

# Society Activities

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

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THERE were 37 completed questionnaire forms returned at the time of writing. Of those, 30 were from technical and 7 from associate members. Twenty-seven respondents signed their names. All the replies were helpful, and while some were critical they were constructively so; there were no purely negative or abusive replies.

### *Question 1*

This asked readers to assign each class of material in the journal a mark ranging from 1 (excellent) to 4 (poor). There was also a category for 'no opinion'. The only class for which a significant number (8) expressed 'no opinion' was that of obituaries, presumably a tendency to extend the '*De mortuis . . .*' principle to include all references to the deceased. The averages of the marks received by each class of material were as follows:

Articles	...	...	...	...	...	1.8
Abstracts	...	...	...	...	...	2.2
Cover photograph	...	...	...	...	...	1.9
Editorial	...	...	...	...	...	1.5
Reports of annual study tours	...	...	...	...	...	2.6
Reports of day meetings	...	...	...	...	...	2.2
Reports of lectures	...	...	...	...	...	2.3
Reports of meetings, symposia etc.	...	...	...	...	...	2.9
Notes and news	...	...	...	...	...	2.4
Obituaries	...	...	...	...	...	2.0
Reviews	...	...	...	...	...	2.2
Trees, woods and literature	...	...	...	...	...	2.1

### *Question 2*

Readers were asked to list the most interesting/useful and least interesting/useful articles printed in the last seven volumes. The nominations varied very widely, but the top six in the list of most interesting and most useful were:

Joint first: Coniferous growth and rooting patterns on machine sod-peat bog (cutover) at Trench 14, Clonsast, by M. L. Carey and T. A. Barry. (Vol. 32, No. 1, p. 18).

The influence of tree spacing on Sitka spruce growth, by W. H. Jack (Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 13).

Joint third: Hybridisation among deer and its implications for conservation, by Rory Harrington. (Vol. 30, No. 2, p. 64).

Origins and distribution of peat types in the bogs of Ireland, by T. A. Barry. (Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 40).

Joint fifth: Some forestry problems in the European Community, by X. Le Chatelier. (Vol. 29, No. 2, p. 4).

Spruce growth rates on drumlin soils, by L. P. O'Flanagan and M. Bulfin. (Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 4).

Nominations for least interesting/useful were much more scattered and it is gratifying to note that no single article was outstanding in this respect.

*Question 3* asked for views on the kinds of articles which members would like to see more of and less of. Generally the demand is for more articles on general silviculture and forest management, and fewer highly technical articles which are of interest to a limited readership only. I would agree fully with those demands. The main difficulty with the first kind is finding the people both able and willing to write them (A few specific suggestions by respondents will be followed up). In the case of the second kind we must take the view that, in the absence of more appropriate vehicles of publication in Ireland, the journal is carrying out the objects of the Society in printing them.

*Question 4* asked what should be the aims of the journal, and for opinions as to how well if at all it was succeeding. The table shows the number of opinions recorded for each option:

Summary of replies to question 4

Possible aim	Should it be?		How successful?		
	Yes	No	Very	Moderately	Not at all
Inform members	36	0	11	16	1
Educate members	30	1	11	14	1
Print research results	25	0	13	9	3
Entertain/amuse	12	14	2	8	3

It would appear from the last line that we Irish Foresters tend to be a somewhat puritan lot, or else we like to keep our work and play very sharply separated.

One respondent who thought that the journal was quite unsuccessful in all the aims added that this was because 'they' didn't read it. If that were so of course the journal would have to accept its share of the blame.

There were a number of other functions suggested, the most popular being a correspondence section (please do write to us!) and more attention to private forestry.

*Question 5* asking for general comments cannot easily be summarised. The replies in general tended to reflect the opinions expressed in the replies to the other questions, and the overall tone could be said to be one of qualified satisfaction. The comments here and under 'general remarks' will give plenty of food for reflection by the present and future editors.

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#### MEETING IN FERMANAGH

Over 70 members were present at the Northern Region meeting in Co. Fermanagh on 30 April 1975. It was organised primarily to see a demonstration of aerial fertilizing by helicopter at Lough Navar Forest, laid on by Central Helicopter Services Ltd. who were carrying out a contract for the Northern Ireland Forest Service. Unfortunately the day was too windy for normal flying to be carried out safely but a special short demonstration was provided. Stops were also made for explaining detailed planning, organisation and quality control procedures which are necessary for a successful operation.

Some time was spent in the morning visiting Belmore Forest and surrounding areas, where fertilizer prescriptions for Sitka spruce planted on gleyed soils of different fertility levels were explained. (Details appear in an article by Savill and Dickson in *Irish Forestry* Vol. 32 No. 1 (1975).)

The party was also able to see some of the recreational facilities provided in the forests of this very attractive part of Fermanagh, the most impressive of which is the viewpoint at Lough Navar Forest overlooking lower Lough Erne.

Many staff of the Northern Ireland Forest Service contributed towards making this a very enjoyable and worthwhile day. The Society's thanks are extended to them all, but in particular to Mr. W. J. Wright in whose District the tour took place.

P.S.S.

#### MEETING IN OFFALY

About 90 members turned up at Edenderry Forest on Monday 22nd September 1975, at Derrycricket property, for a field day organised and presented by the Soils and Nutrition Section of the Forest and Wildlife Service's Research Branch.

The morning was spent looking at a series of experiments on a fen peat site

which was highly deficient in potassium. Potassium deficiency symptoms and the response to potassium fertilisation were demonstrated, and an experiment which showed that, at least in the early years, spot application of potassium fertiliser gave better results than broadcast application, but it was suggested that this would change when the tree roots developed over the whole ground area. In an experiment on combined effects of potassium and phosphorus there was a slight, though statically significant, and as yet unexplained, reduction in growth due to the application of rock phosphate. Another experiment demonstrated that potassium could be supplied with equal efficiency either as the chloride (muriate) or as the sulphate, although the former is considerably cheaper.

After lunch the group moved to a machine cutaway area in Clonsast Bog (Trench 14) where forest experiments have been going on since 1955. A species trial indicated yield classes well into the twenties for both Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine at nine years, although the spruce was not as happy where the peat was deeper. A twenty-one year old plot of *Pinus radiata* on deep peat showed the great potential of that species, as indicated by its prodigious height growth, but not yet attainable because of poor survival at establishment and subsequent deaths from unknown causes. A thinned plot of Japanese larch was seen, the first forest produce to be harvested from machine cutaway bog in Ireland and the final stop was at the stand of grand fir whose high yield class, and extraordinary ability to root deep into a calcareous subsoil has already been described in this journal. (Vol. 32, No. 1, 1975, p. 18.)

N.O.C.

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photographed at a Society study tour.