

THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

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IMPORTANT STAFF CHANGES

PENDING RETIREMENT OF TWO CONSERVATORS

and Mr. JAMES FRASER, North Scotland; the former joined the Forestry Commission only a few days after its inception on 29th November, 1919, while Mr. Fraser was also among the early "pioneers", joining in June, 1920.

Mr. C.A. CONNELL, Conservator, North East England since April, 1950, is to succeed Mr. Popert, and Mr. G.L.J. BATTERS, at present a Conservator on the staff of Director, England at Princes Gate, will follow Mr. Connell in the North East, thus returning to an office he held prior to going to London. Mr. Batters' place at Princes Gate will be filled by Mr. C.A.J. BARRINGTON, who has been Conservator, North West England, since his promotion to that office from State Forest Officer in the North West in July, 1953.

Mr. J.S.R. CHARD, now State Forest Officer in North West England, is being promoted Conservator and will succeed Mr. Barrington; Mr. J.A. DICKSON is to receive similar promotion to fill the office to be vacated by Mr. Fraser. Mr. Chard joined the Commission in 1934, after obtaining his degree in forestry at Edinburgh; he was first employed as a forest worker in the old North East Division of Scotland, and became a District Officer in 1935 and Divisional Officer in 1949, serving in turn at Edinburgh and in South Scotland. Prior to the war he was on census work and during the war he was with H.T.P.D. He returned to the Commission late in 1946 and from then until 1950 was again on census work; the volumes of quite vital statistics which have been published on the survey of 1947-49 are a testimony to the painstaking investigation which he and those working with him made into our timber resources.

Mr. Dickson obtained his forestry degree at Aberdeen in 1938 and, like Mr. Chard, commenced his service with the Commission as a Forest Worker, in his case in South Scotland. Towards the end of the following year he became a Temporary Surveyor on census work and then, early in 1940, he was appointed District Officer; he became a Divisional Officer in 1951. After service with H.T.P.D. he was posted to the North Scotland Conservancy, where he is at present State Forest Officer.

THE COIN & THE WALNUT TREE

LEGEND OR FACT?

familiar with the subject, but we reproduce the letter below.

THE EDITOR of the Numismatic Circular has drawn our attention to a reader's letter in his journal, which appears under the heading "A Curious Numismatic Superstition." Some readers may be

"A recent visitor to the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum informed me that it is usual to find a coin buried beneath a walnut tree. He is a professional tree-feller and assured me that the coin is to be found immediately below the trunk in a position consistent with its having been placed in the hole prepared for the planting out of the sapling. In support of this curious tradition, he produced three coins - two halfpence of George III dated 1799 and 1806 respectively, and an Irish farthing of the same ruler also dated 1806, which he has found while removing the stumps of walnut trees at widely separated points in the Midlands.

"It would be interesting to know if there is any contemporary evidence for such a superstition. Parallels at once leap to mind, notably the concealment of coins beneath the heel of a mast, but one wonders why walnut trees in particular should have been singled out for such treatment..... we should not forget the possibility that the presence of the coin is purely coincidental and due to the tendency for walnut trees to be planted in much cultivated soil. The facts as stated, however, are so curious that it does seem desirable to put on record the honest belief of a highly intelligent countryman that it was the practice to bury a coin at the root of a newly planted walnut tree."

The Editor of the Numismatic Circular asks whether we have any comment on the foregoing and we have replied that so far as Headquarters is concerned we have no reliable evidence of the custom referred to, but that we will make

enquiries among the staff. Can any reader help by telling us whether such a practice really existed and, if so, why?

A GREAT MOORLAND BLAZE

FIRE SPREADS OVER 20 SQUARE MILES

IN JULY and August alone in Scotland we were called upon to deal with more than 1,000 fires which were caused, it is believed, by sparks from railway engines. One of these started on the railway embankment at Roy, in the North Conservancy, and eventually spread over some 20 square miles of moorland. This fire actually travelled nearly eight miles and at one time constituted a very grave threat to the whole of Assich Forest, where Forester M. MACRAE had to evacuate his house for some days on end.

Not only was the surface vegetation affected, but the peaty soil of which the moor is composed was also ignited. Ten fire pumps were used to soak the area surrounding Assich Forest and as a result damage to Commission property was confined to only four acres of woodland, which was destroyed. Twenty-four of our forests and many private estates provided personnel to help fight this fire and altogether between 150 and 200 Forestry Commission employees were involved. One wonders if a greater number of our staff and workers has ever been assembled for the purpose of fire-fighting.

*** DEATH OF MR. ZUKOWSKI

"MAN OF LEARNING AND CHARM"

HIS MANY FRIENDS and former colleagues will learn with great regret that Mr. A. A. ZUKOWSKI, formerly of the Research Branch at Alice Holt Lodge, has died. Mr. Zukowski, who was 63, was engaged in forestry work in his native Poland from 1922 to 1939. He came to this country in 1940 and between 1941 and 1943 served with the Commission as a Foreman in The Dean and with H.T.P.D. as Assistant Acquisition Officer. In 1944 he was re-employed by the Commission as a Foreman in the Research Branch and in 1948 he was appointed a Temporary District Officer, a post he held until July, 1952 when, in common with other temporary staff, his service was terminated.

"Zukowski", writes our correspondent, "was a man of learning and charm. He had a keen sense of humour which made conversation with him a great delight. He acquired an affection for England and in particular for Oxford, where he obtained his D.Phil. in 1951. In various ways he kept in touch with former Research colleagues and his death, which occurred quite suddenly while he was staying at his old address in Farnham, came as a profound shock."

The Research Branch was represented at the cremation service at Brookwood by Mr. M.V. LAURIE (Chief Research Officer), Miss O.A. HARMAN and Mr. G. BUSZEWICZ.

*** CONCERNING A BEETLE

PINE SHOOT BEETLE DOGGEL

Which of the two is absurder?

M. minor or M. piniperda?

The latter, in pine, makes a vertical line,

The former, transverse, like a girder.

Collected deep in the Welsh forests by District Officer ROGER LINES, Research Branch.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE TRADE

WITH THE APPROACH of Christmas it is more or less seasonal to mention that the Christmas tree trade is beginning to liven up. We hope, in due course, we shall be recording claims from Foresters for the greatest numbers of trees sold and A.35's issued. Meanwhile, what about establishing a record for the earliest enquiry from the trade for the current season? Is there any advance on an enquiry received by the East England Conservancy dated 2nd February?

There must, too, be many unusual and amusing stories about Christmas trees. For example, in April this year, with the assistance of the North West England Conservancy, East England were able to tell the local N.A.A.F.I. representative that a certain private nursery had experimented with trees for export by dipping them in a plastic substance. This, in addition to preventing the needles from falling, gave the trees a glossy appearance. Perhaps our NW(E) correspondent can take up the story and give us further details.

What was probably the most unusual request received by East England came from an organisation wishing to erect a tree in the local market place. Dismayed at the cost of purchasing a suitable tree, it was suggested that a 50 ft. tree should be loaned to them for 14 days and replanted in its original position afterwards. Needless to say, the Conservancy was unable to oblige!

CRICKET IN THE NORTH WEST THE NORTH WEST England Conservancy cricket team this year won the Stuart Shield, awarded to the winners of the Civil Service Inter-Departmental Competition, Chester Area, by defeating the Post Office side. Thus an old account was settled in the Commission-Post Office David and Goliath rivalry - two seasons ago the Post Office narrowly defeated our colleagues in a seven-a-side soccer competition.

It is customary for the winners of the Stuart Shield to be challenged by a composite team from other clubs who took part in the competition; the Commission team rose to the occasion and scored a convincing victory over the challengers. Incidentally, during the season the NW(E) team played 15 matches, winning eight and losing seven not at all a bad achievement, when it is remembered that the Chester Office has, at most, only 15 players from which to choose a side.

SOLACE FOR THE LONELY THE VISITOR to Headquarters (and maybe, the lonely, nerve-wracked soul due to appear before a selection board) will in future find something of interest in the waiting room to help while away the solitary moments. A large showcase has been placed in this room and in it are displayed some of the antiquarian finds that have been made in Commission woodlands and which, for one reason or another, have not been placed with the British or other museums.

One is a circular lead weight of the kind used perhaps two hundred years ago for handicapping racehorses. It was found in Gwydyr Forest, in North Wales and has an opening for a strap, by which it was secured under the saddle flap; nowadays, of course, weights are carried in special pockets under the flaps. By way of variety, there is to be seen a Roman "melon" bead, dating from 100-400 A.D. This was unearthed during road repairs in The Dean. Then there is a leaden bullet found at Glaster, Glengarry Forest, North Scotland, by a man on draining work; it may be a relic of the "Forty-Five", for Glaster is in the area devastated by Cumberland's troops, and gun flints were found nearby when the railway was being constructed. Another item is a bronze socketed axe-head, one of several found at Tintern Forest, South Wales. It weighs a lb. and dates from 1200-1000 B.C. Among a number of interesting coins on display are several struck during the reign of Constantine the Great, 306 - 337, and found at King's Forest, East England Conservancy.

But perhaps the greatest interest lies in those antiquarian objects which have been found on Commission property and now, because of their importance, rest on a museum shelf. These are listed in the waiting room and have included a hoard of bronze palstaves of the Middle Bronze Age (1200-1000 B.C.) found near Burley, in the New Forest, in 1926; fourteen silver pennies dating from 1247-1260, unearthed at Newcastleton Forest, Roxburghshire, in 1937; a silver seal of Henricus de Bordon, of the late 13th. or early 14th. century, found at Wark Forest, Northumberland in 1951; a bronze sword of the Late Bronze Age (1000-450 B.C.), found at Kielder Forest, Northumberland, also in 1951; and an early Christian monumental stone dating from about the year 700 and found two years ago in Pelena Forest, South Wales.

ARE YOU A WEATHER PROPHET? CAN YOU accurately forecast the weather - in other words, do you keep an eye on the sky? If so, you will be familiar with at least some of those numerous and quaint little rhymes and maxims which define in such certain terms what is in store for us. Here are one or two: "Mackerel sky and mares' tails make lofty ships carry low sails". "When the wind veers against the sun, trust it not, for back 'twill run". Then there is "When the wind is in the east 'tis neither good for man nor beast"; and "Evening red and morning grey, help the traveller on his way."

How do our Foresters assess the forthcoming weather, apart from putting their own interpretation on or their faith in the B.B.C. forecasts? Are any of them guided by such ancient couplets as quoted above and, if so, what?

TRANSFERS THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

District Officers J.B. TEASDALE from Brecon, S(W), to Llandovery, S(W); A.S. MACNAIR from Cairnbaan, W(S), to Alloa, W(S); N.M. BROWN from Walkerburn, S(S), to Peebles, S(S).

Foresters J.R.A. FRATER from Clach Liath, N(S), to Glenrigh, N(S); J.A. WOOD from Asaph, N(W), to Maclor, N(W); J.H. RIDDELL from Glenrigh to Balblair, N(S); J. DUNCAN from Dalbeattie, S(S), to Wauchope, S(S); T.G.M. JONES from Tair Onen, S(W), to Coed-y-Brenin, N(W). Foreman D. McLELLAN from Glen Affric, N(S), to Clach Liath; A.S. GARDINER from Tintern, S(W), to Research, Grizedale; D.V. JONES from Nethergwent, S(W), to Glasfynydd, S(W).

The following have been transferred on promotion from Foremen to Forester II: A.H. BROWN from SW(E) to S(W); A. MAXWELL from S(S) to N(W); R.S. CARLAW from N(S) to N(W); G.J. BARKER from N(S) to S(W); A.H.D. PYPER from S(S) to S(W); J.L. ROSS from E(S) to N(W).

Executive Officer A.J. SEARLE from Headquarters to Chester. Clerical Officers G.M. PRINGLE from Research, Edinburgh, to D(S), Edinburgh; Miss E.D. MILLER from D(S), Edinburgh, to Research, Edinburgh.

A CURIOUS LINK

THE DEPARTURE from the Commission of Miss E. PEAPELL, for six years a typist at Headquarters, has brought to light a link with the family of our Chairman, LORD RADNOR. Nearly 20 years ago workmen who were excavating on the site of some demolished cottages in the village of Highworth, in Wiltshire, unearthed a brick-built vault containing human remains and decayed and powered wood, obviously all that was left of a coffin. It was subsequently established that the remains were those of one George Peapell, who died in 1647 and was the great-grandfather of Miss Peapell.

George Peapell, according to reports published at the time of the excavations, "was brought with his brother to England from Ireland by a former Lord Radnor." The two men both married and founded families in the Highworth district and George Peapell, who was undoubtedly a colourful character, joined a denomination known as the Adult Baptists. His will read:

"This is the last will and testament of George Peapell:
"My body shall be buried in a great deep hole,
"In my garden near unto my own house,
"Where I do undertake to be as quiet as a mouse,
"Till grin old death my wife in her chair shall grapple,
"Then my house shall be an Adult Baptist Chapel.
"My garden and burial ground shall be
"Where other saints may rest,
"Till the last trump shall call us,
"The Blessed of the blest to glory, glory for ever."

Miss Peapell has transferred to the Assistance Board at Westcliff-on-Sea and, on leaving, she was presented by her many friends with a hairdryer and a sum of money which, she says, will buy rose trees for her garden.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGE

to write in and stake their claims and, in so doing, also let us have lists of the different kinds of trees. While they are at it, readers might provide lists of shrubs, as well.

PROMINENCE AT ALICE HOLT LODGE

FROM Alice Holt Lodge it is reported that the following have married: Dr. MYLES CROOKE, Entomologist; Forester E. LEYSHON; Foreman K.F. BAKER; Foreman J.B.H. GARDINER; and Miss WENDY INGRAM, machine operator. South Wales reports the marriage of District Officer J.B. TEMSDALE, and Headquarters that of Executive Officer CONRAD MATTOCK. Before a large gathering of colleagues the latter was presented with a dinner service, the ceremony being performed by the Secretary, MR. H.A. TURNER, who said Conrad Mattock and he joined the Commission in almost the same week. Being interested in the training of officers, he placed Conrad Mattock in the Public Relations Section, to ensure that he had an answer to everything; next he was put in the Finance Branch so that he could the better understand the intricacies of family budgeting; and of late he had been engaged on nursery work!

Our congratulations, also, to Forester J. CHAPMAN, Dunster Forest, SW(E), and Mrs. Chapman, on the birth of a daughter (Ann Louise).

IF YOU DO SOMETHING, SEE SOMETHING, OR HEAR SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY, TELL YOUR GLASHER CORRESPONDENT. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE