



Notes and News

by Wood Kerne¹

Getting Rid of Stumps

In *Irish Forestry*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (1969), p. 79, we printed an abstract of a report from the University of Illinois, U.S.A., which recommended a particular chemical mixture, and how to use it to promote combustion in tree stumps. We are indebted to Mr. L. J. Gillick, of the Forest and Wildlife Service, Merrion Street, Dublin, for a report on a private trial of the process on the stump of an elm tree. The holes were bored with a 2 inch diameter hand auger. Because of the difficulty in penetrating the stump the holes were not bored to the full 6 inch depth nor kept to 4 inches apart, centre to centre. "Had I done so I would probably have got a better destruction of the butt, particularly on the outer edges. The butt smouldered for about four days and burned to a depth of about 12 inches from the original stump level. The burning actually took place at the end of June after a prolonged dry sunny spell of weather. I bored the first hole in the centre and worked

1. Standish H. O'Grady in the introduction to his *Silva Gadelica* (1892) quotes the chronicler Holinshed (1583) who, under the heading "The disposition and manners of the meere Irish, commonly called the wild Irish", writes:- "They observe diverse degrees, according to which each man is regarded . . . Of the third degree is the Kerne, who is an ordinary soldier using for his weapon sword and target. Kerne signifieth (as noble men of deepe iudgement informed me) 'a shower of Hell', because they are taken for no better than for rakehels, or the divell's blacke gard, by reasing of the stinking sturre (*mod. hassle*. — W.K.) they keepe wheresoever they be".

The text includes a tale entitled "O'Donnell's Kern". In the course of this, O'Donnell and his retinue, having eaten and drunk well, see coming towards them "a kern that wore narrow stripes: the puddle-water plashing in his brogues, his lugs through his old mantle protruding both, a moiety of his sword's length naked sticking out behind his stern, while in his right hand he bore three limber javelins of the holly-wood charred". After the customary greetings and small-talk O'Donnell invites the kern to sit down, eliciting the reply:- "I'll sit or I'll not sit; for nought do I but that which may be pleasing to myself".

outwards. It is possible that a better destruction of the shell would have been obtained had the first series of 2 inch diameter holes been bored close to the rim and continued inwards.

"It took about three hours to bore twelve holes. About 3 lbs. of the chemical mixture was required, which cost slightly over £6.00 (early 1976). The process is effective".

Wetlands Booklet

The Forest and Wildlife Service of the Department of Lands (Dublin) has published a booklet entitled "Wetlands Discovered" (price 35p) as part of its contribution to the European Wetlands Campaign, 1976. The objective of the Campaign is to focus attention on the importance of wetlands, both natural and man-made, and the need for their conservation and management in the interests of wildlife. Wetlands include all three classes of bog, blanket bog, raised bog and fen, and are therefore of great concern to Irish foresters who depend so much on bog to provide a substrate for their forests.

In introducing the booklet the Minister for Lands, Mr. Tom Fitzpatrick, T.D., took the opportunity to refer to the national network of wildfowl sanctuaries being set up by the Forest and Wildlife Service, which now amounts to 51.

More on the Killarney "Scotchmen"

Following our printing in Vol. 33, No. 1, of a passage wholly uncomplimentary to Scots pine, both in its appearance and utility, Mr. H. M. FitzPatrick draws attention to the fact that A. C. Forbes refers to the same trees in "Tree Planting in Ireland". (R.I.A., Vol. XLI, Sect. C, No. 6).

"Sir Richard Colt Hoare in a 'Journal of a Tour in Ireland' published in 1807, remarks on a general lack of trees. He regrets that a colony of Scotchmen were being planted at the base of Torc Mountain but was informed that they were intended only as nurses. It is interesting to note that those same Scotchmen were cut down in 1917 together with some fine larch beside them, and probably of the same age, for war purposes, and consisted of some of the finest timber ever produced in Ireland".

Mr. FitzPatrick adds that Forbes (later Director of Forestry) was "Timber Controller" in Ireland during the 1914-18 war.

Rules for Chain Saw Users

A new leaflet containing operator instructions for chain saw users has been produced by the British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association, Church Street, Richmansworth, Herts, England.

The illustrated leaflet deals with how to get the best from the saw — and how to avoid accidents before, during and after use. It is available from BAGMA at a cost of £3 per 100 copies.

Elegant Variation

A famous phrase in forestry circles in these islands was M. L. Anderson's comment on the selection of species for *Calluna* — or *Sphagnum* — moor sites: "The species which die most slowly are mountain and lodgepole pines, with Scots pine a poor third". (*The Natural Woodlands of Britain and Ireland*. Oxford, 1932). When he came to expand this into a book, however, he adopted a more "objective dead-pan" kind of style in which that striking phrase became watered down to: "If planted with the hardiest and least exacting species, such as Scots pine, shore pine and mountain pine, the trees linger on hopelessly until they die off in the order given". (*The Selection of Tree Species*. Oliver and Boyd, 1950). Some writers need to be protected against themselves.

Where Are They Now, The Polyhists of Yore?

"At a recent meeting of Cairde na Gaedhilge, held at the Club Rooms, 66 O'Connell Street, Mr. Thomas O'Carroll, B.Agr.Sc. (For.), District Forestry Inspector, Department of Lands, delighted a large audience with his very enlightening paper on the Munster Poet of Penal Times, Aodhgan O Rathaille. The lecturer gave a vivid picture of the conditions of the country at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and said that it was impossible to evaluate the poetry of O Rathaille without a knowledge of the history of the gloomy period in which he lived.

"Mr. O'Carroll compared Aodhgan O Rathaille's poetry with that of Dante, Milton and Shakespeare in its gloom, its rolling music and apt phrasing. He recited in a beautiful, soft, full and musical Munster dialect some of the more famous pieces and did credit to every line and syllable of O Rathaille's famous 'Visions' or 'Satires'.

Mr. Downey, Inspector of National Schools; Mrs. A. Riordan, B.A.; Messrs Sean Daly, B.A.; G. Duggan, Inspector of Taxes; Sean O Mathuna, Gaelic Organiser, and F. Glasgow, also spoke. (*The Limerick Leader*, 30th March 1945)

Envoi

"Writing is regarded as a pleasure. It is not. The intellectual activity that precedes writing may be. But the mechanical task of driving a typewriter is just as monotonous as minding looms or screwing bolts on a motor chassis, whatever that is".

(A. J. P. Taylor)