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# **Weekend Excursion to Counties Omagh and Fermanagh**

SEPTEMBER 11th AND 12th, 1965

The visit of the Society to the forests of Northern Ireland was planned for the weekend of the Northern Ireland Forestry Competitions so that the members could spend the Saturday at the competitions and have a full day on the Sunday to visit the forests of the region.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND FORESTRY COMPETITIONS 1965**

The 1965 Forestry Competitions were held on Saturday, 11th September, in the beautiful setting of Gortin Glen Forest in Co. Tyrone. Although not very old, the oldest plantations being less than 30 years planted, this forest has already achieved a delightful sylvan atmosphere and it is likely that in the very near future it will become a Forest Park with specific facilities being provided for public recreation and enjoyment. The weather could perhaps be described as fairly typical Irish mist but this did not dampen the spirits of the almost 500 spectators.

The McGregor Cup and prizes for the various Felling and Cross-Cutting Competitions were presented by His Grace the Duke of Abercorn who is well known for his interest in land use, the countryside and forestry in particular. This interest has led him to travel all over the world and he has been honoured by being chosen as current President of the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Macmahon Shield and prizes for fire fighting were presented by Divisional Officer J. Morrison, of the Northern Ireland Fire Authority who have always strongly supported and assisted with this competition. The date was also a suitable occasion for the presentation by Mr. W. H. Elliott,

Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, of the Challenge Bowl for the best individual garden to the joint winners, Messrs. Barr of Muckamore Forest Nursery, South Antrim District, and Deane of Castle Archdale Forest, West Fermanagh District, and of the Shield for the best housing site in Northern Ireland to Somerset Forest, North Antrim District. Medals awarded to Forestry Division drivers under the National Safe Driving Competition organised by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents were also presented by the local Northern Ireland Organiser of the Society, Mr. L. Sinfield.

One event which gave very considerable pleasure to all forestry personnel in Northern Ireland was the award by the Society of Irish Foresters of Honorary Membership to Mr. D. Stewart, I.S.O., making him the sole present Honorary Member of the Society. The roll of Honorary Members was presented for Mr. Stewart's signature by the current President, Mr. C. S. Kilpatrick, Deputy Chief Forest Officer, Northern Ireland Forestry Division, and Vice-President, Mr. O. V. Mooney, Chief Research Officer of the Forestry Division of the Department of Lands. Formerly with the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Mr. Stewart, a Scotsman, became a Forestry Commission Officer and then Senior Forestry Officer in the Northern Ireland Ministry for Agriculture until his retirement in 1950. During retirement he has kept in close contact with forestry matters and has been a very welcome visitor and judge at the forestry competitions. We all wish him well and many more happy years of retirement.

The Trophy for the main Tree Felling Competition, the McGregor Cup, was won with 88½ per cent. of total marks by E. Laird of Baronscourt Forest, Co. Tyrone, who was also winner in 1962. Great credit is due to him as he is now a Foreman yet he has retained sufficient skill to beat some very strong opposition from forest workers. Shortly after the main event Eddie went on with his partner, William Stevenson, to become close runner-up to the Monaghan brothers, also of Baronscourt Forest, in the Cross-Cutting Competition. In the incredibly short time of 44 seconds the brothers cut three discs from the ends of three logs, each approximately 10 ins. in diameter, using a hand cross-cut saw.

Joint runners-up in the Tree Felling Competition were F. Gilliland of Knockmany Forest, East Fermanagh District — winner on two previous occasions — and E. Monaghan of Castlecaldwell Forest, West Fermanagh District, another familiar face at the finals, who also took third place in the current year's Axe Felling Competition.

The Axe Felling Competition was won by J. J. Mullan of Gortnamoyagh Forest, North Derry District, with a total time of 1 minute 2 seconds, while only a few seconds behind was P. J. Duffy of Pomeroy Forestry School.

Chain saw felling and cross cutting was won in 1 minute 7 seconds by John Creen of Newcastle Forest, County Down District, with Albert McKenna of Favour Royal Forest, East Fermanagh District, only 7 seconds slower. The prize for the best maintained chain and guide bar went to J. J. McGuigan of Baronscourt Forest.

The fire fighting team was from Roslea Forest, East Fermanagh District, with Ballypatrick Forest, North Antrim, and Gortin Glen Forest, the home team, very close behind. The Divisional Fire Officer had some very complimentary remarks to make about the overall standard of all competitors.

The success of this great social occasion was largely due to the meticulous organisation and hard work put into it by many members of the Northern Ireland Forestry Division staff and, in particular, those from West Tyrone District under Mr. W. G. Dallas, District Forest Officer.

W. H. J.

### ELY LODGE FOREST

In the morning the members travelled from Omagh to Ely Lodge Forest, Co. Fermanagh, where Mr. J. C. L. Phillips brought the party on a conducted tour through the forest in which areas are being developed to promote their tourist potential. A nature trail was being planned which should be quite an attraction, if the one at Tollymore Park is anything to judge by. The trail would point out areas of typical lake-side vegetation and patterns of disturbed vegetation, amongst other features.

Although some members appeared to experience a certain amount of difficulty in locating the view point overlooking Lough Erne, which was also being developed as an amenity, a most rewarding view of the lake was enjoyed by the party before heading on to Garrison for luncheon.

### LOUGH NAVAR FOREST

In the afternoon the party visited Lough Navar Forest to see manurial experiments on deep peat. The leader was Dr. W. H. Jack, Research Officer, accompanied by Mr. Montgomery, Head Forester, and Mr. Fitzpatrick, the Forester in Charge.

The first experiment was designed to give information on the mineral and fertiliser requirements of trees on deep peat. Four treatments were applied to the site in 1957, four years before planting, the treatments being :—

1. Control.
2. 2 tons ground limestone per acre.
3. 10 cwts. slag per acre.
4. 2 tons ground limestone and 10 cwts. slag per acre.

The area was planted in 1961 when one half of each plot was given an additional dose of 2 oz. slag per plant.

Leader growth was measured in August last and a comparison of the last two years leader growth is :—

Treatment	Leader Growth (inches)	
	1964	1965
Nil ... ..	0.3	0.3
Nil + 2 ozs. slag ... ..	6.3	9.1
2 tons ground limestone ... ..	3.0	2.9
2 tons ground limestone + 2 ozs. slag	7.6	7.0
10 cwts. slag ... ..	13.6	14.1
10 cwts. slag + 2 ozs. slag ... ..	7.0	10.8
2 tons ground limestone + 10 cwts. slag	9.0	11.3
2 tons ground limestone + 10 cwts. slag + 2 ozs. slag ... ..	8.8	10.1

The disappointing results where no slag was applied were noted. Mr. Maher referred to the Old Red Sandstone areas at Ballyhoura, Co. Cork, where, he said, that without phosphate no amount of manuring had any effect. Side effects of the heavy manurial dressing was the occurrence of lamas growth and also a tendency to broken and double leaders.

Dr. Jack pointed out that one object of manuring in advance of planting was to get rid of the heather. This had not been fully successful although the 10 cwt. slag dressing had altered the vegetation considerably. On the question of how long before planting you should manure he said that there was no answer as yet. In the present case manuring had taken place four years before planting but in Ballypatrick Forest they had cases of manuring two years and six years before planting and both were doing well. He added that it has now become standard practice in Northern Ireland to broadcast 4 cwt. ground rock phosphate per acre before ploughing and he reminded the party that the phosphate content of the rock phosphate was double that of slag. Mr. Kilpatrick suggested that, as the manuring did not fully control the heather, and until further information was available, it might be best to manure the year before planting and control the heather by chemical spray.

The second experiment, established in 1961, was designed to test the effects and interactions of N, P and K. The manures used were :—

Nitro-chalk at levels of	0	1 cwt.	2 cwt./acre
Superphosphate at levels of	0	3 "	6 " "
Muriate of potash	0	$\frac{3}{4}$ "	$1\frac{1}{2}$ " "

and there were 27 treatments.

Results to date indicated that without phosphate there was little or no growth. In the early stages potash was important but in the current leader growth this effect had disappeared. The effect

of nitrogen was negligible as it gave no real colour change or measurable growth. The discussion which followed centred mainly on the question of nitrogen and it was suggested that as the form of nitrogen used was very slow acting it might be desirable to try the highly soluble nitrate instead. It was also suggested that clover might be tried, but Mr. Parkin pointed out that to maintain clover you must add phosphate. It was noted that the superphosphate at 6 cwt. per acre gave the best leader growth in 1965 and that in the plot with this level of phosphate the height of the hundred largest trees was over five feet, which was considered a satisfactory rate of growth for this poor peat.

The third experiment was to compare the effects of slag, ground rock phosphate and Semsol all at the one level of 2 cwt. per acre, and had been established in 1959. Leader growth assessments for 1964 and 1965 were :—

Treatment	Leader Growth (inches)	
	1964	1965
Control	0.8	0.8
2 cwt. slag per acre	7.7	5.3
2 cwt. GMP per acre	9.7	8.1
2 cwt. Semsol per acre	9.4	7.9

Dr. Jack pointed out that there was a general falling off in growth in 1965 relative to 1964 although growth during both years was better than had been apparent in 1963 except for the plots which had received slag. Again there had been an apparently greater reduction in growth on slag plots than with the other phosphate manures. This falling off from 1964 to 1965 may, he said, have been due to some extent to a general climatic or other cause but this did not appear, from general observation elsewhere, to be particularly likely and he suggested a better explanation might be that the amount of phosphate has been insufficient to maintain growth and that the falling off was a nutrient deficiency. Reference to other experiments in Lough Navar forest where heavier doses of phosphate had been given showed that on the younger crop the 1965 growth has generally exceeded the 1964 growth.

The President thanked Dr. Jack and the local foresters for their contributions to the success of the excursion and expressed the Society's gratitude to the Minister for Agriculture for the facilities made available. On dispersing the cavalcade drove through majestic terrain which, in the evening light, made an excellent finale to the weekend.

M.S.