

## NEW CONSERVATOR, SOUTH WALES

MR. J. Q. WILLIAMSON SUCCEEDS THE  
LATE MR. W. D. RUSSELL

Private Woodlands Officer in East England. Mr. Williamson joined the Forestry Commission in 1936 and served for a number of years with the Department and H.T.P.D. in East Anglia before being appointed Chief Education Officer in 1945. It was while holding that office that he so successfully undertook the organisational feat of setting the stage for the Empire Forestry Conference held in this country in 1947, and ensuring its smooth running; it was very largely for his conference work that he received the M.B.E. Mr. Williamson went to The Dean early in 1950.

OUR BEST WISHES go to Mr. J. Q. WILLIAMSON, on his promotion from Deputy Surveyor, The Dean, to Conservator, South Wales; and to Mr. R. G. SANZEN-BAKER, who succeeds Mr. Williamson in The Dean after serving as

Mr. Sanzen-Baker joined the Commission in 1931, being stationed in early days at Farnham, Surrey; later he was engaged on research work at Oxford in association with the Imperial Forestry Institute, and then went to the Research Station at Alice Holt as Silviculturist, South. He went to Cardiff in 1947, had a spell in N.W.(E) and recently moved to Cambridge.

## WATCH ON THE BUZZARD

## HELP WANTED FOR NEW SURVEY

Survey.

HERE IS AN INTERESTING project in which the aid of Foresters and others is sought.

Dr. N. W. MOORE, of the Nature Conservancy, is keen to recruit helpers for the new Buzzard

A century and a half ago the Buzzard bred throughout most of Great Britain, but with the passing of the years its breeding range became restricted to Wales, the Devon Peninsular, Lakeland, the Pennines, New Forest, and central, west and north Scotland (including the Inner Hebrides). During the last 30 years it has been gradually returning to old haunts and has even colonised elsewhere, for example in the Outer Hebrides.

The new survey, Dr. Moore tells us, is being run by the British Trust for Ornithology, with some help from the Nature Conservancy and himself as organiser. "Already," he says, "we have had many offers of help and it looks as if we shall be able to discover the present distribution of the Buzzard and forecast future changes; the exact number of Buzzards in several quite large 'sample' areas and in particular the normal maximum density in different parts of the country and in different types of habitat; the extent to which Buzzards feed on rabbits and any gross changes in density, distribution or feeding habit resulting from the spread of myxomatosis in rabbits.

"Our main difficulty is in getting accurate records of Buzzard density in thickly wooded areas and the help of Foresters would be invaluable in such places. Since the Buzzard population is changing so rapidly no one need feel that the present investigation is a useless duplication of the previous one; in fact the value of each will obviously be increased by the existence of the other."

Keen ornithologists among our readers, particularly those living in Scotland, are invited to write to Dr. Moore for questionnaires, giving a clear indication of the area they are prepared to cover. Dr. Moore's address is: The Nature Conservancy, Furzebrook Research Station, Near Wareham, Dorset.

## PISCATORIALLY SPEAKING

## GROWING INTEREST IN TROPICAL FISH

SEVERAL READERS to whom we have spoken of late have told us of their interest in the keeping of tropical fish and there seems little doubt that this hobby is quickly growing in

popularity. Many of the fish which can be acquired at a reasonable price are handsomely coloured and easy to keep; furthermore, one reader assures us, they will breed easily and thus provide a well-stocked tank, which will rank as a "decorative" piece of furniture and evoke sustained interest. The economic side of keeping these fish, after the initial expense of purchasing the tank at a pound to 30s., apparently presents little or no problem, for the specially prepared food is easily and cheaply obtainable and the cost of electrically heating the tank is negligible. The beginner, it is recommended, would do well to start with a few Guppies, which are very attractive fish and can be bought for as little as 2s. to 2s. 6d. a pair. Other good "buys" are Angels, at 3s.-3s. 6d. a pair, and Zebras, which are usually no more than 2s. a pair.

If readers have any tips on the matter of keeping fish which would be of help to others, perhaps they will send them along.

#### ~~THE~~ FOOTBALL IN THE DEAN

#### CHALLENGE CUP WON BY SCHOOL TEAM

THE DEAN football team, it is claimed, was a better all round side last season than for many years past. The team won the Dilke Memorial Challenge Cup and finished third in the second division of the Forest of Dean League. As far as is known, this was the first occasion that any real distinction was gained since 1927-28, when under GEORGE BUTTON (now Head Forester at Thetford Chase East England) the same league championship was secured.

The side that beat Sling in the final of the aforementioned cup competition included JOHN NORTH, a past student, and two exchange course men from the Forester Training School at Faskally, namely C. ALLISON and J. MILLAR. The following teams were beaten on the way to the final - Monmouth Reserves, St. Briavels, and Carters (Ribena) Works.

Prospects for next season, we are told, are thought to be good, since six of the 1953-54 season players will again be available.

#### ~~THE~~ THE MAN WHO WAS BURIED HEAD DOWNWARDS

REFERENCE HAS BEEN MADE of late to some old monuments and memorials. The latest example to come to our notice must surely be the strangest of all.

(We have not personally seen it, but if other readers have and know more of the story we shall be glad to hear from them.)

The stone in question is to be seen on the top of Box Hill, a famous Surrey beauty spot quite close to our Abinger Forest, and carries the inscription: "Peter Labelliere, aged 76 years, an eccentric resident of Dorking, was buried here head downwards on 11th June, 1800". According to local legend, this peculiar form of burial was requested by the gentleman because he felt that although pronounced dead by the physician, some spark of life might remain; this would, however, quickly be extinguished by the rushing of blood to the head. In appearance, the memorial looks like an old milestone, but what intrigues us is that on its side are to be seen the letters WD and a broad arrow. Nearby there is another stone, without an inscription.

#### ~~THE~~ THE SEQUENCE OF THINGS

EXTRACT from a Yorkshire newspaper: "The owners of Misty, the cat that travelled 150 miles on the axle of a lorry and was rescued at Doncaster, have been traced. They are officials of the Forestry Commission at Falstone, Northumberland."

Memo. from the office of Director, England, enclosing Press report, to Conservator, North East England: "I understand there is no record of this (the cat) on your Stores ledgers. Why?" Reply from Conservator: "The cat is kept alive by means other than through the Forestry Fund. Question does not therefore arise."

#### ~~THE~~ ODD NAMES OF INNS

#### THE SILENT WOMAN IS AN ANGEL

READERS have sent us some more examples of unusual names of inns. Among these is "Labour-in-Vain", at Dawley, Shropshire; the inn sign depicts a woman trying to scrub a black baby white. Then there is the "Spy-glass and Kettle", near Rainham. This inn being in the vicinity of the Chatham naval base, we assume the reference is to an admiral's telescope and the first steamships, which were colloquially known as "kettles".

Near Wareham Forest, in Dorset, is "The Silent Woman" and in this case the sign shows a woman without a head. We are told that this hostelry is known locally as "The Angel".

Mr. A. MANSFIELD, a Clerical Officer in the Shrewsbury Office, writes about one of the public house names we mentioned last month. "While at the R.A.F. Station at West Malling during the war," he says, "the locals informed me that a public house named 'The Saint' used to stand on the site of what is now 'The Startled Saint'. Apparently the original house was bombed and, on being rebuilt, was given its present name and a sign which shows a plane circling the saintly head."

#### ~~THE~~ THE DEAN OF DAYS GONE BY

#### "STATE OF THE FOREST ..... DEPLORABLE"

IN THESE MORE OR LESS enlightened days, when good forestry practice is widely encouraged and quite often encountered, it was a little startling to come across an article entitled "The Forester",

which appeared in an 1855 issue of "The Quarterly Review". This includes the following picture of The Forest of Dean as it was alleged to be about the year 1803, such description being "verified" by comparison with the original in Lord Nelson's handwriting:

"The Forest of Dean, containing about 23,000 acres of the finest land in the kingdom, which I am informed is in a high state of cultivation of oak, would produce about 9,200 loads of timber fit for building ships of the line every year; that is, the forest would grow in full vigour 920,000 oak trees. The state of the forest at this moment is deplorable for, if my information is true, there is not 3,500 load of timber in the whole forest fit for building, and none coming forward ..... The generality of trees for these last fifty years have been allowed to stand too long; they are passed by instead of removed, and thus occupy a space which ought to have been replanted with young trees. Where good timber is felled, nothing is planted, and nothing can grow self-sown; for the deer bark all the young trees. Vast droves of hogs are allowed to go into the woods in the autumn, and if any fortunate acorn escapes their search, and takes root, then flocks of sheep are allowed in and they bite off the tender shoot.

"Of waste of timber in former times I can say nothing, but of late years it has been, I am told, shameful. Trees cut down in swampy places, as the carriage is done by contract, are left to rot. Another abuse is, contractors, as they can carry more measurement, are allowed to cut the trees to their advantage of carriage, by which means the invaluable crooked timber is lost for the service of the Navy ..... There is another abuse ..... trees which die of themselves are considered of no value .... the tree of fifty years growth, fit for buildings, fencing, etc., is therefore cut just above the ground entirely through the bark; in two years the tree dies, and it becomes either a perquisite, or is allowed to be taken away by favoured people.

"If the Forest of Dean is to be preserved as a useful forest for the country, strong measures must be pursued. First, the guardian of the support of our Navy must be an intelligent honest man, who will give up his time to his employment; therefore he must live in the forest, have a house, a small farm, and an adequate salary ..... the guardian to have proper verderers under him, who understand the planting, thinning, and management of timber trees; their places should be so comfortable, that the fear of being turned out should be a great object of terror, and, of course, an inducement for them to exert themselves in their different stations. The first thing necessary in the Forest of Dean is to plant some acorns; and I saw plenty of clear fields ..... in my voyage down the Wye."

One would have thought that after a denouncement of this character there would soon be improvements and little cause for criticism of affairs in The Dean. But the article goes on: "Such was the state of things in 1803 and, with the exception that some of the minor evils have been remedied, such it is in 1855. The nursery grounds selected without reference to soil or aspect, and undrained; the seedbeds filled with weeds, badly-grown oaks, and firs too old to bear transplantation; the young plantations perishing by acres .... from mismanagement; the trees, here drawn up to fishing rods for want of thinning, there blasted or uprooted by sudden exposure; here pruned after the barbarous fashion in which hedgerow elms are lopped, there encumbered by rotten boughs ..... bark so spoilt in drying as to be deteriorated to half its value; incompetent officials cutting down 4,500 loads of timber to be sure of securing 2,000, rarely meddling with a tree until it shows symptoms of decay and selling, for 2l. 15s. a load, timber, for which private individuals can obtain from the Admiralty 4l. a load ..... these are only a portion of the evils....."

So much, then, for the bad old days. Reading the foregoing makes a visit to the now well-managed Dean a pleasure indeed.

#### ~~THE~~ GOLF IN THE RAIN

THE ANNUAL SPRING outing of the Scottish Directorate Office golf club was held recently at Longniddry and was attended by some twenty members of the staff and several guests. Unfortunately it was cold and wet and no doubt the conditions were responsible for the high scoring. The leading returns were: J. W. BLANE (-4) 77 (winner of the Sutherland Cup); H. BROWN (-16) 78; A. L. RAE (scr.) 80. Invited guests, V. DICKINSON (-15) 71 (winner of the Guests' Cup); D. HART (-9) 79.

#### ~~THE~~ TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

Divisional Officer A. PATERSON from Cambridge to Bristol. District Officers J. R. FLETCHER from Shifnal, NW(E), to Chester; R. CHARD from Chester, to Kendal, NW(E).

Head Forester W. McDONALD from Tentsmuir, E(S), to Drumtochty, E(S). Foresters J. REID from Allean, E(S), to Tentsmuir; F. CLOSE from Blengdale, NW(E), to Grizedale, NW(E); R. J. POWER from Kershope, NW(E), to Thornthwaite, NW(E); H. FULLER from Thornthwaite to Blengdale; E. McLEOD from Monaghty, E(S), to Roseisle, E(S); G. B. THOW from Fetteresso, E(S), to Glendoll, E(S); J. F. WILSON from Craigvinean, E(S), to Pitmedden, E(S); W. J. WATT from Glendoll to Allean.

Foremen S. W. RICKARDS from Lyminge, SE(E), to Arundel, SE(E); D. CAMPBELL from Nevis, N(S), to Glenrigh, N(S); G. D. SPILLER from Arundel to Lyminge; J. O. WEBSTER from Hallyburton, E(S), to Fetteresso; G. L. McBAIN from Pitmedden to Craigvinean; T. G. FRYER from Coed-y-Brenin, N(W), to Tintern, S(W). Assistant Engineer A. C. SANDWELL from Lyndhurst to Lightmoor Depot.

Higher Executive Officers E. J. F. TINSON from Headquarters to Bristol; G. H. BOWERS from D(E), to Shrewsbury; J. W. ELLIOTT from Headquarters to Dumfries; E. GOWER from Aberystwyth to D(E). Executive Officers E. F. WHITING from Bristol to Parkend, Dean; J. W. A. TARRANT from Shrewsbury to Cardiff.

Newcomers are: Higher Executive Officers R. J. AFFLECK to E(E); J. B. WHARAM to NE(E). Clerical Officers J. F. WALSH to N(W); R. BUCHANAN to D(S); Miss L. M. JOHN to N(W); Miss M. G. SUMMERS to Research; A. REDPATH and S. P. CRONIN to Dean; Miss B. J. WILLIAMS to S(W). Draughtsman R. MOORE to SW(E).

#### ==SQUIRREL KILLED THE CAT

WE HAVE HEARD some strange stories about grey squirrels, but this is the oddest. A newspaper records that a household cat and a grey squirrel became friendly and were to be seen playing together in the garden. Later the cat was found to have been killed by the squirrel and literally torn to pieces.

Incidentally, for the information of those readers who missed references in the Press, no fewer than 360,792 grey squirrels were killed in the first year of the intensified campaign under which the Department is paying one shilling for every tail sent to the County Pests Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture. The number of kills in respect of which the bonus was paid was 265,583, thus involving an outlay of more than £13,279. The number killed in the year was well over double the kills in the year ending September, 1952, and 102,783 more than in the year ending September 1953, during which the campaign had been running for a little over six months.

#### ==PERSONAL

CONGRATULATIONS to NORMAN C. GORDON, C.O. in the Estate Section of the Edinburgh Office, on his recent marriage. To mark the occasion he received a chair and a standard lamp from his colleagues, the presentation on their behalf being made by the Land Agent, Mr. J. P. MACKIE WHYTE.

Best wishes, too, to the following proud parents: Forester D. MUNRO, Carradale, West Scotland, and Mrs. Munro (twin sons); District Officer J. D. LEEFE, Dean School, and Mrs. Leeffe (a son); Ganger W. J. DAVIES, Bedgebury, South East England, and Mrs. Davies (a daughter); and Divisional Officer G. E. GODWIN, Aberystwyth, and Mrs. Godwin (a son).

#### ==SCHOOL JUBILEE

AS STATED last month, arrangements for The Dean School's Jubilee celebrations on 22nd July are well ahead. Presentation of Certificates by the Director General will take place in the Parkend Memorial Hall at 2 p.m. (not 2.15 as previously stated); there will follow the garden party and sports; a performance by the students' concert party; and, to conclude, the Grand Jubilee Ball in Lydney Town Hall.

Mr. J. F. GODWIN, the Education Officer, asks us to mention that a high tea will be provided free to the first 100 ex-students to claim a ticket. Foresters are asked to make this offer as widely known as possible. "It is also hoped", says Mr. Goodwin, "to provide a meal for wives and friends at, say, 5s. a head, but I must have early notification of how many such meals will be required." All communications on this subject of meals should include the date of the course taken by the writer and should be addressed to the Chief Instructor at the Dean School."

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