met a cart and permitted the leader to turn round short to the right hand and went down over the precipice 121 feet where at the bottom near the river came against an ash tree where the coach was dashed into several pieces " (Here follows a list of victims.)

On the side of the monument which faces north there is this further wording: "I have heard say where there is a will there is a way one person cannot assist many but many can assist a few, as this pillar will show which was suggested, designed and erected by J. Bull, Inspector of Mail Coaches with the aid of thirteen pounds sixteen shillings and sixpence received by him from forty one subscribers in the year 1841".

Footnote: We wonder whether the driver refreshed himself in Llandovery, which has 20 public houses to serve a population of 1,700 souls - or one to every 85 persons. Incidentally, can readers tell us of other monuments of interest?

****A NEW FILM WORTH SEEING**

"SHOT" AT THETFORD CHASE

A NEW FILM may come to your local cinema and is worth looking out for. It is a short "documentary" made by the Rayant Film Company, and we are informed that it will be given a wide public showing; it is entitled "The Forest" and, being exclusively for public consumption, it obviously makes the subject as colourful as possible. It opens with some scenes which are liberally steeped in Robin Hood atmosphere, describes the dwindling through the centuries of Britain's forest estate, and then contributes to the crusade against forest fires. It was shot at Thetford Chase, our great forest in East Anglia, and a number of our workers appear as extras and, fighting the realistic fire, as principals. If the credit titles of the film could be extended they would surely include the names of S.F.O. G.F. BALLANCE and District Officer S. W. ROGERS, who gave much valuable help to the producers, particularly in the advisory sense.

"The Forest" does not attempt an erudite presentation of forest policy and forestry practice; but it does bring home in no uncertain way the danger of forest fires and, if it is widely shown this summer, as we hope it will be, it will do a great deal of good.

****BEATING UP THE FISHING NETS**

READERS who have taken special interest in speculation as to the origin of the term "to beat up" may wish to note the following. Mr. G. O. COOK, Assistant Engineer, East England, tells us that the expression "beating up" is used in the East Coast fishing industry. In East Anglia fishing ports such as Great Yarmouth or Lowestoft, where Anglo-Saxon influence is strong (he states) one may see tall, very narrow, brick buildings with a unique appearance. These are known as "beating-chambers", in which the repair of fishing nets is carried out. The work is done by women and girls, known as "beatsters", who knit new twine into torn nets, using a sort of hand shuttle, and make the mesh with a peculiar knot. A repaired net is said to be "beaten" or, more rarely, "beaten up".

Is there a connection here with the term as used in forest operations?

****D.O. AS RUGBY STALWART**

FROM TIME TO TIME we have mentioned the sporting prowess of members of our staff. It is of interest, then, to learn that District Officer P. J. LANGLEY, of the North East England Conservancy, is a regular member of the Civil Service Rugby Union team, and has played with this side since he joined the Department two and half years ago.

District Officer Langley played in the recent match at Chatham against the Royal Navy; he scored a try at a period in the game when the Civil Service team was seriously in arrears, and thereby helped stage the recovery that won the game. A report of this match in the February edition of the Civil Service Sports Journal says: "Langley revealed the class that made him an Oxford Blue and English Trialist."

District Officer Langley was chosen to play against the Army at Aldershot last month.

****A WELSH HILL'S CLAIM TO FAME**

HOME OF POTENTILLA RUPRESTIS

THE CLAIM TO FAME of a hill in Montgomeryshire, we were told the other day when driving nearby, is that it is one of only two places in Britain where *Potentilla ruprestis* is found. This is (obviously) a rare plant indeed; it is similar in appearance to a wild strawberry plant, except that it is larger and bears no fruit. The other site on which *Potentilla ruprestis* may be seen is in Radnorshire. Botanists will not normally divulge the exact locations where the plant may be found, for fear that it may be stolen.

While on the same journey we were told of a moth that is unique to Wales, namely the Ashworth rustic. This is the only British moth which cannot be found outside Britain, and here it is to be seen only in North Wales. It is slatey grey in colour and hard to see when settled on the slate and limestone which abounds in North Wales. It is about one and a half inches in wing-spread, and the grub feeds on heather and other low-growing vegetation.

**TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters: District Officer D. T. SEAL from Fort Augustus, N(S), to Edinburgh. Foresters R. H. IRVING from Castle O'er, S(S), to Aberfoyle, W(S); E. J. D. WILKINSON, from Maresfield, SE(E), to Information Section, H.Q.; C. R. DICK from Ae, S(S), to Castle O'er; A. H. FORREST from Chiddingfold, SE(E), to Witley, SE(E). Foremen T. J. GALT from South Laggan, N(S), to Slattadale, N(S); D. MARPLES from Friston, SE(E), to Chiddingfold; D. HOLDER from Rendlesham, E(E), to Walsham, E(E); Clerks of Works E. J. BARTLETT from Wyre, SW(E), to Clipstone, NW(E); E. J. DUMMETT from Margam, S(W), to Gwydyr, N(W). Clerical Officer E. FLEMING from Lightmoor, Dean, to Parkend, Dean. Newcomers are: Clerical Officers Miss M. M. MacASKILL to N(S); R. D. NICOL to D(S); T. A. EVANS and Miss V. M. JAMES to S(W).

**APPRECIATION OF A FORMER FORESTER

THE FOLLOWING APPRECIATION of the late Mr. G. H. GULLIVER, a former Forester, whose death was recently announced, has been

received from a reader: "I was privileged to know Harry Gulliver for 16 years when he was in charge of Hazelborough Forest, East England. He was truly modest and humble and yet most knowledgeable. The Commission never had a more faithful or reliable servant. He was a first class shot and, in his younger days, a keen cricketer. He used to tell me that as a young man, when he lived in Salcey Forest (where his father was Forester) he would walk into Northampton, seven miles away, after work on a Saturday morning. There he would play cricket and then walk home again."

**DEATH OF FOREMAN F. W. UNDERWOOD

WE REGRET to have to record the tragic death of Foreman F. W. UNDERWOOD, of Yardley Forest, East England. Mr. Underwood, who had been employed at Yardley since 1935, was walking home to lunch when he was knocked down by a motor-van.

**PERSONAL

FORESTER G. H. RICHARDS, of Penllergaer Forest, South Wales, who has retired, has been presented with two fireside chairs as a gift from the field and office staffs of the Conservancy. The presentation was made by the Conservator, Mr. W. D. RUSSELL.

Congratulations to Miss A. L. HUNTER, of Stores Section, Headquarters, and Mr. J. TALLBOYS, an employee of the London County Council, who have wed. Miss Hunter joined the Forestry Commission in May, 1946, from the Ministry of National Insurance. To mark her marriage she was presented with a set of carvers and other cutlery, the gift of colleagues; the presentation was made by Mr. H. G. HYEM and Miss E. A. TODD.

Our best wishes, too, to District Officer T. I. W. BELL, South Wales, and Miss M. G. TUCKER, C.O. in the Cardiff office, who have announced their engagement.

Enter the Stork. Congratulations to District Officer B. P. GRABASKEY, of Aberystwyth, and Mrs. Grabaskey, on the birth of a son; to Messenger J. RAFTREE, of the same office, and Mrs. Raftree, on the birth of a daughter. Also to District Officer S. U. ROBERTSON, of Barcaldine, West Scotland, and Mrs. Robertson, on the arrival of a son; and to Clerical Officer J. T. GORDON, Glasgow, and Mrs. Gordon, also on the birth of a son.

**PHILATELISTS ALL

SOME MEMBERS of the Social Section at the Research Station at Alice Holt Lodge have formed a stamp club. Senior Photographer I. A. ANDERSON has been elected president and E.O. W. O. WITTERING secretary-treasurer. Mr. Wittering will be pleased to hear from any other stamp clubs there may be in the Commission.

IF YOU DO SOMETHING, SEE SOMETHING, OR HEAR SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY TELL YOUR SLASHER CORRESPONDENT. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE