

TRAGIC DEATH OF CHIEF CLERK

PASSING OF MR. WALTER MATTHEWS

when a caravan drawn by a car broke away and crushed him, causing multiple injuries. He was taken to hospital and operated upon but died in a comparatively short while.

IT IS with profound regret that we have to record the tragic death during the August holiday weekend of Mr. WALTER MATTHEWS, Chief Clerk in the Bristol office. Mr. Matthews was walking near his home

Although Mr. Matthews did not join us until 1947 he made a host of friends throughout the Commission and he will be greatly missed. He started his Civil Service career in June, 1921, with Customs and Excise; in July, 1943, he went to the Ministry of Supply and was posted to the office of Director, England, when at Cadogan Square, in July, 1947. He went to Bristol in May, 1951. Mr. Matthews leaves a wife and daughter, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

VISIT TO RUSSIA

BY THE TIME you read this a Forestry Commission party should be about to leave, or will have left, for Russia -- a return visit, following the recent tour of our forests made by the Russian foresters led by the head of the Forestry Division of the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture.

The British party will be: Mr. LLOYD OWEN, one of the Forestry Commissioners and Chairman of the National Committee for Wales; SIR HENRY BERESFORD-PEIRSE, Deputy Director General; Mr. JAMES MACDONALD, Director of Research and Education; Mr. J. R. THOM, Conservator on the staff of Director, Scotland; Mr. J. Q. WILLIAMSON, Conservator, South Wales; and Dr. F. C. HUMMEL, Mensuration Officer at Alice Holt. They fly to Moscow towards the end of the month.

At the time of writing details of the programme are not known, but it is understood that Karelia or the Ukraine and the Caucasus may be visited. We hope to include an account of the tour in the next issue of The Slasher.

Last month we referred to the visits to this country of the Russian and French parties and to the Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations. Space did not permit mention of certain of our colleagues closely concerned with the organisation of those events, but we are pleased now to place something on record. Much of the work undertaken at Headquarters in connection with the tours by the Russian and French visitors fell to the lot of Mr. JOHN SUMMERS and Miss M. J. EDEN, while Mr. B. V. MILLS and Mr. J. D. TRIST ably handled the manifold duties attendant on the organisation of the IUFRO Congress. At the same time, of course, in each case colleagues in other offices and in the field contributed greatly to the success of the arrangements. Mr. A. G. MILNE, a Clerical Officer in the Education Branch, helped to interpret for the benefit of the Russians and District Officer L. C. TROUP, of South East England Conservancy, interpreted for the French foresters. Mrs. D. M. GODFREY, of the Purchasing branch at Headquarters, was among the guests at a reception given by the Russians; she speaks Russian and helped greatly to facilitate conversations between the overseas visitors and Commission representatives.

OLYMPIC GAMES FUND

Commission, to the Olympic Games Fund.

THE Controller of Finance has despatched a Payable Order for £85, subscribed by employees of the

THE ABNORMAL ROE BUCK

Grizedale Forest, North West England Conservancy, has already had some interesting experiences. Shortly after his arrival at Grizedale some tourists called at his house quite by chance -- it was the first one they came to -- and asked if there was anyone able to deal with an injured deer. This was a roe buck which had become entangled when trying to cross a fence.

THE COMMISSION'S newly appointed Game Warden, Mr. H. A. FOOKS, who has taken up duties at

A few days later Mr. Fooks shot a roe buck with three horns. On examination it was found to carry tusches, or vestigial canine teeth, in the upper jaw. These are found in the red stag but the chances of finding them in a roe buck are usually reckoned at one in 10,000. The combination of these two abnormalities in one animal is probably unique in the history of stalking.

WATCH 'EM GROW!

I WONDER (writes Forester M. P. SALMOND, of Doncaster Forest, North East England) whether anyone can beat the following speedy hardwood growth this dry spring? The trees are red oak, planted in 1954, on marl soil over the magnesium limestone. Up to this year they had not shown much progress.

<u>Specimen 1</u>			<u>Specimen 2</u>	
May	9th	(not measured)	6	inches
"	17th	15 inches	13	"
"	20th	16 "	14	"
"	24th	17 "	14	"

Specimen 2 grew 8 inches in 11 days. Both trees "settled down" to $17\frac{1}{2}$ and $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches respectively, but others have overtaken them, the maximum growth so far being 19 inches.

14 YOUNG BLUE TITS IN ONE NEST

FROM Forester A. T. HOLLOWAY, of Fritham Beat, New Forest, we have a report that when one of his men went to move a heap of cordwood in Island Thorns he discovered a bluetit's nest containing 14 fully fledged young. As the worker remarked, they were packed like sardines and he estimated that the mother didn't work a 5-day week! Forester Holloway has seen nests with 10 bluetits, and would like to know whether 14 is a record. So would we!

FOCUS ON FORESTRY AS A CAREER

A FORESTRY COMMISSION display at a careers exhibition at Llandudno, staged because the Commission wants more Welshmen in Welsh forestry, attracted a great deal of attention. It was ably erected by Mr. F. C. B. LATHAM, of the office of Director, Wales, and Mr. G. ONG, of Chirk, and among those in attendance to answer numerous questions were District Officer J. C. VOYSEY and Head Forester P. HARRISON of Gwydyr, with two senior students from the Gwydyr Forester Training School. Cones and young surplus trees were distributed and were in such demand that Llandudno may well one day become a town within a forest!

FURTHER COMMENT ON THE WHITE HORSE

and writes:

IN THE June issue of The Slasher, Forester F. STEPHENSON referred to the Kilburn White Horse. He has made further enquiries as to its origin, "The White Horse was cut on the initiative of Thomas Taylor, a native of Kilburn; the plan was drawn up by John Hodgson, the Kilburn schoolmaster, and the figure was cut under his direction. A copy of the plan, which shows the overall dimensions to be 314 feet by 228 feet, can be seen at the Foresters Arms -- the original plan is in the possession of Mr. Hodgson's grandson, who now lives in York. It was drawn on 24th October, 1857, and the work was executed in November of that year. The story about the horse and rider leaping over the cliff refers to the White Mare Crag, east of Gornine Lake; it is said that neither was seen again and this gives some basis for the tale that Gornine is bottomless. The rider and horse came from the Hambleton Stables, a training establishment long before the White Horse was cut. A legendary leap over Roulston Scar was made by the Devil when he leaped to Hood Hill -- leaving his footprint and the huge Druid's stone, which was demolished two years ago by a crashing jet plane."

Forester R. B. GILSON, now at Cawood Forest, North East England Conservancy, writes: "I started Ampleforth Forest, which now includes the White Horse, almost 30 years ago when there were still people alive who remembered the horse being cut and there is no doubt that Thomas Taylor caused this to be done. Byland Abbey was a Cistercian foundation and not Benedictine, as is the nearby Ampleforth Abbey.

"It is Oliver Cromwell (not Thomas, who aided and abetted Henry VIII to dissolve the monasteries) who is supposed to be buried at Newburgh Priory; as subsequent owners of Newburgh have persistently refused to have the vault opened this has never been proved. According to correspondence in Country Life a few years ago, Canon Horace Wilkinson, sometime Vicar of Mildenhall, Suffolk, claims to possess the head of Oliver Cromwell."

PLAQUE FROM WELSH OAK

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

IN THE Town Hall at Aberystwyth, Mr. G. B. RYLE, Director, Wales, presented the Council with a plaque carved from oak grown in Wales. In handing over the gift Mr. Ryle recalled that after the opening of the Commission's offices in Aberystwyth the Council allotted a number of post war houses to the staff; this had been a tremendous help, and the plaque was a token of gratitude. It was fitting, said Mr. Ryle, that the presentation should be made

at the time when Her Majesty the Queen had planted a tree to commemorate the planting by the Commission of one million acres, of which nearly a fifth had been planted in Wales. Accepting the plaque, the retiring Mayor, Alderman W. G. Rowlands, said it would be a reminder of the happy relations that existed between the Commission and the Council. The plaque, he said, would be inscribed with the names of more recent mayors.

THE HORRIBLE HOODIE

CAN any reader explain or cite similar examples of the behaviour of a hooded crow which knocks on the windows of District Officer S. U. ROBERTSON'S house at Barcaldine, West Scotland Conservancy, almost every sunny day at 5.30 a.m.? This hoodie is a very large bird with a strong beak and the noise he makes is just like that of a hard wooden object tapping on the glass -- a noise through which it is impossible to sleep.

The hoodie must use a great deal of force, since the chosen window is often smeared with blood, apparently from the beak -- or has it sometimes been the blood of a newly murdered lamb? All the windows of the house have been "attacked" and efforts to shoot the crow have so far been unsuccessful -- have you ever tried to shoot straight after being rudely awakened at 5.30 in the morning? "If the nuisance continues", writes District Officer Robertson, "I am going to fire before opening the window. This is the second year in which such tapping has taken place."

PROPS FROM NORTH WALES

IT APPEARS (writes our correspondent in the North Wales Conservancy) that British Railways credit us with some novel wet weather work -- or a very advanced level of silviculture -- for, included in a recent account, was a charge of 5s.5d. for the carriage of two artificial limbs from a North Wales station to South Wales. Perhaps it was just an error and not a compliment, since there is a lot of traffic in pitwood; or perhaps the clerk, seeing the items were in the nature of props, thought we were the proper persons to bill. Or again, he may have heard of silvicultural surgery and got on the wrong track that way. However, we have now suggested that British Railways recover the cost from the Ministry of Health. But does the incident point to another possible outlet in our preparation of produce?

SPORT

THE South Wales Conservancy Office table tennis team, captained by H. L. SMITH, has completed a very successful season. Division 4 of the Cardiff and District League was won outright, with the only one game lost, and the team reached the semi-finals of the Cardiff knock-out competition. They also topped the league for Government Departments without losing a match and in a knock-out competition for Civil Servants the Commission captured the men's singles (H. L. SMITH) and the men's doubles (D. AITKEN and J. ELIAS).

Although, apparently, it rained almost everywhere else on a recent Saturday it was fine enough in Brecon for the Conservancy office to meet a team, captained by District Officer R. E. PALLETT, at cricket. The office side, which has had a successful season in evening matches, won by 96 for 5 to 57 all out (Assistant Forester E. C. TREWEEKS 28 not out) thus proving, our South Wales office colleagues think, that the pen is mightier than the lash.

At Chester, Messenger ARTHUR H. SPOONER is again showing excellent form at bowls. Already he has won the Lidbury Bowl for the third time in the last six years. He has also won the J. H. Jones Cup for the second year running.

TALL TREE OR TALL STORY?

WE have heard -- admittedly at third hand -- about a tree which, although not perhaps "the biggest aspidistra in the world", may well be the biggest tree measured in the British Isles. It appears that away in the Emerald Isle at Belmullet, County Mayo, some workmen have dug up a tree trunk -- species unknown -- which measures 192 feet long and has a quarter girth of $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet. As the tallest standing trees in Britain, three Douglas firs growing, respectively, at Powis Castle, near Welshpool, Vivod near Llangollen, and Duneraig in Western Ross, have never been credited with more than 175 feet of height, this prehistoric Irish tree seems to create a record.

THEY'RE COMING ROUND THE MOUNTAIN

UP & DOWN AFTER A DAY'S WORK

FROM North Scotland comes the story of a race by four Forest Workers from the Glenmore Hostel -- up and down the 4,000 feet high Cairngorm mountain with an 8 p.m. start after a full day's work! For the record we must add that the starting point, the Glenmore Hostel, is some 1,000 feet above sea level, so that the actual height climbed was about 3,000 feet. Here are the competitors and their times, the course being a tough one of $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles:

R. J. F. CLARKE, aged 20, of Dagenham. Ex-Coldstream Guards. Represented BAOR in pole vault. To top, 54 mins.; down, 36 mins., 15 secs.
 JOHN DIXON, aged 18, of Crewe. Awaiting call-up. Top, 53 mins.; down, 90 mins., 15 secs.
 IAN WILSON, aged 22, of Leeds. Ex-Coldstream Guards. Former BAOR hurdles champion. Top, 57 mins.; down, 91 mins.
 FRED BARTLET, aged 28, of Manchester. Former cross-country runner. Top, 57 mins.; down, 93 mins., 30 secs. ("Fred broke his neck recently", writes Mr. A. LINDSAY, but did extremely well against the younger competitors.")

A good, fit walker, accustomed to the hills, will take two hours for the ascent alone, so for these lads to make the return trip in about 2½ hours each really is good going. Incidentally, we were intrigued to note that all the competitors come from south of the Border. We hope that the pride of the Scots will assert itself if the race is run again next year -- there are prospects of the event being made an annual one. It remains for us to say that WILLIAM GRANT was timekeeper at the summit and waited in near-Arctic conditions for some 20 minutes before the first of the runners appeared. CALLUM MAIGILORAY was stationed half way up to give any encouragement that may have proved necessary.

==REQUEST FROM JOURNAL EDITOR

FOR long periods the subject of forest fires has been in almost everyone's mind and we are all anxious that there shall be no repetition of this year's devastating outbreaks. One way of helping to ensure this is by an exchange of information on every aspect of fire protection. The Editor of the Forestry Commission Journal asks us to bring this to the notice of readers and says he would welcome contributions -- anything from a note on some "dodge" such as an improved fire beater to a full-length account of an actual major fire. Remember, please communicate with the Editor of the Journal and not of The Slasher -- in other words, write to H. L. EDLIN, Forestry Commission, 25, Savile Row, London, W.1.

==ACORNS FROM CHARTWELL

ACORNS collected on a Kent estate may soon be growing into oak trees in Australia. The Commission received a communication from the Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, who asked whether it would be possible for us to send him some acorns collected on SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL'S estate at Chartwell, near Sevenoaks, from which he might raise an oak to take its place among trees planted in the Gardens by members of the Royal family and other distinguished visitors. Permission to collect some acorns was forthcoming, with the result that 50 were dispatched to Melbourne by air and an additional quantity stored at Alice Holt in case of failure of the first consignment.

==TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:
 District Officers D. F. C. FORBES from Dalry, S(S), to Gatchouse of Fleet, S(S); J. G. H. VEREY from Chichester, SE(E), to Uckfield, SE(E). Foresters T. N. BROWNE from Tintern, S(W), to Taf Fechan, S(W). Assistant Foresters D. L. PARNALL from Vinchall, SE(E), to Rochester, SE(E); E. BUGDEN from Bedgebury, SE(E), to Brightling, SE(E). Assistant Engineer K. T. DAVIDSON from Inverness, N(S), to Fort Augustus, N(S). Clerk of Works J. A. COWIE from Oyckell, N(S), to Ratagan, N(S).

==PERSONAL

CONGRATULATIONS to District Officer D. Y. M. ROBERTSON, Aberystwyth, on his marriage; Forester C. P. KIRKLAND and Leading Surveyor Miss BETTY SAUNDERS, both of Alice Holt, on their wedding to Asst. Mech. Engineer W. C. ANDERSON, Edinburgh on his marriage. To Miss ISOBELLA BRYCE, of the Superannuation Section at Headquarters, who this month is to marry Mr. RICHARD GARWOOD formerly with the Finance Branch at H.Q. and now with Exchequer and Audit. Before a large gathering of wellwishers she was presented with cutlery, the ceremony being performed by Mr. A. F. MINTER.

Congratulations, also, on the following births: to Dr. MYLES CROOKE, Alice Holt, and Mrs. Crooke, a daughter; Forester J. H. STYLES, Alice Holt and Mrs. Styles, a daughter; District Officer G. D. KEIGHLEY, North Wales, and Mrs. Keighley, a son; Research Forester G. PRINGLE and Mrs. Pringle, a son; District Officer T. COULSON, North West England, and Mrs. Coulson, a daughter (Heather); EO J. ARMSTRONG, Chester, and Mrs. Armstrong, a son (Ian).

==WHO HAS THE BIGGEST METEORITE?

A READER sends along a cutting from a national newspaper, which reads: "A meteorite the size of a football fell close to two forestry workers near Honiton, Devon." The reader, no doubt recalling the spate of thunderstorms in the last month or two, says "Why not a feature in The Slasher -- which forest has had the biggest, brightest and best meteorite?" Well, why not?