

THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

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CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

OFFICE PARTIES, NEAR & FAR

COLLEAGUES in the various offices have been busily celebrating Christmas and the New Year and at the time of writing we have received a number of reports of festivities; no doubt others will follow in due course.

In London, the annual party arranged by the Inforesta Social Club at Headquarters was held in the Civil Service Canteen. The programme included dancing (for the first time there was a band to provide the music), games and competitions and a very funny play entitled "The Promotion Board" - a good humoured and delightful skit on official procedure. The board comprised Messrs. A.C. STAMMERS, L.G. POWELL and G.G. SEAL, with Messenger F. MATTHEWS causing much amusement with a self-impersonation. Candidates for promotion were L.A. CARVOSSO and "Miss" HYEM.

A humorous musical comment on silviculture came from Messrs. A. WATT, A.F. MINTER and W.R. DOHERTY. A relay race in which the Director General, SIR ARTHUR GOSLING; the Secretary, Mr. H.A. TURNER; and the Deputy Establishment Officer, Mr. A.D. PALMER, competed (in nightgowns) for the men and Miss A. BROOKS, Mrs. M. ALISON and Miss P. DREW (in pyjamas) for the ladies provoked a great deal of mirth, especially when one of the ladies experienced difficulty in keeping the lower portion of her attire in position.

Among the visitors were the Chairman, LORD RADNOR, and several colleagues from the office of Director, England. An efficient Master of Ceremonies was Mr. H.P. WILBRAHAM, and some readers may be interested to know that "BILL" AUDIE took some good photographs which are available in colour at a very reasonable price

The Luncheon Club dining room at Princes Gate was the venue for the party of the English Directorate and here again, in the dancing, games and competitions the festive spirit was very much in evidence. In Edinburgh our colleagues of the Scottish Directorate office celebrated with a dinner and dance in the Grosvenor Hotel, and dancing commenced with a grand march led by Mr. A. CAMPBELL and his pipes. Over at Aberystwyth there was a dinner and dance in the Belle Vue Royal Hotel, with the staff of the Welsh Directorate office dancing into the early hours to the music of Hughie Humphreys and his band. There were a number of toasts at the dinner and several of our colleagues excelled in the wittiness of their speeches.

The Research Branch held their customary Christmas lunch and guests included the Director of Research and Education, Mr. JAMES MACDONALD, and his Chief Clerk, Miss A. BROOKS.

The annual party of the North East Conservancy in York had as its highlight a musical item by District Officers S. FORRESTER, A.A. ROWAN and A. RIX (who accompanied on the guitar), the verses being a commentary on the official life of the former Conservator, Mr. C.A. CONNELL, who recently moved to South West England. In the Chester office, "hub" of the North West England Conservancy, there were dancing and games and a staff pantomime. Office and field staff in the Dean held their party in the Deputy Surveyor's house at Whitmead Park, there being two "sessions". In the afternoon parents and children were entertained and in the evening it was a case of "adults only". The Deputy Surveyor, Mr. R.G. SANZEN BAKER, and Mrs. BAKER were cordially thanked for allowing their home to be "invaded" by upwards of a hundred people.

Back to Wales. The North Wales Conservancy party and dance was held in the Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury, and was generally voted the best ever. Ten Foresters (while blindfold) were attired in a new "uniform" and it is easy to imagine their surprise when they found they had been dressed as Can-can dancers. And, O la la, how they danced! Prize for the highest kicker went to Head Forester J.E. EVANS, of Coed-y-Brenin. As was only to be expected when Welshmen are together, there was some fine singing from a "choir" under the direction of Head Forester Evans. In Cardiff, the South Wales Conservancy party was also a great success, the programme consisting of a dinner and an old time palace of varieties under the chairmanship of Mr. A.R. BURGESS, and dancing and games.

COLLEAGUES HONOURED

WE WERE very pleased to see from the New Year Honours List that two of our colleagues had received well deserved recognition of their work. Mr. TOM FARMER, now Chief Clerk in the

Dumfries Office, South Scotland Conservancy, has been made an M.B.E. - in other words he becomes a Member of the Order of the British Empire; and Head Forester H.W. JONES, of Delamere, North West England Conservancy, receives the British Empire Medal.

Mr. Farmer was in the Secretariat at Headquarters before leaving for Dumfries in August last and colleagues will recall that for a very long time he served as Secretary to the Committee on Hedgerow and Farm Timber, whose Report is to be published in the near future.

Head Forester Jones was employed with the old Office of Woods in the Dean as long ago as 1909, and later moved to Tintern Forest. He was absorbed, as it were, into the Commission in 1923 and has been in charge at Delamere, an old Crown forest, for about 30 years.

~~THE~~
PRESENTATIONS TO MR. A.H. POPERT
AND TWO CONSERVATORS

CONSERVANCY staff gathered at Bristol the other day to say farewell to Mr. A.H. POPERT, who has retired after 10 years as Conservator, South West England. Mr. D.F. STILEMAN, Private Woodlands Officer, presided and Mr. O.J. SANGAR, Director of Forestry for England said he had known Mr. Popert for very many years, in school and as an official colleague, and the two of them were almost the last of the Commission's original "old guard". The passing years had seen the building up of a great forest organisation in which he and Mr. Popert had been proud to play a part.

Mr. Sangar, for the Conservancy, handed Mr. Popert a cheque and an inscribed silver plate which is to be affixed to a desk which Mr. Popert is to buy, and wished both Mr. and Mrs. Popert a long and happy retirement. Miss Combes, Clerical Officer, presented Mrs. Popert with a bouquet.

In his reply, Mr. Popert spoke of the loyal and whole-hearted support he had received from the staff during his long term of office. He thanked everyone for the wonderful gifts and for the good wishes, which had moved him greatly.

Mr. C.A. CONNELL received a diversity of gifts from all ranks in the North East England Conservancy, on the occasion of his departure for pastures new as Conservator in South West England; these gifts were a wrist watch, a picture and some electrical equipment and they were handed over by the Land Agent, Mr. W.J.J. PORTLOCK who, with the Chief Clerk, Mr. L.A. CHAPLIN, paid tribute to Mr. Connell's work in the Conservancy.

The North West England Conservancy gift to Mr. BARRINGTON, who is now at Princes Gate on the staff of Director, England, took the form of a pair of binoculars and case, and was presented by Mr. J. CHARD, who has succeeded Mr. Barrington as Conservator at Chester. Mr. Chard said the gift was a token of the high esteem in which Mr. Barrington was held in the Conservancy.

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TRAGIC DEATHS IN SOUTH WALES

TWO TRAGIC DEATHS occurred recently in the South Wales Conservancy. At Towy Forest, Mr. W.J. THOMAS was killed when the tractor he was driving overturned. He was an established industrial worker and had been with the Commission since July, 1946; he leaves a widow and a married daughter.

On the same day as the accident mentioned above, Ganger E.C. BARTLETT, of Rheola Forest, South Wales, died suddenly while at work, from a heart attack. Mr. Bartlett commenced his employment with the Commission in 1935 and joined the Services in 1943. He returned to the Commission immediately after the war, left for a short spell, and then rejoined in April, 1948. He was a keen sportsman and greatly liked by all who knew him.

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SINISTER SYLVICULTURE

A ONE-ACT PLAY

THE SCENE of the following playlet is the hinterland of the North Norfolk coast. The theme was suggested by Red Face's wife.

Two characters in Teddy Boy marmalade velvet collars and lovat green suits huddle under a grotesquely formed ash. One is stocky and corpulent with a complexion like the setting sun. The other is tall and lean with sallow cheeks.

Red Face (glancing up the track): Got yer "Slasher"?

Sallow Cheek (jerking his head): In the van.

(Red Face nods his approval)

Red Face: Planted that stuff yet?

Sallow Cheek (also glancing up the track): Yeah, but we had trouble. Plenty of trouble. Some - some of 'em ain't gonna live.

Red Face (screwing up his countenance): That's bad, Rip. There's goin' to be a big beat up. I can see it coming. Get the gang together Rip, I wanna talk to 'em.

Sallow Cheek: Can't do that yet awhile, boss. They gone to see about that fence.

Red Face (nodding heavily): Yeah, that was a little matter that just had to be taken care of. Glad you fixed it, Rip. You're a good chap, Rip. See they get the hole deep enough, that's all. Don't want no trouble later.

Sallow Cheek (jerking around quickly): Look, boss, here he comes - and he's got a gun.

Red Face (putting up his hand): O.K. We'll wait here under the tree. I've got a packet for him.

(The man unsuspectingly approaches, starts on seeing who it is under the tree and drops his gun. Red Face steps out of the shadows, a steely glint in his eye).

Red Face: Pick it up at once. A good warrener should never do that, in any circumstances. Here are your wages (hands over the packet). And we've brought along the "Slasher" for you to read.

(The warrener's face which, until that moment, had borne an expression of consternation, clears and a happy smile spreads over it).

Warrener: Ah, now. That's made my day, that 'ave. (Takes the "Slasher"). I'm almost as pleased to get that as I am me wages. Best bit of reading of the month, I always say. Er - sorry I dropped the gun.

THE PLOUGHING RECORD

SOUTH WALES CLAIMS IT

of Irfon Forest, South Wales. He points out that in exactly four weeks from 8th September to 6th October last, Tractor Driver T. POOCOCK ploughed 179 acres, plus four acres of fire belt, the ground being rough and hilly, and in part also boggy. This feat averages over 96 acres for 16 days. The work was done with a double furrow Cutbertson plough drawn by an International T.D.9.

Anyone go better still?

FROM FOREST RESEARCH TO

M.A.F.&F.

Forester at Benmore School and on leaving there was posted to Research (Mensuration). After a spell in the field he was brought into the Research Station, where he developed undoubted skill in statistics. His hard work and home studies helped in the formation of a statistical section at Alice Holt and, on the personal side, with success in statistical examinations. He was one of only two candidates out of eleven for his new post.

STAG CARRIED A HUNDREDWEIGHT OF WIRE

RESEARCH FORESTER J.N.R. JEFFERS has left Alice Holt Lodge to take up an appointment with the Ministry of Agriculture, and we wish him every success in his new job. Mr. Jeffers was trained to be a Forester at Benmore School and on leaving there was posted to Research (Mensuration). After a spell in the field he was brought into the Research Station, where he developed undoubted skill in statistics. His hard work and home studies helped in the formation of a statistical section at Alice Holt and, on the personal side, with success in statistical examinations. He was one of only two candidates out of eleven for his new post.

OUR NORTH SCOTLAND correspondent has sent us an almost incredible photograph of the antlers taken from a stag shot at Glen Hurich forest.

These were sent to taxidermists for mounting and presented quite a problem, for around them, tightly entwined, and trailing from them was an enormous amount of fencing wire. This weighted about a hundredweight, so that the stag must have been of great strength to carry it.

TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

District Officers D.A. WOODBURN from Perth, E(S), to Dunkeld, E(S); R.D. JACKSON from Dunkeld to Edinburgh; I.S. WATT from Edinburgh to Perth; W.G. JEFFREY from Perth, to Brechin, E(S); J.C. VOYSEY from Aberystwyth to Bettws-y-Coed, N(W).

Foresters G. GILBERT from Kirkhill, E(S), to Durris, E(S); E.J. TUCKER from Kinver, NW(E), to Corvedale, NW(E); P. STUART from Rosarie, E(S), to Newtyle, E(S); J. GUILD from Newtyle to Kirkhill; D.R. MACGREGOR from Devilla, W(S), to Irdgartan, W(S); D.L. SHAW from Coed-y-Brenin, N(W), to St. Asaph, N(W). Foremen A.E. HARWOOD from Culbin, E(S), to Rosarie; E.R. ROBSON from Research, Rashfield, to Research, Tulliallan; J.W. BARRACLOUGH from Corvedale to Hatlock, NW(E); J.M. McNAIR from Strathlachlan, W(S), to Devilla.

THE WEASEL AND THE MOLE

FORESTER J.A. MARSHALL writes in with a question. Recently, he says, he saw a weasel with a mole which it had killed. "Yet" he goes on, "I had never seen a weasel or, in fact, any other animal kill a mole before and I believe the instance which I witnessed must have occurred through the shortage of rabbits."

"I would be interested to know whether any other readers of The Slasher have seen such an occurrence or witnessed any other strange 'kills'. And can anyone tell me why moles are not normally killed by flesh-eating animals? I have been given three different reasons - that the flesh has an unpleasant taste; that the mole gives off an unpleasant smell when attacked; and that the skin of the mole is too tough for most animals. I personally think the first reason is the most likely, but I would like the opinions of others."

Mention of the shortage of rabbits reminds us of one or two other comments of interest. One newspaper stated recently that buzzards, owing to the dearth of rabbits as food, had attacked human beings in the Penberth Valley, Cornwall. One victim was said to be a six-months old child which was attacked as she lay in the perambulator, and suffered a wound in the hand. The same report said that a Devon man killed with his hands a buzzard which struck at him when he went to the rescue of a hen caught in its talons. There is another report of buzzards now eating wood pigeons and, obviously, being able to catch them despite their speed of flight.

For ourselves, we have an open mind as to extent to which habits have changed on the part of certain wild life since the rabbit became more or less a rarity. But some readers may have views on the subject and, if so, we would be glad to hear from them.

HELPED RESCUE CRASHED PILOTS

FOREST WORKERS and staff at Crychan Forest in South Wales, helped in the rescue of the pilots of two jet aircraft which crashed within a short distance of each other after a collision. The pilots baled out and one was rescued from the larch tree into which he had descended; both pilots were taken by ambulance to hospital at Carmarthen, after resting at the Commission's office at Llandulais.

PERSONAL

AT HEADQUARTERS a warm welcome was given to Mr. HARRY MORGAN, who attended for the purpose of a presentation. Mr. Morgan, who has retired from the Commission after 32 years service - successively Messenger, Paper Keeper and Senior Paper Keeper - received the gift of a wrist watch, the ceremony being performed by Mr. A.D. PALMER.

Congratulations to Miss STELLA COOKE and Miss SHEILA HALL, machine operators at Alice Holt Lodge, who have married; to District Officer ROGER LINES, Research, Edinburgh, on his engagement to Miss JANE BOX, of Shamley Green, Surrey; and to Dr. W.H. HINSON, Soils Research Officer, and Mrs. Hinson, on the birth of a son.

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