

Annual Study Tour

The Study Tour in 1970 was held in the Wexford region, and led by Mr. T. Enright, District Inspector, Enniscorthy. Thirty-four members stayed at the Castle Hotel, Ferrycarrig, Wexford, and nine other members also took part.

The first day, Tuesday, 19th May, started with a brief stop at Deerpark property of Buncloody forest, followed by a drive to the top of Mount Leinster (2610 ft.), site of the television transmitter, and a view of one of the most extensive prospects in Ireland, covering on a fine day six counties.

Lunch was taken *al fresco* at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Park, and was followed by a tour of the arboretum, the forest garden, the phenological garden and the buildings conducted by Messrs. A. M. S. Hanan and B. J. O'Reilly, Director and Forester in charge, respectively. One of the most striking plots in the forest garden was one of red alder (*Alnus rubra*) averaging about 10 ft. in height after 4 growing seasons. The visit ended with a walk through a small section of old woodland with blue-bells and other wildflowers in full bloom. Here were seen nesting boxes provided for tits. Other birds of interest which nest here or in the neighbourhood are kestrel, long-eared owl and hen-harrier.

In conclusion it was pointed out that the Park contributes much more to the local economy than a farm enterprise of similar area. Apart from direct employment there is a growing business in farm-house guest accommodation as a result of the increasing number of tourists visiting the Park.

Wednesday, 20th May, began with a visit to Forth forest (Mr. J. McKnight, Forester in Charge; Mr. J. P. Mulkern, Assistant) with just over 2,400 acres planted. Soils here are extremely infertile podsols and gleys derived from cambrian quartzite. Crops seen demonstrated the importance of cultivation and fertilization, and in particular of agricultural reclamation, resulting in good growth of Sitka spruce on former agricultural fields. A seed stand of contorta pine was visited and N. O'Carroll (Research Branch, Forest Service) explained the methods and results of an NPK factorial experiment on a range of contorta provenances.

In the afternoon the group went to Johnstown Castle, headquarters of the Soils Division of the Agricultural Institute (An Foras Taluntais), and visited the laboratories of the National Soil Survey and the soil testing laboratories. This was followed by a tour of the nature trail laid out in the grounds of Johnstown Castle by Dr. Austin O'Sullivan. The day ended with a visit to the grass growing and drying enterprise at the South Sloblands covering 2,500 acres of reclaimed alluvium.

The first stop on Thursday was in a 51 year old stand of *Abies grandis*, Yield Class 300, in Camolin forest (Forester in Charge: Mr. P. J. Kerrigan; Assistants Messrs. M. Donohoe and J. O'Driscoll). Also of interest in Camolin forest were the 51 acre nursery, opened in 1959, a 55 year old stand of Norway spruce and a 43 year old stand of *Cupressus macrocarpa*.

In the afternoon the group went to the Raven, an area of sand dunes formerly Curracloe forest, now a property of Bree forest (Forester in charge: Mr. S. Ua Cearnig; Assistant: Mr. J. F. Fee). The discussion was opened by the President, Mr. H. M. FitzPatrick, who recounted his memories of the beginnings of Curracloe forest in 1931. To start with, 20 lb. of maritime pine seed was sent by post,

addressed, according to custom to "Curracloe Forest". The postman arrived with it saying, not without an edge of sarcasm: "I am looking for Curracloe Forest", to which the forester, Mr. O'Brien, replied: "Sure you have it there on the front of your bicycle."

Mr. O. V. Mooney outlined the development of sand dune afforestation in the Landes region of France, on the Culbin sands in Scotland, and on the Raven itself. He concluded that the effort had been successful technically, but not economically when judged by normal forest standards.

Mrs. Ann Quinn of the Institute for Physical Planning and Research (*An Foras Forbartha*) spoke on sand dune ecology and pointed out examples of dune formation, mature dunes, and dune erosion.

Mr. Oscar J. Merne, of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy spoke about the North Slob, reclaimed from the sea in 1848, and particularly about its bird population. One half of the total world population of the White-fronted Goose now spends the winter on the Wexford Slobs. There are about 170 species of birds of which about 80 breed in the neighbourhood. Shooting is strictly controlled, less than 10% of the goose population being shot each year.

The Study Tour as a whole was a very good example of the way in which foresters are broadening their horizons so as to include the various aspects of land use other than commercial timber production.

N. O'CARROLL.

Meeting at Dundalk Forest

An outdoor meeting took place in Dundalk forest on Sunday, 25th April, 1970. The leader was Mr. M. O'Brien, then Assistant District Inspector, Cavan, who introduced the Forester in Charge, Mr. P. Giblin, and his Assistant, Mr. M. Ward. Crops seen and discussed included an intimate mixture of Norway and Sitka spruces planted in 1927, groups of Norway spruce, beech and Scots pine which had been planted in 1957 to replace Douglas fir attacked by honey fungus, pure Lawson's cypress planted in 1932 (yield class 160, 4,000 H. feet per acre) and pure *Cupressus macrocarpa* planted in 1948 (yield class 180) which appeared to be well able to withstand exposure. Some impressive views were also seen, bringing to mind the great amenity potential of the area.

J. A. MCGINLEY