

# THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

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MR. A. H. H. ROSS TO BE DIRECTOR, SCOTLAND  
SUCCESSOR TO SIR HENRY BERESFORD  
PEIRSE

MR. A. H. H. ROSS, Conservator of Forests for North West England, is soon to return to his native country, for he is to succeed SIR HENRY BERESFORD PEIRSE as Director of Forestry for Scotland.

He will take up his appointment in July, when Sir Henry becomes our Deputy Director General.

A native of Edinburgh, the headquarters of the Scottish Directorate, Mr. Ross was educated at Shrewsbury School and at Oxford, where he gained a degree, and a diploma in forestry. He commenced his career in the Indian Forest Service, and joined the Forestry Commission in 1925. He subsequently served as District Officer and Divisional Officer under the then Assistant Commissioner for England and Wales. During the war he was seconded to the Home Grown Timber Production Department; he returned to the Commission early in 1947 to take up his present post as Conservator.

We take this opportunity to wish Mr. Ross and Sir Henry well in their new appointments.

## THE FAMOUS BEECH HEDGE

580 YARDS LONG: 113 FEET  
HIGH

WHO HAS HEARD of the famous beech hedge at Meikleour, Perthshire? This is situated on the west side of the main Perth to Blairgowrie road, on the Meikleour Estate, property of the

Marquis of Lansdowne. It is 580 yards long and its height varies from 80 to 113 feet, and the average space between the trees is about three feet.

District Officer J. L. F. FERGUSSON tells us the locally accepted history is that estate workmen planted the hedge after returning from Culloden. For some unknown reason it was left unpruned for 40 years, pruned during the next 20 years, and left for a further 20 years. Pruning has since been carried out at intervals and the estate staff now reckon to do this every seven years. Obviously, pruning involves much high climbing and the job occupies six men for approximately six weeks. This remarkable hedge has survived a commercial threat involving proposed felling for charcoal production and, we are glad to say, it withstood the great January gales - due partly to the fact that it is sheltered by a nearby stand of old hardwoods.

"I have always considered that the hedge is unique in Britain and probably the world," says District Officer Fergusson. "I should be interested to hear of any other hedge which approaches it in height".

## PASSING OF A FORESTER

WE DEEPLY REGRET to have to record the death of Forester D. B. LLOYD, of Hay

Forest, South Wales, whose tragic death occurred early this month as the result of a road accident. Forester Lloyd was riding a motorcycle when he was involved in a collision with an R.A.F. lorry. He sustained a fractured skull and other injuries, and died almost immediately. At the inquest a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

Forester Lloyd was only 37 years of age. He started work with the Department in 1935 as a Forest Worker, became a Ganger in 1938, Foreman in 1948 and Forester in 1951. He had been at Hay Forest since 1949.

The death has also occurred of Mr. PAUL R. S. WILD, Forester on the Hurst Hill Estate, Sussex, who will be known to many readers. Before his resignation from the Commission some years ago he was Forester at Bramshill, in the South East England Conservancy.

## WHARNCLIFFE: THE CLIFF OF THE QUERNS?

OUR REFERENCE to the possibility of a quern factory having once been established on the edge of Wharncliffe

Forest, in North East England, has brought forth an interesting speculation. Is there not some connection, asks one of our readers, between "quern" and the name Wharncliffe? Could not Wharncliffe mean "cliff of the querns"?

We would say it could; in fact, it is highly probable. The sounds "qu" and "wh" are closely connected - for example, the old Scottish spelling of the English "when" is "quhen".

It is an interesting point that some of the rocks at Wharncliffe are what the geologists call millstone grit; until fairly recently this was actually used to make stones for corn mills. Incidentally, it is said that the primitive "quern", or handmill for grinding corn, is still used in the Western Isles of Scotland. We confess that we have never seen it there, but perhaps some of our readers have come across it.

#### \*\* KIELDER TENNIS CLUB ENTERTAINS

THE RECENTLY formed tennis club at Kielder, North East England, has been raising funds with which to acquire a court. The Club's latest venture was a pantomime, the first ever to be performed in Kielder and presented on what might be called a vest pocket stage. Entitled "The Babes in Kielder Forest", it was written and produced by Mrs. ALICE CURRY, a shorthand typist in the forest headquarters in Kielder Castle, and was based on a 700-years old legend of the Cowt of Kielder. Mrs Curry also took a part in the play and made most of the costumes; the cast numbered nineteen and consisted entirely of Forestry Commission employees and wives and children.

The scenery was designed and painted by Mr. ANDREW RUTTER and the lighting effects were by Clerk of Works V. BLANKENBURGS. There was a "capacity" audience on each of the two nights on which the show was presented. Well done, Kielder Tennis Club!

#### \*\* MODERN FOREST HAZARDS

THE FOLLOWING LITTLE POEM reaches us from a reader in Wales.

Ten million little trees were planted (Nigra pine),  
Every tenth row was felled - and that left only nine.  
In came the Roads Branch, starting rather late,  
And clearing for the road line brought them down to eight.  
Eight million little trees were thinned: and that left seven  
For M.D.C. experiments with sky hooks screwed to heaven:  
Yards and yards of cable with a rope they had to fix,  
Soon reduced the little trees to rather less than six.  
Six million Corsican, growing on a hill  
With annual shoots so flourishing, the rest seemed standing still,  
Research Branch wanted specimens with root and shoot alive -  
And that left this plantation with scarcely more than five.  
Along came General Hutson, who said: "You must fell more:  
The roads are far too narrow" - and that left only four.  
A new idea for sampling came from the D.D.G.  
And that reduced the little trees to even less than three.  
Three million little trees growing bravely still;  
And then they sold some standing to the Timber Merchant's mill.  
Two million little trees were trembling in their roots  
For they'd heard a rumour of Col. Shaw's new chutes.  
He shot them down the hillside; and by the time he'd done  
The Forester protested that there now was only one;  
(However no one minded because they'd had such fun).  
Then frost by Day and Chrystal's bugs, with Peace's fungi too,  
Created a new havoc 'mongst the last remaining few.  
There now remains to mark the site, one solitary tree  
And that, to everyone's disgust, had come up naturallee.

#### \*\* NATURE STUDY

BUZZARDS; WHITE STOATS, ETC.

these birds are seen in or over many of our woodlands in the south. Are they?

FORESTER A.H. FORREST, of Witley, South East England, reports that several buzzards are frequently to be seen flying over his forest, and he asks whether

FORESTER E.C. KIBBLE, of Eggesford, South West England, states that his Ganger, Mr. J. KINGDON, recently saw a black and white stoat in the forest; and Head Forester G.W. HOLLIS writes in to say that last year he had a similar experience on the Goodwood Estate, Sussex ("the only white stoat I have ever seen"). Forester H.C. LAW, of Neroche, also in South West England, says he saw a white stoat in his forest in February.

Forester Kibble also reports that on February 20th two brimstone butterflies were seen at Eggesford, one in Foxes Cover, a low-lying area, and the other in Flashdown Plantation, which is at a much higher altitude.

Finally, a few more words from Head Forester Hollis: "In 1949-51 I frequently saw a white squirrel on the Somerhill Estate, Tonbridge, Kent, and was told by the Estate Forester that they boasted a dozen or so at a time". This estate is about 20 miles from Gravetye Forest in which, as reported in the February issue of The Slasher a white, pink-eyed squirrel, the second seen in 16 years, had been shot.

\*\*THE LETTERS WE RECEIVE!

THIS LETTER, which speaks (more or less) for itself, was received at Headquarters.

Dear Sir,

I be writing to:

1. Camping Club Great Britain
2. National Federation of Permanent Holidays Camps but their answers no help me.

I visit during 1952, forests of France, Spain, Dutchland, Germany, Danmark, Norsk and Sverige; I desire visit 1953, forests of Switzerland, Italien, Great Britain and Ireland.

I will study birds and other little animals, therefore I desire camping into the forests, and waste forests the best; for this animals flee out the organised campings; they shun the clamorous people.

Can the National Forestry Commission, by repayment, procure me a map of forests Great Britain and Ireland?

I not smoke! I have never match or other firerisk upon me! I prepare never food during my campings! I eat in restaurant take pot luck.

Yours truly, etc.

\*\*PRESENTATIONS AT BRISTOL

South West England Conservancy.

SEVERAL PRESENTATIONS have been made in the Bristol Office, headquarters of the

On behalf of colleagues, the Conservator, Mr. A.H. POPERT, presented Miss B. FIDDES, a Clerical Officer, with a gift to mark the occasion of her marriage. Miss Fiddes has now left the Department after 10 years' service.

Mr. R.E. PERRETT, another C.O., received a clock as a wedding present, the presentation in this case also being made by the Conservator. Mr. Perrett joined the staff of Director, England, in 1944, served in the R.A.F., and went to Bristol in 1948.

Mr. R.H. ROSSITER, a Temporary Clerk, who has now left us, was presented with a clock as a parting gift.

\*\*GOLF AND TABLE TENNIS IN WALES

AND A CHALLENGE

was presented with the challenge cup. Mrs. Long was appointed captain for the ensuing year.

THERE WAS a pleasant ceremony at the annual meeting of the ladies' section of the Aberystwyth Golf Club, for Mrs. LONG, wife of Mr. A.P. LONG, the Director for Wales,

At the same meeting Miss E. REES, of the Welsh Directorate Office, was presented with the silver medal of the Ladies' Golfing Union.

The South Wales Conservancy Office this year, and for the first time, entered a team in the Cardiff and District Table Tennis League. The team played 18 matches without defeat and finished with the outstanding record of 354 games for and 84 against, an average win per match of about 20 games to 5. Let it be recorded, too, that three matches were won by 22 games to nil!

Our correspondent now takes up the story: "Members of the team are naturally very pleased with their performances," he writes. "The one regret is that for geographical reasons inter-Conservancy matches are rather a pipedream. Nevertheless, a challenge is issued by the team to any other Conservancy office which cares to take it up.

"Do we hear something from Bristol ..... or the Dean .....?"

#### \*\* HOPE FOREST UNDER SNOW

AFTER A LONG period of drought and more than a promise of a worthwhile spring, it is difficult to realise that only a few short weeks ago some of our areas were having what were probably the worst snowfalls for years. A report of experiences in Hope Forest, in the wild Peak District of Derbyshire, reminds us southerners of our relative good fortune where our winter weather was concerned. FORESTER W.H. MORRILL tells us that snow drifts were 20 ft. - 30 ft. high in some parts of Hope Forest; a bungalow was to all intents and purposes buried, and snow reached to the bedroom windows of a farmhouse. Forest Workers Holdings were completely isolated for days and the occupants were running short of food when, with the aid of neighbours and Forest Workers, Forester Morrill was able to set off on a car journey of 18 miles to the bank and shops for wages and provisions. It was a journey notable for repeated "dig-outs" but, says Forester Morrill, "it saved us from eating the soles of our shoes".

In the "Snake" area of the forest huge drifts flattened the fence lines and elsewhere a Forest Worker sank to his neck in the snow and had to be dug out. There was considerable damage to the trees, some of the spruce being bent like bows, with the leading shoots touching the ground.

#### \*\* THE BIG TREE

THERE IS a Sitka spruce in Glynn Forest, South West England, which is 90 ft. tall and has a quarter girth (breast height) of 18½ inches. It was planted in 1923, says Forester F.W. EVERITT. Having regard to its age, the dimensions of this tree are probably a record in the Conservancy.

#### IN BRIEF

THE SUM collected in the Forestry Commission and subscribed to the National Memorial to His Late Majesty, King George VI, was well over £500.

While supervising draining operations at Kirrroughtree Forest, South Scotland, Forester F.J. CANNON found a spindle whorl; such whorls have been used in spinning since very early times.

#### \*\* ODD QUOTES

POINTS from letters received at Aberystwyth: ".....where I work since 1945 when they redunded me". ".....to enquire of particulars relating to Forestial Education." "My ambition is to climb to the heights of my intellect in Forestry". "In conclusion, Sir, would you kindly enlighten me as to information of which I have omitted."

#### \*\* PERSONAL

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Executive Officer K. ROSCOE, Aberystwyth, on his marriage to Miss M. Laings, of Stockport; to Clerical Officer E. TOZER, of the Office of Director, England, on his marriage to Miss MARGARET (Peggy) SMILLIE, formerly a Temporary Assistant in the same office.

To Divisional Officer W.A. CADMAN, of Aberystwyth, and Mrs. Cadman, on the birth of a son; to Executive Officer K. PRUCE, of the same office, and Mrs. Pruce, on the birth of a daughter; to Clerical Officer G. STONE, of Bristol, and Mrs Stone, on the birth of a son; and to Forester JOHN STYLES, of the Forest Research Station, and Mrs. Styles, also on the birth of a son.

#### \*\* TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters.

District Officers E.M. CONDER from Pickering, NE(E), to Chester, NW(E); G.J.N. TAYLOR from Parkend, Dean, to Woodchurch, SE(E); H.W. BELL from Shifnal, NW(E), to Kielder, NE(E); R.E. CROWTHER from Kielder to Allerston, NE(E); T.W.G. COULSON from Chester to Mansfield, NE(E); P.L. WINCHESTER from New to Malvern, SW(E).

Foresters T. MORRIS from Cardiff, S(W), to Tair Onen, S(W); G. STEWART from Montreathmont, E(S), to Dallas, E(S); G. STOKOE from Allerston to Slaley, NE(E); J. MELVILLE from Newcastleton, S(S), to Selm Muir, S(S); D. REID from Thetford Chase, E(E), to Allerston. Foremen J. SOPPIT from Strathord, E(S), to Glenerrochty, E(S); P. GALLACHER from Bareagle, S(S), to Laurieston, S(S); H.F. CLARKE from Wyre, SW(E), to Quantocks, SW(E).

Newcomers are District Officer O.N. BLATCHFORD to S(W). Foreman A.W. GRAHAM to W(S). Clerical Officers N. IRELAND and R.J. PERRY to NE(E); Miss K.J. Betts to N(W); Miss W.M. DURN to SW(E).