THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

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A NEW FORESTRY COMMISSIONER

APPOINTMENT OF
MAJOR D. C. BOWSER

MAJOR D. C. BOWSER of Argaty and the King's Lundies, Doune, Perthshire, has been appointed a Forestry Commissioner. In effect, he takes the place on the Commission of Professor JOHN WALTON, who has retired because of ill-health.

Major Bowser is a woodland owner, with 250 acres of plantations. He tells us he is in process of planting a further substantial area on his adjoining estate of Kilbryde Moor, which he bought two years ago - his woods, by the way, are "dedicated". Major Bowser is President of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, which body he has represented on the United Kingdom Forestry Committee. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Co-operative Forestry Society (Scotland) Ltd. Apart from his forestry interests and appointments he is, of course, well known in other walks of public life in Scotland. He is a member of the Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland, the Royal Company of Archers; he is an Honorary Sheriff Substitute of the Sheriffdom of Perth and Angus -- intriguing offices in name alone, to those of us who live south of the Border. He is a Ruling Elder in the Church of Scotland, and vice-convener of Perthshire and of Perth and Kinross Joint County Council.

An interesting appointment held by Major Bowser after the first world war, in which he served with the Engineers and Marines, was that of Deputy Assistant Director of Armament Stores (Contract Department), Ministry of Munitions. His work, we understand, included the termination of war contracts for materials ranging from big guns to buckles on leather straps!

Argaty and The Lundies were included in land forfeited to the Crown in 1425, when the Duke of Albany, his sons and father-in-law were condemned for treason. Thus the Lundies became known as The King's Lundies. The name Lundy was, of course, frequently applied to marshland, which was identified by appending to Lundy the name of the owner or occupier - for example Lundy-Arthur, Lundy-McCabe, Lundy-Gilchrist, etc.

TWO MORE VILLAGE HALLS
OPENED

CEREMONIES IN EAST AND NORTH
EAST ENGLAND

FORESTRY gives employment, the workers and their families require houses, houses become a village, and a village acquires a social centre .....That, roughly, has been the scheme of things in a number of our forests, and now two more village halls have been opened.

LORD RADNOR, our Chairman, recently visited Santon Downham, in Thetford Chase Forest, East England, a forest village which has more than doubled in size since the war. There, before a large gathering, he formally declared open the new village hall. He was welcomed by the EARL of STRADBROKE, Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, who referred to the growth of Commission activities and expressed the hope that collaboration between the Commission and private forestry would continue to develop. Lord Radnor pointed out that the Commission is planting at the rate of twice the area of Thetford Chase in a year, and said he hoped that the forest villages would develop into communities with corporate lives of their own. He then handed the key of the new hall to Forester E. H. LEUTSCHER, who in turn gave Lord Radnor a silver key as a memento. Thanks to Lord Radnor and the Earl of Stradbroke were proposed by Mr. E. LINGWOOD, a Forest Worker and tenant of one of the houses in the village.

Lord Radnor then opened the Brecklands Club, a registered club with premises within the hall. Honorary membership cards were presented to him and to the Earl of Stradbroke by Mr. G. CARTER, Chairman of the Club Committee.

Among those present were Lady Stradbroke; the Clerk to the East Suffolk County Council; the Mayor and Mayoress of Thetford; Chairman and Clerk of the Brandon Parish Council; Chairman of Santon Downham Parish Council; Mr. C. W. BACKHOUSE (Conservator, East England) and Mrs. Backhouse; Mr. J. B. STOCKS (representing Director, England); Mr. F. G. GOOD, Conservancy Land Agent; and District Officer S. W. ROGERS.

They Danced All Night At Stonehaugh

Mr. O. J. SANGAR, Director for England, opened the new village hall at Stonehaugh, which serves Wark Forest in the North East England Conservancy. In so doing he stressed the more personal aspects of life in a forest village, linking the efforts and wellbeing of individuals with the wide concept of building up a flourishing, stable and profitable forest industry in Britain. Mrs. STELLA JACKSON, Secretary of the Village Committee, presided in the absence through illness of both the Chairman of the Committee and the Vicar of Wark. Head Forester W. C. BROWN proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Sangar, and this was seconded by District Officer B. J. ALLISON.

About 70 people attended the opening of the hall - a sizeable gathering for that remote part of the country. But by the time a concert had been held and dancing was under way the attendance had swollen to over 200! Dancing continued throughout the night, the party dispersing to watch the breakfast time meet of the local Hunt, which was held in the village to commemorate the opening of the hall.

**NATIONAL COMMITTEE'S 100th MEETING

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE for England held its hundredth meeting last month. The occasion was commemorated by the presentation of fountain pens to the Director for England, Mr. O. J. SANGAR, and to the Secretary to the Committee, Mr. E. J. S. HINDS, who have held their respective offices since the appointment of the first committee in 1945. An informal luncheon followed the meeting.

**REINDEER IN SCOTLAND EXPERIMENT NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR

THE REINDEER experiment in the Cairngorms is now in its third year. The deer, on their arrival in Scotland from Sweden, were fenced on some poor ground in Rothiemurchus Forest. Some time later, however, food became scarce and during the second year the Reindeer Company were given leave to fence some of our land adjoining the original enclosure. This ground, though of no great value for afforestation, was abundant in the lichen which is almost the sole diet of the reindeer. Then came a serious setback, for the deer suffered much from the midges and flies, with the result that they calved in such poor condition that all the young and some of the mothers died.

So 300 acres of Forestry Commission land of high elevation - some 1,500 feet - were enclosed outside the plantation fence. To date the deer have thrived on the new pasture and the midges and flies haven't bothered them. Unfortunately, however, some bad luck overtook the herd, for during a gale the leader stag got its antlers stuck in a roll of netting and fell into the nearby loch and was drowned.

At the moment there are eleven reindeer remaining, seven of these being hinds. They do no damage to the forest trees, so far as is known, but they do like to eat the leaves of newly flushed birch. They are really quite tame, and will eat from a man's hand. Reindeer flesh is said to have a taste somewhere between that of beefsteak and venison and the importation of reindeer to Scotland was originally envisaged as a means of increasing meat production in the well remembered days of rationing.

**FORESTERS IN THE FLOODS

TWO of our Research Foresters will long remember the great floods in Cornwall and Devon which marked the close of 1954. These occurred while our colleagues were doing some work on the Lizard. "Every day", writes one of them, "there were gales up to 80 miles an hour, and very heavy rainfall. Many roads were flooded and impassable. Part of the sea wall at Penzance was washed away and a Dutch ship was lost with all hands off the Lizard.

"On a journey from Helston (the scene each year of the famous Cornish Floral Dance) to St. Clement Forest, near Truro, the roads were also extensively flooded, and sometimes the water came up to the floorboards of the car. The deepest water was about half a mile from the forest. However, we managed to get through; the car sounded like a motor boat, for the exhaust pipe, of course, was under water. On our return from the West Country to Alice Holt it did not stop raining. We started at 8 a.m. and arrived at 8.15 p.m., though the journey was one of only about 240 miles. We encountered dozens of flooded roads and at Honiton, Devon, saw some of the havoc caused to dwelling houses, some of which were evacuated, the water being up to the bedroom windows. Our main difficulty arose from having no workable brakes on the car, due to water being almost constantly on the drums."

FAREWELL TO MR. J. R. FERENS

HE LEAVES 'A HAPPY SHIP'

A SOMEWHAT SAD event occurred recently in the Scottish Directorate Office, namely the departure from the Commission of Mr. J. R. FERENS, Senior Temporary Assistant.

Our late colleague was held in very high regard. He had served for a number of years as Establishment Officer at Edinburgh and, in making a presentation to him, Mr. F. C. HANDFORD, Chief Clerk, said that although Mr. Ferens was not one of the longest serving Commission employees, he had a wide experience of our work at Headquarters, in the Scottish Directorate Office and in Conservancy offices. He had always taken a great interest in office social functions in Edinburgh and was founder of the office cricket club.

Mr. Ferens was presented with a fireside chair and a cheque for the balance of a considerable sum of money subscribed by his many friends in the Commission.

In a letter to the Editor of The Slasher Mr. Ferens writes: "For me the Commission has been a 'happy ship'. While I shall write to many of my friends it is not possible to write to them all. What I wish to convey to my former colleagues is summed up quite briefly. It is - thank you all for the friendship so freely given and so much enjoyed. May good health and prosperity be yours in the future; like the forests, may your shadows never grow less. Good luck to you all."

THE TREE OF DEATH

INTRODUCING THE ARBOR DIABOLI

HERE, perhaps, is the inevitable follow-up to our recent references to voracious trees. One of our readers came across it in an old botany book - "It amused me much," he writes. It amuses us, and maybe you, too, will be diverted.

POPULAR BOTANY - 1889

A Tree of Death has been discovered in Mexico by a botanist who found it growing on an inaccessible rock on the Sierra Madre Mountains. As examined through a field glass its trunk appeared thick and scaly, and about 20 feet high. A few feet from the ground branches resembling those of the weeping willow shot out, but the long, drooping, whip-like limbs had the power of erecting and coiling themselves with a motion like sentient life. The botanist's curiosity was intensely excited, and after a day's search he discovered a passage through the rocks, through which he crawled and came out near the tree. As he looked at it a bird alighted upon it. The branches instantly twisted like snakes around the bird, and drew it down until he lost sight of it. In a short time the flattened carcase - only feathers and bones - dropped to the ground. He saw other birds alight, and in each case the branches held them until they were crushed and drained of blood. At last he ventured to touch a branch with his finger. It was seized instantly and held so tightly that, in withdrawing the finger, it was stripped of skin. Looking closely at the branches, he found that they were covered with small suckers like those of the devil-fish, some of of which were stained with the blood of the birds. Professor Wordenhaupt, of Heidelberg University, to whom the botanist sent a description of the tree, says it is the Arbor Diaboli, or devil-tree, of which only two other specimens are known - one on the peak of the Himalayas, and the other on the island of Sumatra.

THE LARGEST EVER PLANTING GRANT?

WHAT must surely be the largest sum ever paid out by the Commission in the way of planting grants involved a cheque for no less than £14,981. The payment was made recently in respect of 11,071 acres planted during the Forest Years 51, 52, 53 and 54, and accrued during unavoidably prolonged negotiations in the dedication of the Pale Estate in Merioneth, owned by the late Duke of Westminster.

LEAVES GWYDYR FOR FASKALLY

PRESENTATION TO MR. H. CRUICKSHANK

THE GWYDYR Forester Training School has said farewell to two long-service members of the staff, Education Officer H. CRUICKSHANK and Shorthand-typist Miss H. H. THOMPSON.

Mr. Cruickshank has left to become Education Officer at the Faskally school, near Pitlochry, in Perthshire. There he succeeds Mr. T. A. ROBBIE, who at his own request has returned to the field, and is now serving in the East Scotland Conservancy. Mr. Cruickshank took charge of his late school on its inception at New Park, New Forest, in 1947. Miss Thompson joined the staff at Gwydyr following the move to North Wales from New Forest in February, 1948; she leaves on promotion to Clerical Officer and transfer to the North Wales Conservancy office at Shrewsbury.

A farewell dinner at Gwydyr was attended by students and staff and other well-wishers. Assistant Education Officer H. A. E. TILNEY-BASSETT presided and presented cheques to Mr. Cruickshank and Miss Thompson, subscribed to by students and staff as tokens of esteem and friendship. There were additional speeches from Second Year Student M. A. PROCTOR and Forester Instructors J. M. BRUCE and E. MADDELOVE.

Consequential moves involve the transfer of Mr. IAIN ROBERTSON, formerly Assistant Education Officer at Faskally, to Gwydyr; and of Assistant Education Officer E. H. M. HARRIS from Benmore to Faskally.

DINNERS AND PARTIES

THE ANNUAL dinner and dance of the Scottish Directorate office was held in the Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh. Mr. J. R. THOM, presiding in the unavoidable absence of the Director, Mr. A. H. H. ROSS, welcomed the guests. From the moment when the first skirl of Mr. A. CAMPBELL'S pipes heralded the Grand March and Eightsome Reel, everything went with a swing, including the kilts of several gentlemen in full Highland evening dress. Highlights of the evening were several novelty dance competitions and among the prize-winners were Mr. and Mrs. A. G. BURNETT, and Mr. HARNESS and Miss LORRAINE. Such was the success of the function that the Grosvenor has already been booked for a "repeat" on 15th December next.

The Pier Pavilion at Aberystwyth was the venue for the annual dinner and dance of the Welsh Directorate office. Mr. ERIC LEWIS, Chief Clerk, proposed the toast "The Welsh Directorate" and Mr. G. B. RYLE, Director for Wales, responded. The Director was the winner of the Christmas draw.

Then, of course, there was that convivial event the annual Christmas dinner at the Research Station at Alice Holt Lodge. Mr. M. V. LAURIE, Chief Research Officer, presided, and a very welcome guest was Mr. JAMES MACDONALD, Director of Research and Education.

There was a good attendance at the Christmas party held at the Shrewsbury office and organised by the Social Club committee, with Mr. H. HENRY as Chairman. Games and dancing were greatly enjoyed, the M.C. being Mr. ROBERT JONES. Among those present were the Conservator, North Wales (Mr. F. C. BEST) and Foresters.

The folk of the new forest village of Glentrool, in the South Scotland Conservancy, held their first Christmas party in the hall at Bargrennan. Funds to enable this to be done were subscribed entirely by Forestry Commission employees, and between 70 and 80 children took part in the festivities. Santa Claus was ably impersonated by District Officer J. D. MacNAB, who was welcomed by the youngsters with great joy. The programme included an impressive Nativity play, produced by Forest Worker F. WOSITSKY and performed by a cast of children of ages varying from five to 15. There followed an enjoyable dance with music supplied by the village dance band, which was making its first public appearance.

(Editor's note. The aforementioned Christmas events cannot possibly represent all the seasonal activities in the various offices. We would like, another year, to have a better coverage. Do please see that your local Slasher correspondent receives the news. He will do the rest.)

TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

District Officers S. J. C. WEST from Llandovery, S(W), to Chepstow, S(E); E. JONES from Brecon, S(W), to Llandovery; R. C. STERN from Ruthin, N(W), to Aberystwyth; J. H. JAMES from Tintern, S(E), to Carmarthen, S(W). Foresters D. M. CAMERON from Lauriston, S(S), to Dundeugh, S(S); G. W. CLAYDON from Coed Penllyn, N(W), to Mathrafal, N(W); J. TRUSSELL from Rockingham, E(E), to Beechwood, E(E). Foremen J. HOWSON from Mynydd Ddu, S(W), to Brecon, S(W); E. T. SNELL from Orlestone SE(E), to Queen Elizabeth, SE(E).

Higher Executive Officer J. STEELE from Headquarters to Edinburgh.

PERSONAL

CONGRATULATIONS to Miss P. J. HISCOCK, Clerical Officer, New Forest, on her marriage to Mr. D. Bedford.

And to District Officer GEORGE HOLMES, Alice Holt, and Mrs. Holmes, on the birth of a daughter.