



Notes and News

by WOOD KERNE

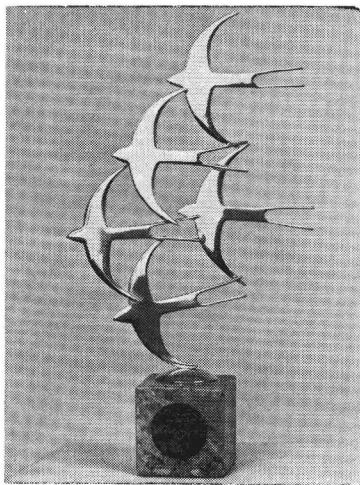
ABOUT US

I have been informed by the editor of this magazine, a person whose name escapes me, that there have been animadversions, both direct and via his pink questionnaire, (a wholly unnecessary, to my mind, exercise in quasi democracy) on both this column and the picture which heads it. The picture is from a portrait etching which pleases me a lot, and like all works of art it loses much in reproduction. As for the material in the column, it is intended to be literally what it is called: a series of items from various sources, stopping short of gossip, of varying degrees of seriousness, but which might be of interest to members and which they might not otherwise be aware of. And that's that.

AWARD TO FOREST AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The United Dominions Trust (a finance company) 1975 National Endeavour Award for tourism was given to the Forest and Wildlife Service, Dublin. The citation which accompanied the award was as follows:

"At a time when the preservation of our natural environment and a strong policy of conservation are essential to maintaining Ireland's 'clean' image in the industrial wasteland of Europe, the excellent work of this year's National winner should be fully recognised, not only for its own value but also for the example it displays to the Irish public at large.



'With foresight and imagination, commercial forestry and woodlands have been developed as a major recreational and tourist amenity. Its enlightened attitude to native exploration has proved an appreciable asset to both tourism and the quality of Irish life.

'The 1975 national winner is responsible for 800,000 acres of forest and parks, of which 300 acres are open to the public. These have been developed as tourist attractions, with car parks, picnic areas, resting places—all furnished in good taste, making the best use of timber and other local materials.

'For its very significant contribution to tourism with a service that attracted over 1,000,000 visitors during the year, the 1975 National Award is presented to The Forest and Wildlife Service, Department of Lands."

AN AVERSION TO "SCOTCHMEN"

"I was sorry to see a colony of *Scotchmen* transplanted to the borders of this lake. [Muckross, Killarney]. The *Fir* tree, from its uniform and never varied shape, but ill accords with scenery so wild and natural as that which environs these lakes on all sides; and of all the different species of that ribe, the *Scotch* fir is the worst in every point of view, both as to profit and beauty: being almost the only fir that does not in its growth assume a spiral form,. the quantity of timber it produces, is far less than in those sorts, viz the *Larch*, *Spruce*, *Silver*, &c., &c. which measure up to the very top; and the *Scotch* fir has this disadvantage in point of profit, that it takes nearly double the number of years to ripen, though, I will allow, when mature, it may surpass in value the other sorts. As to beauty, in my opinion, *it has none*. All the other tribes, though uniform in their spiral shape, have *rich tints* to recommend them, and, mixed with forest trees, do not hurt the eye of the colourist: but the *Scotchman* is discordant throughout, and its *blue* foliage always offends, and never pleases the eye of taste. I have never seen this tribe look even tolerably well, except when planted together in a large mass, unmixed with any other kind of trees; and then, in particular situations, they have an imposing, though always a *sombre* effect. I was happy however to learn from Mr. Herbert's gardener, that the firs were only intended as *nurses* to the forest trees; and that, having performed their parental office, they would bend to the axe. Every stranger who visits this charming lake, will join with me in the fervent hope that these good intentions may be fulfilled!"

From *Journal of a Tour in Ireland A.D. 1806* by Sir Richard Col Hoare. London and Dublin, 1807. (Supplied by Mr. L. P. O'Flanagan.)

A RARE MANURE

The following is from the British Forestry Commission's Research Report for 1973:

In March 1973, a man's skeleton was found in woodland near Woking, Surrey. There was evidence that he had lived rough in the wood for a short while before his death, and we were asked to help in determining how long ago he had died. From a scar on a pine, and from birch seemingly cut to provide a shelter, it appeared that he went there at some time between the summer of 1969 and spring 1970. Roots from the pine had been growing in the remains of the man's coat for the last two years, and the tree's radial increments for this time showed a remarkable increase, possibly in response to a gruesome fertiliser.

GOBBLEDY—WHAT?

"Complex systems that are the means or the objects of research invite the danger of descending into holistic categories of thought. Forest science, particularly in central Europe, presents many vivid and deterrent examples. The holistic model of the "organism of the forest", and its dialectic exploitation by holistic forest ecologists, has caused problems and unnecessary difficulties for many forest geneticists. Probably the periodic prevalence of reductionist ideas and methods in forest genetics is a result of this. This is particularly true in the field of forest tree breeding, which is the practice of biological engineering in forest biology. Today, following the spread of TANSLEY'S (1935) ideas on ecosystems, this danger is no longer with us to the same degree. With this development the task of systematic illumination of forest ecosystems has been recognized more clearly and experimental approaches using suitable techniques, methods, and models have been replacing the dialectic models."

From *Genetics of Forest Ecosystems* by Klaus Stern and Laurence Roche (Springer-Verlag, 1974).

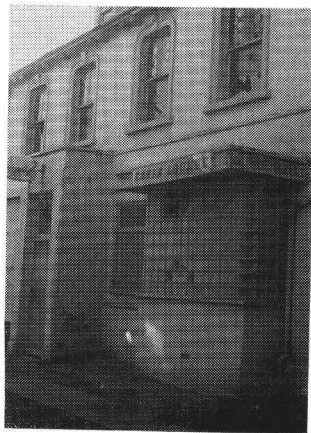
A suitable prize will be offered to any reader who can supply a plausible translation of this into any of the recognised IUFRO or FAO languages, preferably English.

THE "W.K." EFFECT

It was a happy day for science when a Deputy in *Dail Eireann* observed, referring to the continual interventions of another, that he was "up and down like a whore's knickers". This has provided scientists with a long-awaited illumination. Every scientist has encountered that set of data where up-and-down, unexplainable oscillations occur. These can now be ascribed, with incontrovertible argument and ineluctable logic, to "the whore's knickers effect".

TRANSFER TO BRAY

The Research Branch of The Forest and Wildlife Service, formerly dispersed among the garrets and basements of Merrion Street and Merrion Square, have recently transferred to a centralised headquarters at Sidmonton Place, Bray, Co. Wicklow. Bray appears to be a town of declining commercial activity, containing as it does a number of derelict business premises (see photograph). Let us hope that this new influx will go some way towards helping to restore it to its former prosperity.



TO OUR READERS

If you should find any mistakes in this journal please remember that they were put there for a purpose. We try to offer something for everyone; some people are always looking for mistakes.