

THE DEANSDAY BOOK

A LIVELY PUBLICATION

LAST MONTH we referred to the Dean School Jubilee and mentioned the revival of The Deansday Book. This lively and attractive publication has much to commend it.

Editor P. L. STONE has shown a nice sense of balance in the selection of his subject matter and in the method of its display. There is a foreword by our Director General, Mr. A. H. GOSLING, who writes of the pride the School may take in its achievements, and C. O. HANSON, the first instructor at the School when it was opened in 1904, sends his greetings. JOHN F. GOODWIN, the present Instructor, contributes an absorbing potted history of progress and vicissitudes over 50 years..... "It was necessary in early days," he says, "for the Instructor to purchase coal for the heating of his classroom, since on-one else thought it essential."

The Conservator for South West England, Mr. A. H. FOPERT, a former Instructor, also speaks of early days, when a "hard battle" was fought for recognition and even for the necessities with which to carry on training. "The School," he says, "was regarded primarily as a permanent fire brigade and a source of cheap labour for forest work and sheep pounding."

Then there is an interesting piece by R. B. SALT, who tells of the extensive work by students in more recent years, arising out of the Research Branch's nesting box experiments in the Dean. "It was in 1948 that the School came into the picture," he says. "All the subsequent work of collecting data, ringing birds and maintaining the nesting boxes has been done by the students, much of it in their spare time." It is appropriate, therefore, that in the Jubilee year, as the result of a grant from the Nature Conservancy, the Nagshead nesting area has been honoured with the appointment of a professional observer-ornithologist.

Place-names in the Dean are interpreted by G. STONE, who must have undertaken some painstaking research. Did you know, for example, that Bailey Lea means "Clearing where the berries grow"; that Lydney means "Sailor's island"; or that Soudley means "Southern clearing"?

"Low-Down", by J. LOW, is a lighthearted analysis in which it is claimed that pre-School occupations of certain students have to date been as diverse as brewery assistant, dance-band pianist, dog-breeder, White hunter, coalminer, Wimbledon ball-boy, cobbler, lifeguard and veterinary assistant, to say little or nothing of a book-maker's crow and a smudger. (We are at a loss to identify the last-named two occupations, but perhaps some reader will oblige.) The School's activities where sport is concerned are reviewed by D. F. SOLWAY, who rightly places on record the winning by the football team last season of the Dilke Memorial Cup. Other contributions which help make The Deansday Book so readable are: "The Correct Approach to Forestry", by R. TWEEDALE; "Westmorland", C. B. FULMAN; "Royal Scottish Forestry Society, 1854-1954", JOHN LEEFE; "Conversation Piece", REYNARD; "My First Experience of Forestry", REINIS GULBIS; and "Three Counties Show", by P. S. For the record, there is an exhaustive list of students who have attended the School from its inception to the present time. And, of course, there is JOHN ROWLAND'S story of how he and C. B. FULMAN produced the first number of The Deansday Book "almost half the School's lifetime ago". The last war seemingly put an end to the appearance of this journal but, says the writer, "perhaps it may now be possible to continue its production." The Slasher echoes this hope and has pleasure in drawing attention to the fact that it may still be possible to obtain copies of the Jubilee number of The Deansday Book if early application is made direct to the School. The price is 2s. 9d., post free.

AERIAL SPRAYING OF FORESTS

PINE LOOPER ATTACKED AT
CANNOCK AND CULBIN

FOR THE FIRST TIME in this country, plantations have been sprayed from the air against a forest pest, operations having taken place in recent weeks at Cannock Chase, near Stafford, in the North West England Conservancy, and at Culbin, the forest which the Commission has formed on sand dunes on the Moray Firth, in the East Scotland Conservancy.

The need for spraying with an insecticide arose through an infestation of the Pine looper; as explained in an earlier issue of The Slasher, this pest is a serious defoliator of pine on the Continent, but although indigenous to this country had not hitherto been regarded as a menace to British forests. A large area of Scots pine at Cannock Chase was found last summer to have been defoliated and it was feared that if the caterpillars were not now attacked on their emergence, many

trees already damaged would be completely killed. At Culbin the infestation and damage was less than at Cannock, but quite obviously it is better to attempt to be safe than to resign ourselves to being sorry.

At the time of writing we are unaware of the measure of success that has attended the spraying in the two forests. If perseverance deserves reward, then it should have been substantial, for day after day went by at Cannock with the 'planes unable to spray except on limited "runs", due to the abnormal weather conditions. At Culbin operations were at the outset restricted by high winds. All in all there have been anxious days for those of our staff involved in the operations, in particular for Dr. MYLES CROOK, the Entomologist, and Assistant Entomologist Mr. D. BEVAN.

==IN THE CONSERVANCIES

EDUCATIONAL VISITS: AND SOME CRICKET

NEARLY 50 members of the Scottish Directorate staff and the Research Branch (Sighthill) set off recently on the annual educational visit. First stop for the coaches was at Strathyre, where Head Forester A. CAMERON conducted the party over the West Conservancy nursery.

Later, in the forest, the visitors were much interested in seeing the construction of new roads. Lunch was taken by the roadside at Glen Oglehead and, after a pleasant ride along Loch Tay side, Drummond Hill (in the East Conservancy) was reached. There the party was welcomed by District Officer R. d'O. P. JACKSON, who introduced Head Forester W. L. ROSS; the emphasis at this forest was on extraction and conversion. The return journey was made via Aberfeld, the Sma' Glen, Crieff (where a stop was made for tea), Glen Devon and the Kincardine Bridge to Edinburgh.

Believing in variety, some of the Scottish Directorate staff and friends spent an interesting evening on a conducted tour of Leith Docks. The intricacies of lock gates, dry docks, grain elevators and so on were explained, but the highlight of the visit was the boarding of a Norwegian sailing ship wherein the main features were explained by a duty officer who spoke excellent English. At the entrance to the docks, by the way, are the new east and west breakwaters, built to a large extent by Dutch labour and fashioned on the same lines as the dykes of Holland; adjoining the east breakwater is a fine example of a Martello Tower, a relic of the Napoleonic Wars.

The Cambridge office cricket team, who were accompanied by the Conservator, Mr. G. W. BACKHOUSE, were recently entertained at Lynford Hall School. Despite some rain an enjoyable match was played, the office side winning by 24 runs and being the first team to score more than 100 runs on the Lynford pitch. Individual honours went to W. REDFORD and J. ALLEN, who scored 45 and 18 respectively, and to R. AFFLECK and J. ALLEN, each of whom took three wickets at little cost. To complete the day an excellent tea was provided by the School.

The Bristol office staff were challenged to a cricket match by Dunster Forest and, after gruelling lunch-time training on the office car park, won the game by three wickets. Play took place in the shadow of Dunster Castle and was in the best traditions of village green cricket. Tea was kindly provided by the ladies, on behalf of the Dunster Forest team.

==CAN YOU BEAT THIS?

£206 FOR AN OAK TREE

AN INSPECTION revealed that two of the beams in the White Tower at the Tower of London were in need of replacement and a search was instituted for oak trees of sufficient size to provide the timber. The beams

had to be 35 feet long with a cross section of 24 inches by 19 inches.

After an unsuccessful quest in eastern and southern counties, the search was extended to the Forest of Dean, where two trees that appeared to meet requirements were found in Highmeadow Woods and were accepted by the contractor. The first of these was 170 years old, 39 inches quarter girth at breast height and contained, with top, branches and cordwood, just over 404 cubic feet of timber and was sold for a total of £206. The second tree was 177 years old, 30½ inches quarter girth, and with top, branches and cordwood had a volume of a little over 244 cubic feet. It was sold for a total of £136.

Incidentally, to hark back to Wendy Barrington's letter to the Deputy Surveyor, the Dean (The Slasher, July), we are now informed that the oldest living trees in the Dean probably date from about 1650, some planting having been undertaken, it seems, during the "Commonwealth".

THE TRAVELLING PENNY

HARROGATE TO MACHYNLLETH

IN THE WEEK prior to the opening of the Royal Welsh Show the travelling unit was at Harrogate for the Great Yorkshire Show. Forester E. J. D. WILKINSON, who was in charge, demonstrated to other members of the show team that a penny can be broken in half if struck in the right way with a glass tumbler. A penny was borrowed for the occasion from FRED COURTIER and returned to him before it actually became two pieces; this penny he used in the purchase of cigarettes at a Harrogate shop. On arrival at Machynlleth for the Welsh show, Forest Worker HEAL, who had watched the demonstration in Harrogate, entered a shop and obtained some cigarettes, and was given the damaged penny in his change! The coincidence, perhaps, lies not only in the rapid journey of the penny from Harrogate to Machynlleth, but in the fact that Forest Worker Heal should receive it. We are told by Forester Wilkinson, by the way, that in the absence of a hammer a large nail can be driven into wood by the use of a bottle - but we take no responsibility for the well-being of anyone who attempts such a task!

SOME FOREST ANAGRAMS

A READER has kindly sent us the following anagrams and you are invited to try your skill at "unravelling" them. Each is an anagram of a Commission forest; there is one for each Conservancy and for the New Forest; one for the Dean would have been too obvious, so to make up for its omission the word "Dean" has been added to one of the others. The answer in the case of one Conservancy will be two forest names.

1. ONE TRAIN; 2. CEDED SALLY; 3. HATCHED FOREST; 4. DIG NOW, OR.....;
5. HOLD A TRAM RON, DO; 6. TRIM TUNES; 7. TEN GARDENIA; 8. REDS THAT RAN;
9. LED RAW DEALS; 10. FOR THE LAMP; 11. HO! LEAD CHARGE; 12. THREW INTO HAT.

Answers next month. Meanwhile, we would be glad to have other anagrams from other sources.

CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING

NEW FOREST MARKSMEN

KEEPER H. BLANDFORD, New Forest, is to be congratulated on securing for the Department the New Forest Hunt Cup; this was won in the clay pigeon shooting competition at the recent agricultural show at Lyndhurst. The teams comprised representatives of the New Forest Hunt Club, local farmers, Young Farmers' Club, game-keepers and Forest keepers, the highest scorer in each team shooting off for the trophy. Keeper G. BARRELL carried on the good work by winning three prizes in the open classes in the clay pigeon competition at Bisterne Show, Ringwood.

Successes were gained in another sphere when Commission employees from the Fritham area won first prize (a cup) and second prizes at the New Forest show for the preparation of oak piles and oak paling.

A READER'S PROBLEM

A READER - EO W. O. WITTERING - of the office of Director, Scotland, writes to ask if any reader can answer the following.

"There is a small block of woodland near my home in Hertfordshire," he writes, "which is called Roaming Meg Plantation. The local council have sought in vain for some information as to how the wood got its name. Are there any other plantations of that name in the country and, if so, can anyone explain how it originated?"

WHAT A RAMP!

IN A LOADING ramp wall at Chirk Depot, writes Asst. Mechanical Engineer W. L. LOW, a pair of pied wagtails built a nest and reared a cuckoo. The wall is constructed of heavy stones and quarry waste and is subject to great vibration when in use.

The cuckoo grew too big for the nest, and it was also too big to get out through the entry hole and so a large stone had to be removed to allow it to reach the outside world.

PUBLIC HOUSE NAMES

HERE are a few more unusual public house names that have been noticed by readers: "The Case is Altered", at Banbury; the sign depicts a judge in his robes. It is believed this is the only hostelry so named in the whole of the country. "The Only Honest Lawyer", thought to be in East Anglia; the sign is said to show Counsel being hanged. "Castleton's Oak", near Biddenden, Kent; the sign shows an old man sitting on a coffin.

THE MOSS WOMAN

A FOREST SPIRIT

interest.

GERMAN TRADITION, writes Forester B. R. G. HAMMOND, of Moccas Forest, South West England, peopled the forests with spirits, or "Walgeister", and the following poem, taken from the "Book of the Tree," may be of

WALGEISTER

"A moss woman," the haymakers cry,
And over the fields in terror they fly.
She is loosely clad from head to foot
In a mantle of moss from the maple root,
And like lichen gray on its stem that grows
Is the hair that over her mantle flows.

Her skin like the maple rind is hard,
Brown and ridgy furrowed and scarred,
And each feature flat like the bark we see
Where a bough has been lopped from the bole of a tree
When the newer bark has crept healingly round
And laps o'er the edge of the open wound.

Her knotty root-like feet are bare
And her height is an ell from heel to hair.

(Note. According to the author of the book the moss woman, although terrifying to look at, was not always unfriendly.)

THE FARIGAIG STILL

MENTION in the foregoing paragraph of spirits reminds us that when, recently, an old house in Farigaig Forest, North Scotland, was renovated an old still was discovered in a recess under the staircase. It had obviously been out of use for many years. "No trace of any contents remained," writes our correspondent, who fails to add whether this was a matter for regret.

PERSONAL

HEAD FORESTER A. E. WALKER, the Dean, has been presented with his British Empire Medal, the award of which was announced in the Birthday Honours List in June. It was handed to him by the Duke of Beaufort, during a recent tour by His Grace of the forest.

Congratulations to District Officer M. G. HARKER, North Wales, and Mrs. Harker, on the birth of a daughter; and to Forester M. J. WILSON, Purbeck Forest, S.W. England, and Mrs. Wilson, also on the arrival of a daughter. To Clerical Officer J. B. SELL, Cambridge Office, who has married - he received a clock from colleagues to mark the occasion; and to E.O. KEN BALDWIN, Aberystwyth, on his engagement to Miss CHRISTINE CHAPMAN, Clerical Officer at Cardiff.

TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

District Officer R. H. KENDALL from Lyndhurst, New, to Northampton, E(E). Foresters C. H. PALMER from Rhinefield, New, to Wyre, SW(E); J. COOPER from Maresfield, SE(E), to Marden, SE(E); E. B. CORDERY from Marden to Maresfield; A.W. BIGGAR from Corrennie, E(S), to Elchies, E(S); J. A. SEATON from Glenlivet, E(S), to Corrennie.

Foremen W. J. P. DYCE from Reelig, N(S), to Ardross, N(S); S. FRASER from Ardross to Reelig; J. W. MACKAY from Shin, N(S), to Craigs, N(S). Asst. Engineer R. G. ORGILL from Chirk, N(W), to Cardiff. Clerical Officer F. L. DRUETT from Headquarters to Aberdeen.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL - AN OPERATION

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, Mr. A. H. GOSLING, entered hospital early this month for an emergency operation for appendicitis. We are very pleased to say this was successful and that Mr. Gosling is making good progress.

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