

THE SLASHER

Forestry Commission News

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RETIREMENT OF MR. JAMES FRASER

AFTER nearly 36 years with the Forestry Commission, MR. JAMES FRASER, Conservator, North Scotland, has retired.

FAREWELL DINNER AT INVERNESS

MR. FRASER had the longest service of any of our Officers with the exception of MR. O. J. SANGAR, the Director for England, and he could claim the record for having remained in the one Conservancy longer than any other Conservator. A native of Dingwall, MR. FRASER obtained a degree in forestry at Edinburgh in 1912 and in the following year he gained a Pure Science degree; he then went to the West of Scotland College of Agriculture as a lecturer and, after serving in the first world war, joined the Commission in April, 1920. It is a point of interest that the decision to offer employment to MR. FRASER was taken at the second meeting of the Forestry Commissioners - in December, 1919.

After a period as Instructor at the old Beaufort Forestry School at Beaully, MR. FRASER was a District Officer in West Scotland and in 1931 was promoted to Divisional Officer and posted to Inverness.

Evidence of the great esteem and affection in which MR. FRASER is held was to be seen at the Station Hotel, Inverness, when a large number of Officers, Foresters and other Commission wellwishers attended a dinner to mark his retirement. Among those present were the Director General, SIR ARTHUR GOSLING; the Deputy Director General, SIR HENRY BERESFORD PEIRSE; MR. J. R. THOM representing the Director, Scotland, who was unable to attend through illness; MR. JAMES MACDONALD, Director, Research and Education; and the three other Scottish Conservators, MR. F. W. OLIVER, MR. J. E. JAMES and MR. J. A. B. MACDONALD. SIR ARTHUR GOSLING, on behalf of subscribers, presented MR. FRASER with a radiogram, a clock and a pipe, and gifts were also made to MRS. FRASER and MISS B. FRASER. Among the compliments to MR. FRASER was that offered by District Officer D. MACLEOD who, to piano accompaniment by Divisional Officer R. INNES, played an entirely new violin tune of his own composition, entitled "JAMES FRASER, O.B.E." Others who entertained included MRS. McBEATH, MRS. OFFICER, and District Officer FINLEY MACRAE, who played the pipes.

We take this opportunity, on behalf of all the Commission staff, to wish MR. and MRS. FRASER a happy and long retirement.

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BRRR!

HOW WE SHIVERED!

SEVERAL readers have commented on the recent cold spell. From North East England comes a report that at Stonehaugh, Wark Forest, a temperature of below zero was recorded - it is believed for the first time in memory; there were 32.50 degrees of frost on 3rd February. But our colleagues in Northumberland were not alone in their "sufferings", for 33 degrees of ground frost were registered on 2nd - 3rd February at the R.A.F. Meteorological Station near Shrewsbury; at Chopwell Forest, in County Durham, 13 degrees of air frost were recorded on 9th January and 16 degrees of ground frost on 25th of the same month; on 1st and 2nd February there were 5 degrees of frost, all day long.

Other recordings - 28 degrees of ground frost at Bourne Forest, Lincolnshire; minimum temperature readings of 3.8 degrees on 2nd February and 3.9 degrees on 4th February at the Lynford Hall Forester Training School in East Anglia; 9 degrees at Ampthill and Yardley forests, in the East England Conservancy.

The cold spell resulted in "no noticeable alteration in the way of life" at Mabie Forest, South Scotland, except where nursery work was concerned, and many wild birds became quite tame; but Leithope Forest, in the same Conservancy, experienced exceptionally heavy snow - up to two feet deep in the plantations and with local drifts of 6 feet or more. For some time the forest labour force from Jedburgh was unable to report for work, owing to blocked roads; there were no postal services and no deliveries of food until these were made possible by the provision by a local farmer of a horse and sledge.

Finally, an odd spot from the North Scotland Conservancy. "Although the weather was cold," writes our correspondent, "no unusually low temperatures were reported. Daffodils were in bloom in the Outer Isles".

XXX SAW FLYING SAUCER

MECHANIC'S ALARMING EXPERIENCE

"HUNDREDS and hundreds" of letters have been received from all over the British Isles and from France and America by MR. M. W. BRAZIER, one of our mobile mechanics in the South Scotland Conservancy, since it was reported that he had seen a flying saucer. We now have MR. BRAZIER'S own version of the event, and he has also sent along a sketch which describes just how and where it happened; unfortunately we cannot do justice to illustrations in The Slasher. But MR. BRAZIER'S word-picture is graphic enough. "I was travelling from Newton Stewart to Balmaclellan", he writes. "It was about 7.15 p.m. and bright moonlight and as I came round the corner at Talnotry I saw a bluish light out on the hill to my right, about three quarters of a mile away. Thinking it was the reflection of the foglight of a car I slowed down, under the impression I would meet the car on a narrow bridge. When I realised that it was a ring of light coming towards me and close to the ground, I thought it must be a mountain rescue helicopter. But I suddenly realised I was seeing a machine such as I had never seen before, and it was heading straight for my van. I was scared stiff and braked hard, and dived out into the road and on pulling myself upright by the front of the van I saw the flying saucer, or whatever it was. It was a large flat disc about 70 feet in diameter and was ringed around the edge with a bluish, gas-like flame; when it was 15-20 yards away from the van it banked sharply right towards Murray's monument, turned left and then made a tight turn round the van at a distance of 15 yards or so. It made little noise except a very high pitched buzzing, but as it banked there was a clicking sound, like a turnstile, which got louder as the banking angle increased. I would say its speed was 35-40 miles an hour and in its flight it closely followed the contours of the ground. When it came towards me edge on it looked just like a cigar, but as it banked and showed its underside I saw three bulges underneath. There seemed to be no cockpit or windows.

"I would like to add that I wasn't drunk or anything like that; what I saw was fact. Earlier that day my son had been involved in an accident with a car and I was hurrying home, and the last thing I was thinking about was flying saucers."

XXX SOME FAREWELLS AND

PRESENTATIONS

A DINNER in honour of MR. I. O. ROBERTSON was held at the Gwydyr Forester Training School to mark his departure on appointment as Chief Education Officer, with headquarters in London. MR. ROBERTSON was at Gwydyr for little more than a year but became much liked and respected. The dinner was attended by the school staff and their families and students and, after the loyal toast by Mr. G. T. THOMAS, School Foreman, MR. H. A. TILNEY-BASSETT, the Assistant Education Officer at Gwydyr, presented MR. ROBERTSON with a brief case, as a token of the regard in which he is held by all members of the Gwydyr community. MR. ROBERTSON replied and also gave the toast of the school, to which MR. R. J. HOLLOWAY, Chairman of the Student Committee, responded. MR. D. J. KEMP was the toastmaster.

Colleagues and other friends took leave of MR. GORDON GRANT, Estates Officer, South Scotland, who has retired. MR. GRANT joined the Commission in September, 1943, and was first stationed in the East Scotland Conservancy; he was transferred to Dumfries in April, 1949, and quickly established himself as a popular member of the staff. Good wishes for the future health and happiness of both MR. and MRS. GRANT were expressed by the Conservator, MR. J. A. B. MACDONALD in handing over to MR. GRANT, on behalf of subscribers, a substantial cheque.

Also in South Scotland, District Officer G. G. STEWART was recently presented with an oil painting of a Highland scene, to mark his departure for the Research Branch.

Representatives of Forest Officers and Foresters in the South Scotland Conservancy called on MR. P. BROWN, late of Craigieburn Forest, who has retired on medical grounds after 25 years service with the Commission. MR. BROWN, who attended the Forestry School at Beaulieu, joined us as a Ganger and became a Foreman in 1932; he was promoted to Forester II in 1935 and to Forester I in 1946. Until moving to Craigieburn he was successively in charge at Le and Greskine forests. On behalf of former colleagues, District Officer W. B. SUTHERLAND presented MR. and MRS. BROWN with an inscribed chiming clock.

XXX HELP FOR LECTURERS

FORESTERS who give talks on forestry are encouraged to use the official colour slide library now established by the Research Branch at Alice Holt Lodge. That the collection is already becoming very popular as a means of illustrating lectures is

evidenced by the fact that in 1953 652 slides were borrowed; in 1954, 3,690; and in 1955, 5,140.

The following subjects are well represented in the collection: Nursery work (sowing, covering, weeding, fertilising, soil sterilisation, transplanting, etc.); forest operations; afforestation of difficult ground and planting of derelict woods; ploughing and draining; soils and vegetation; sample plots; damage by fire, frost, animals, insects; machinery used in nursery and forest; tree species (good stands, elite trees, foliage, flowers, fruit); utilisation; general views, including some of the integration of forests with fine scenery, and with agriculture.

In some cases the use of these slides may mean borrowing a projector or asking the organisation requesting the lecture to provide a suitable projector - that is, for 2 by 2 inch slides.

~~THE~~ S.O.S. FROM JOURNAL EDITOR

THE EDITOR of the Forestry Commission Journal writes: "Will the author of the interesting note 'Ornamentals' please let me know his name and official station, so that credit may be given where it is due? These details have become mislaid, or were lost in the post.

"More contributions, by the way, will be welcomed by the Editorial Committee."

~~THE~~ FROM REDESDALE TO IRELAND

ORNITHOLOGISTS among our readers will be interested to hear of the experience of Forester W. L. McCAVISH, of Redesdale Forest, North East England. A very keen ornithologist himself, he has ringed a number of birds and has now heard from the Natural History Society of Northumberland that a mistle thrush ringed by him on 24th May, 1953, has been found in Moira, Co. Down, Ireland, some 180 miles away in a west-south-westerly direction.

~~THE~~ "TREES, WOODS and MAN"

A NEW BOOK

FROM the indefatigable pen of H. L. EDLIN, the Commission's Publications Officer, has come yet another book - "Trees, Woods and Man", in the New Naturalist series. Like all good reading, it has its price (No quips, please, about The Slasher being free!) and will cost the purchaser 30s.

But what a wealth of information; and what delightful reading and viewing is contained in this latest effort of 271 pages and 24 plates in full colour, plus 30 photographs in black and white. Indeed, nothing worth telling the "enquiring layman", as the author describes his potential reader, has been overlooked.

The growth, structure and functions of the tree are explained; the physical and biological environments of the forests in Britain are clearly elucidated; and the importance of the natural woodlands in the country is defined in detail. The story of man's influence on the forest and his past improvidence with his timber provides the reader with food for much serious thought, while a description of the forestry renaissance of more recent years brings hope to those who know all too well that the countryside could die for want of trees, and have for long advocated the doctrine of an eye for an eye - a forest policy that requires the planting of a tree wherever one is felled. Indeed, this is to some extent possible within the provisions of the 1951 Forestry Act.

The care that goes into the formation of a modern forest, and the operations therein, are described and will hold surprise for those whose misguided belief is that "trees just grow"; and the importance of forestry research is rightly dealt with at some length. The very fine studies of different tree species will find much favour and should prove of special value to educationalists who have the not too easy task of developing an interest in, and love of trees in the younger generation, and seek the best references. "Trees, Woods and Man" is truly a worthwhile volume; handsome in looks, and expansive and constructive in its treatment of an all-important subject.

~~THE~~ DEATH OF FORESTER R. J. BIRCH

IT IS with great regret that we have to announce the death of a Forester - MR. R. J. BIRCH, of Glentrool, South Scotland. Mr. Birch joined the Commission in 1934, and started work at Kirroughtree Forest. He was seconded to H.G.T.P.D. during the war, and rejoined the Commission in August, 1946. He became a Foreman in the following year and was promoted Forester II in 1955.

"Bob" Birch, as he was widely known, was of quiet and kindly disposition, and did his work unobtrusively but well. For over a year

before his death, at the relatively early age of 52, he was unwell but, uncomplaining, he always maintained on enquiry that he was "fine". He leaves a widow and family, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

District Officers D. MACKAY from Carlton Scroop, E(E), to Grantham, E(E); T.S.L. FINDLAY from Dumfries, S(S), to Newton Stewart, S(S); P. W. MORGAN from Dovey, N(W), to Aberystwyth; E. J. M. DAVIES from Aberystwyth to Dovey; R. T. F. LARSEN from Forres, E(S), to Dunkeld, E(S); M. R. W. WILLIAMS from Edinburgh to Newton Stewart; R.B. HERBERT from Neath, S(W), to Llandrindod Wells, S(W); J. G. CURWEN from Chichester, SE(E), to Aylsham, E(E); R. M. G. SEMPLE from Bristol, SW(E), to Devizes, SW(E); D. SMALL from Aylsham to Thetford, E(E); D. H. WALLACE from Neath to Aberystwyth; D. MACLEOD from Inverness, N(S) to Dingwall, N(S); G. J. FRANCIS from Llandrindod Wells to Neath; D. G. CAMPBELL from Dingwall to Edinburgh; R. E. CROWTHER from Pickering, NE(E), to Headquarters; J. W. L. ZEHETMAYR from Research, Edinburgh, to Headquarters; S. W. ROGERS from Thetford to Exeter, SW(E); A. D. WALKER from Salisbury, SW(E), to Princes Risborough, E(E); M. H. ORROM from Shifnal, NW(E), to Kendal, NW(E); R. CHARD from Kendal to Cambridge, E(E).

Foresters G. J. BARKER from Towy, S(W), to Daugleddau, S(W); D. CAMPBELL from Research, Newton, to Eilanreach, N(S); M. HECKLES from Hamsterley, NE(E), to Rothbury, NE(E); V. MASSON from Durris, E(S), to Blackcraig, E(S); H.C.B. PARK from Strathnairn, N(S), to Glentool, S(S); M. H. COLSON from Coed Taf Fawr, S(W), to Rheola, S(W); E. J. D. WILKINSON from Research, Alice Holt Lodge, to Agricultural Show Unit.

Assistant Foresters G. M. W. MURRAY from Rannoch, E(S), to Drummond Hill, E(S); G. M. MORRIS from Wentwood, S(W), to Rheola; F. STRAWBRIDGE from King's, E(E), to Lavenham, E(E); D. J. A. JAMES from Dunraven, S(W), to Irton, S(W); O. N. EDWARDS from Bennan, S(S), to The Garraries, S(S); N. L. B. MANNING from Tongwoods, NE(E), to Knaresborough, NE(E); J. N. SANDY from Hafren, N(W), to Coed Clwyd, N(W); M. J. H. WESTLAKE from Coed Clwyd to Hafren; D. LEE from Allerston, NE(E), to Hamsterley; A. W. GRAHAM from Irdgartan, W(S), to Garadhban, W(S); L. O. PROUDFOOT from Garadhban to Devilla, W(S).

Foreman B. D. PATTEN from Aberhirnant, N(W), to Kershope, NW(E). Asst. Engineer W. H. CLARKSON from Aberdeen to Dumfries.

GAINS T.D.A. CERTIFICATE CONGRATULATIONS to MISS A. M. PIDGEON, Executive Officer on the staff of Director, England, who has gained the Certificate in Timber Technology of the Timber Development Association, after completing a three years' course. It is understood that the certificate has only been awarded to two or three women since it was instituted, and Miss Pidgeon is the only woman in the British Isles to receive it on this occasion.

Further news of interest is that Divisional Officer G. F. BALLANCE, East England, is now a licentiate of the Institution of Fire Engineers; he has for long taken a special interest in the subject of forest fire prevention.

Other reasons for good wishes. Miss DOROTHY BOOTH, telephonist, Dumfries, has married Mr. James Leyland; she received a canteen of cutlery from colleagues. Miss GRETA GARDINER, Clerical Officer, also of Dumfries, has married Mr. James Shimmings, and has been presented with a travelling case - especially appropriate in view of the fact that the couple are emigrating to Southern Rhodesia.

Twins - boy and girl - have arrived for District Officer J. GWYNN, West Scotland, and Mrs. Gwynn.

F.C. TIE-SALE NOW ON!

SOME time ago readers were reminded that the Forestry Commission tie is obtainable from C. H. Munday, Ltd., 7, Irving Street, Leicester Square, London, W.C.2., in four qualities. The firm have now found that with the extension of the range the demand for the rayon reppe tie (price 6s. 6d.) is falling off and they wish it to be known that they have a small stock which they are prepared to supply at the reduced price of 4s. 6d. (plus 3d. postage).

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