

Day Excursion to Shelton Abbey

MAY 2nd, 1965.

THE Society's first field day of 1965 took place on 2nd May at Shelton Forest Nursery. In spite of the poor weather there was a satisfactory turn out of members but proceedings were confined by rain to a visit to the experimental greenhouse set up by the Research Branch of the Forestry Division.

After the usual opening formalities Mr. Mooney introduced the topic for discussion with a brief summary on the contorta pine provenance research programme with particular reference to the search for provenances suitable to Irish conditions.

Mr. O'Driscoll elaborated on the subject and described the greenhouse and its objects.

Tree improvement first started in 1961 when contorta pine plus trees were selected by members of the Research Branch, British Forestry Commission and a representative from the Danish Forest Service. These were located as follows : East coast — 32, South — 28, West — 4.

In 1962 scions were sent to Scotland and Denmark to form the basis of their seed orchards. Grafting commenced in Spring 1963 in the open but due to adverse weather conditions and unsuitable stocks the results were poor.

Following the poor results the erection of a glass house was considered necessary. The glass house is 20 feet wide by 70 feet long and has a capacity for approximately 2,000 grafts. The present work commenced in the spring of 1964 when 2,000 stocks were potted in a specially prepared mixture of sand, loam and peat. These were embedded in a gravel bed and allowed develop throughout the summer. In December they were moved into the green house. Here they were subject to soil heat of 45°F. for 3 weeks and 60°F. for 2 weeks.

The scion collection was undertaken when first growth of buds was noticed after some 4 weeks heat. 40 trees were chosen to form the basis of the first seed orchard and 40 scions were collected from these. Of the remaining 22 trees, two blew down so that 20 scions were grafted. They will form the basis of a tree bank ensuring the preservation of these trees.

The method of collection involved the use of a shot-gun with heavy cartridges. As the scions were collected they were sent to the Research Nursery at Shelton and grafted immediately using side veneer method. In all 1,850 scions were grafted. Success has been 100% to date with some clones. Cutting back of stock has been undertaken but it is intended to leave one branch until next year. Lining out will take place in the summer and it is hoped to set up the orchard in 1966 at Avondale.

	Loam	Peat	Sand	
Potting mixture	7	3	2	+ $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. John Innes Base Fert. per pot.
Bedding mixture	1	: 1	peat and sand	
			Watered 2 weekly.	

Growth best in middle 2 beds due to possibly better insulation from outside influences.

Questions from members followed which were answered in detail by Mr. Mooney and Mr. O'Driscoll.

When the meeting finished the President, Mr. C. Kilpatrick on behalf of the Society thanked the contributors and expressed his appreciation to the Minister for Lands for facilities offered and to Mr. Ua Cearbhaill and the staff at Shelton School for their kind co-operation.

G.J.G.
