

THE SLASHER
Forestry Commission News

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THE WAR ON GREY SQUIRRELS
250,000 KILLED IN A YEAR

a shilling a tail. The effect of the campaign has been twofold - undoubtedly more people have been encouraged to operate for the first time against the pest, and there has been increased activity on the part of Squirrel Clubs.

The number of grey squirrels killed in England and Wales in the year ended September last was 257,644, compared with 168,038 in the previous year - an increase of nearly 90,000. Kills from 16th March, the date on which the campaign opened, were 182,082 and the number of shillings paid was 129,871. In Scotland, where the Grey Squirrel is very much localised, kills were relatively few.

The year's "bag", in the words of SIR RICHARD COTTERELL, Chairman of the Grey Squirrel Committee, constitutes "a staggering figure when it is taken into account that there are still many areas where no steps have as yet been taken to deal with the pest". But, adds Sir Richard, there is no cause for complacency and efforts must be re-doubled; and this is where readers of The Slasher can come into the picture by urging their friends and acquaintances to join in the campaign wherever possible. Some may have land or access to land on which they can shoot or trap, and others may be interested in joining Squirrel Clubs. First step in the latter connection, of course, is to approach the County Pests Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Footnote: As the grey squirrel appears in a locality, so the red squirrel disappears, but hitherto there has been a paucity of evidence that the grey actually attacks the red. Now comes news from Forester E. G. HOLLOWELL, of Coed Caerdydd, that his local trapper was recently an eye-witness of an attack by a grey squirrel on a red. Both squirrels were shot and an inspection of the red showed an incision at the back of the right ear which could not be attributed to gun shot wounds.

ANOTHER FOREST VILLAGE OPENED

A SHEPHERD'S CROOK FOR OUR CHAIRMAN

instalment of 47 houses and a shop is nearing completion and about twelve families have "moved in" to date.

YET ANOTHER forest village has been officially opened. This is the village at Glen Trool, in the South Scotland Conservancy, where more than 100 houses will eventually be built. The first

The opening ceremony was performed by the EARL of GALLOWAY, the Lord Lieutenant of the Stewartry, who was supported by our Chairman, LORD RADNOR; the Director General (Mr. A. H. GOSLING); the Director for Scotland (Mr. A. H. H. ROSS); Mr. J. A. B. MACDONALD (Conservator); and Mr. R. E. FOSSEY, State Forests Officer.

In introducing the Earl of Galloway the Chairman said the activities of the Forestry Commission had a social significance that was not always fully appreciated, for by planting trees the Commission not only stabilised the number of people living in an area but made it possible for others to find employment there.

The Earl of Galloway and the Chairman each planted oak trees at the roadside at the entrance to the village, and each was presented with a shepherd's crook by 12-years old MARGARET BIRCH, daughter of the first householder in the village.

LINKS NEW AND OLD

BETWEEN FOREST AND RAILWAY

MANY AND VARIED, writes Conservancy Engineer R. R. MESTER, are the links between forest and railway. The thoughts of foresters turn often to the railways, for statistics show all too clearly that sparks from the engines cause most forest fires. It may be that news of some pending railway closure in or about our plantations is received with satisfaction; there is a sense of relief as a line falls into disuse; a feeling of

special achievement in such cases as the occupation by Chirk Depot of some of the very buildings of the now dismantled Glyn Valley Tramway, closed to traffic as long ago as 1935. In the Forest of Dean the motor road approach into Lightmoor Depot is aligned over a section of abandoned mineral railway. There is no doubt, fires apart, that railways do have a considerable interest for most of us at one time or another and certainly the construction of a new railway through a forest is an item of news which should not pass without special reference, especially as the Commission's plantations, in consequence, become associated with both the modern and ancient railways of this country.

New railway ventures are not common nowadays, but a notable addition to British Railways was opened in September last year. This was the Calverton Colliery Branch, a double track, standard gauge line seven and a half miles long, serving the colliery, which is north east of Nottingham. For a distance of more than half a mile this new line runs in a deep cutting through part of Sherwood Forest, in the North West England Conservancy, and the construction of the railway meant the surrender of about thirteen acres of plantation in the form of a strip. The standing timber (C.P., P30 and fully stocked) was clear felled and, with the building of the new line, there has resulted a very considerable and marked change in the appearance of the countryside. In the centre of the plantation the cutting is 30 feet deep and 80 feet wide, with a maximum depth of about 50 feet of cutting approaching the western perimeter. As the railway cut this part of Sherwood Forest into two separate blocks, a modern, three-span concrete connecting over-bridge for vehicular traffic was provided by the Railway Executive and is one of nine bridges included in the engineering works on the line. This branch railway is the first of any appreciable length to be constructed since the nationalisation of railways and is designed for operation by main line locomotives and new standard 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton coal wagons. So much, then, for the modern.

For contrast - the ancient in railways - we must go to Dovey Forest, in the North Wales Conservancy. There, at Abergynolwyn, the Commission's plantations adjoin the track of what is now the oldest surviving, steam-hauled, passenger-carrying narrow-gauge line in the world, the historic Tal-y-Llyn Railway. This 2ft. 3ins. gauge railway was incorporated in 1865 and a Tal-y-Llyn Railway Preservation Society has been formed to ensure the survival of the line as a going concern. Among the "stud" of locomotives we find an 88-years old veteran - DOLGOCH - still in commission, and four-wheeled coaches which have carried passengers since 1866.

Unfortunately, it is not within the scope of these notes to describe this quite remarkable railway at length, but even so, we remain fire-conscious, for there above Abergynolwyn terminus is clearly displayed the familiar "Take Care: Do Not Start Fire" notice. Perhaps one day it will be joined by a modern forest nameplate.

***ODD JOBS!

WE ARE ALL AWARE of things that are harmful to forestry, and of the need of energetic steps

to eradicate them. It is, therefore, perhaps a little surprising to hear that the work of leading surveyor Miss MARION MANSELL, of the Forest Research Station, has included the potting-up of woods, the planting of rhododendrons and, of all things, the nurturing of baby grey squirrels. Where the last task is concerned, it should be explained that a number of grey squirrels is to be kept in captivity at Alice Holt Lodge, the main object being to permit a study of their food preferences, so that the most effective bait may be used for future trapping.

At first the colony consisted of just two baby squirrels, acquired by FRED COURTIER, who is undertaking much of our grey squirrel research work. They were fed through a fountain-pen filler on milk and honey, the menu being supplemented in due course with a nut dessert. We understand that the colony is now more than 20 strong.

***PAGING A FORMER ART TEACHER

A PARAGRAPH in a Yorkshire newspaper described how the landlord of a London hotel is planning

a reunion of a band of men who, nearly 30 years ago, "stood up to the corkscrew bowling of big Bill Bowes on a concrete hard pitch in Leeds". A pile of bricks served as stumps. The said landlord listed 13 names in a Press advertisement and all persons have been traced, and eleven of them intend to take part in the reunion early next year. They include (says the same newspaper report) "a former art teacher now with the Forestry Commission in Cumberland", and we would hardly be human if we failed to speculate as to the identity of this particular gentleman. If, therefore, he should read these few lines we would be glad to hear from him, for no doubt his early cricketing reminiscences would make interesting reading.

GANGER AS RUGBY PLAYER

SEVERAL OF OUR STAFF are noted for their prowess at different sports. It is with pleasure, then, that we record the fact that the South Wales Conservancy can boast of a first class rugby player. He is Ganger G. MORRIS, of St. Gwynno, who applied for a trial with the Newport Rugby club and has now obtained a regular place as lock forward.

"IN THE HANDS OF THE POLICE"

EDINBURGH VISIT TO WIRELESS STATION

SOME VARIED NEWS from Edinburgh. First, we record that members of the Directorate Office Social Club recently spent an enjoyable evening in the hands of the Edinburgh police. Enjoyable? Yes, we mean it, for the police were good enough to show our colleagues over the wireless station on the top of Blackford Hill. They were allowed to listen-in to actual broadcasts to patrol cars, directing the vehicles to the scenes of various misdemeanours. "Our only regret", writes our correspondent, "was to miss by a few days the big 'break-out' from Saughton Prison."

The party was also shown the make-up of the transmission and receiving sets carried in patrol cars, and a few were permitted to use the "walkie-talkie" apparatus.

In addition to seeing the wireless station the party visited the Kirk o' Shots TV station, also through the good offices of the police. "Now", says our correspondent, "as Scots we know where to get free viewing!"

One might be over-colloquial and say it is now a case of from coppers to cosmetics. In the conversation among ladies of the Edinburgh Office (adds our correspondent) one now hears such words as "tone", "lubricate", "vitalise" and so on (and so on), and one wonders whether the fair sex has gone mechanically-minded. But no - all these words relate to BEAUTY. This more intensive than usual interest in the subject arises because the Social Club Committee was fortunate enough to get Yardley's, of Old Bond Street, to send along one of their experts to give a talk on the art of make-up. Needless to say, men were barred from the meeting, but it can be said that the Edinburgh Office should now be called the Headquarters (Scotland) of Glamour!

MESSRS. LEEFE, PLANT AND DEAL

THE FOLLOWING situation arose at Lynford Hall, the Forester Training School in East Anglia. Due to sickness and the taking of leave, District Officer LEEFE was deputising for the Education Officer; and the Forester-Instructor, also deputising, was Mr. PLANT (now District Officer). Incidentally, the Forester in charge of the School beat is Mr. DEAL.

TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

District Officers D. R. JOHNSTON from Alice Holt, SE(E), to Chichester, SE(E); A. R. SUTTON from Woking to Chichester; J. V. CROSSLAND from Ulverston, NW(E), to Kendal, NW(E); R. C. STEIN from Aberystwyth to Ruthin; L. C. TROUPE from Alice Holt, SE(E), to Farnham, SE(E); J. E. A. KEEN from Woking to Farnham.

Foresters J. R. HENDERSON from Gravetye, SE(E), to Brightling, SE(E); M. K. YOUNG from Glenduror, W(S), to Loch Katrine, W(S); I. O. EVANS from Polena, S(W), to Towy, S(W); C. O. MACKINTOSH from Leanachan, N(S), to Speymouth, E(S); J. DAY from Clipstone, NW(E), to Charnwood, NW(E); E. JONES from Kershope, NW(E), to Inglewood, NW(E). Foremen D. TOIBIN from Wentwood, S(W), to Slebech, S(W); J. HOWSON from Giedd, S(W), to Mynydd Ddu, S(W); R. A. F. KEMP from Education, Faskally School, to Education, Gwydyr School; P. H. PARSONS from Savernake, SW(E), to Erme, SW(E); D. ROBERTSON from Research, Wykeham, to Research, Glentree; G. F. THOMAS from Charnwood to Clipstone; J. J. MUNRO from Wark, NE(E), to Redesdale, NE(E). Clerk of Works T. DALGLEISH from Glenhurich, N(S), to Straiton, S(S). Executive Officers W. O. WITTERING from Research, Alice Holt, to Edinburgh; C. RIDLEY from Bristol to Alice Holt.

Newcomers are District Officers I. A. D. GRANT to N(S); J. R. ALDHOUS to Research; A. J. GRAYSON to NE(E); M. C. SHIRLEY to SW(E); W. G. JEFFREY to E(S); T. S. THOMPSON and D. Y. M. ROBERTSON to S(W); M. H. ORRAM to NW(E); J. R. SKINNER to N(W); J. D. CAMERON to Dean. Executive Officers Miss M. J. EDEN to H.Q.; J. W. DAVIS to D(S). Clerical Officers W. R. G. HALL to E(S); J. A. DUNFORD to SW(E); Miss J. S. REID to N(S).

TAKING IT TO EXTREMES

FORESTS 32 MILES FROM NORTHERN
IRELAND
Great Britain.

NOW THAT OUR FORESTS are so well distributed over the country, readers may like to be informed, or at least reminded, of those forests that lie at the extreme geographical limits of

For a long time - from about 1920, we believe - the record for being farthest north was held by Borgie Forest in Sutherland, which is only ten miles south of Dunnet Head. (For the record, it is Dunnet Head, not John o' Groat's, that is the northernmost point of the British mainland.) Recently, however, the new acquisition called Strathy, also in Sutherland, has taken the Commission a mile or two nearer the North Pole.

Also in the North Conservancy, Scotland, you will find our most westerly forests - Fiunary, on the Morven peninsula is only 10 miles east of the Point of Ardnamurchan, which is the westernmost part of the Scottish mainland, and indeed of Great Britain. Still further out, on the Isle of Skye, comes Glen Brittle Forest, which at its extreme point is five miles west of the Point of Ardnamurchan; incidentally, it is also nearly 20 miles west of Belfast!

Our most easterly forests are all in Suffolk and at the moment it looks like a tie between Dunwich and the new unit called Waveney, both being within five miles of Lowestoft Ness, the easternmost point of England. (Waveney, strange to say, is on a island called Lethingland; although you can easily reach it by road or rail, you always have to cross a bridge, and it is even possible to sail around it.) We should like to know whether Dunwich or Waveney claims our most easterly tree - or possibly Tunstall, which is a close competitor.

The record for furthest south was held for a few years by Erme Forest, in Devon, but this year a new acquisition has been made on the Goonhilly Downs of Cornwall, within five miles of Lizard Head - that will take a lot of beating! This area, by the way, is farther west than any point in Wales, and only 20 miles east of Land's End, the westernmost point of England.

To complete the story, Glen Brittle is 320 miles west of Waveney, or a greater distance than that from London to Carlisle. No fewer than 600 miles, in a north to south direction, separate Strathy from the Goonhilly Downs; this is a greater distance than that from London to Spain. There is room for quite a lot of differences in climate and weather in such far-flung extremes.

We suspect that the Research Branch may try to go one better (as they always like to do) by bringing in experimental areas they are running on Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, and Hoy in Orkney. We haven't heard much about these far-off foreign parts and are wondering whether any trees really do brave the winds of these remote islands. Will any reader send us information?

Before we put away our atlas, it is a curious fact that both Saddell Forest in West Scotland, and Barcagle Forest in South Scotland, are only 32 miles from Northern Ireland, while Lyminge Forest, in Kent, comes within 30 miles of France!

***PASSING OF FORESTER B. V. JAMES

FOLLOWS RECENT RETIREMENT

issue of The Slasher.

WE DEEPLY REGRET to record the passing of Forester B. V. James, whose sudden death has occurred less than three months after his retirement, to which we referred in the last

As previously stated, Mr. James was employed in State forestry for 46 years, for he started his career with the Office of Woods as long ago as 1907, spending most of his time in The Dean. He joined the Forestry Commission in 1924 and subsequently became a Ganger and, in 1937, a Foreman. He became a Forester in 1939. During the war Mr. James served with H.T.P.D., returning to the Commission, at Tintern, early in 1947. Later in the same year he was transferred to Pembrey, one of our forests which has been largely formed on sand-dunes, and there he remained until his retirement in August last.

The cremation took place at Pantypridd.

Unfortunately, we have also to report the passing of Mr. W. E. RAIKES, formerly Clerk of Works in the South Wales Conservancy, who died in Bridgend Hospital.

***MORE RESEARCH ROMANCE

ROY FAULKNER; District Officer GEORGE HOLMES (to Miss SHEILA WOODGER); and Foreman G. BUSZELICZ (to Miss LYDIA ROSSNER).

THE FOLLOWING members of the Research staff have recently married: District Officer

We also congratulate District Officer D. BEVAN, Research Branch, and Mrs. Bevan on the arrival of a third daughter; and District Officer JOHN MATTHEWS, Research, and Mrs. Matthews, on the advent of a second son.