

## Day Excursion to Hillsborough Forest 12th September, 1964

THE finals of the various Forestry Competitions for 1964 were held on Saturday, 12th September, at Hillsborough Forest. Members of the Society had been invites and those attending joined some 300 Forest Workers, Foresters and the general public for a gala day with brilliant sunshine.

The main competition, which is the Tree Felling Competition, was won by Albert Johnston, who is the son of the Forester at Gortnamoyagh Forest. In this competition there is a finalist from each district. Each competitor must judge in which direction the tree will fall and how high the tree is. The maximum points are 20 and points are lost if the tree falls in a different direction or if the height estimated was wrong. A further 45 marks are awarded for quality of workmanship, this being divided to give 10 marks each for laying-in by axe, felling by the saw, snedding branches, accuracy of cross-cutting and 5 marks for the angle of cross-cutting. Fifteen marks are awarded for the technique used, 5 for felling with the axe, 5 for snedding and 5 for use of the saw in felling. The President, Mr. Maurice Swan, acted as one of the judges of tool using technique. Up to 20 marks are awarded for speed of work, the man completing all the operations in the quickest time receiving full marks and others losing marks for the number of seconds that they are slower than he was. Only hand tools are allowed in this competition and the trees used this year were hemlock. The standard of work was generally very high but there were a few unfortunate lapses in accuracy of cross-cutting. The runner-up in the competition was Frank Gilliland from Knockmany Forest, who was last year's winner. The third was Herbert McAdam of Hillsborough, who had been third in 1961 and 1962.

The Axe Felling Competition, which is determined solely on time, all competitors starting together, was won by T. Bond from Cam Forest. Again, there is one finalist from each forest district. The runner-up in this competition was Andy McLean, the Forester at Randalstown Forest.

The Chain Saw Competition, which is also determined solely by time with all competitors starting simultaneously, was won by John Creene of Newcastle Forest with the runner-up J. A. Monaghan of Baronscourt. This competition starts with all motors of the chain saws stopped, the competitor must then fell the tree after cutting a 4 in. deep wedge in the direction of the tree's fall, stop his engine, jack up the tree, re-start the engine and cut three rings from the top of the tree, stopping the engine and placing the saw on the ground.

A special prize which had been awarded for the best maintained chain and guide bar was a tie between John Dobbin of Ballycastle Forest and J. A. Monaghan of Baronscourt.

In the Cross-Cutting Competition, which is open to any pair of workers using hand-saws only, the winners were J. A. and S. Monaghan of Baronscourt Forest and the runners-up E. Laird and W. Stevenson, also from Baronscourt. In this competition each team of two men must cut a disc from each of three logs, the first to complete in each heat being the winner. All five cross-cutting contests have now been won by teams from Baronscourt Forest.

Teams from each district also compete in a Fire Fighting Competition. The three teams with the least penalty marks in a qualifying round are permitted to enter the final. In the qualifying round penalty points are given for cleanliness and condition of equipment, hose running, hand signals, efficiency of drill, abuse of equipment and the time taken to carry out a drill laid down by the officer currently in charge. The three finalists then compete on a time basis alone, starting off with the crew in the fire tender and no pumps working, right through the routine of taking the pump to the water, running out hoses, laying on the water and finally knocking down tin cans. The winning team was from Baronscourt Forest, with Bunlougher runner-up and Ballypatrick third.

Suitable refreshments were provided on the spot and the day ended with the presentation of the McGregor Cup for the Tree Felling Competition, the Macmahon Shield for Fire Fighting, the Perpetual Challenge Bowl for the best individual garden in Northern Ireland Forestry and the Perpetual Challenge Shield for the best housing site in Northern Ireland and the various prizes and certificates by His Grace the Duke of Abercorn, President of the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and A. N. Macmahon, Esq., O.B.E., who recently retired from the post of Principal Officer in the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture for Northern Ireland.

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