

## Forestry News

### AN IRISH MARKET?

George Roche runs a shellfish and smoked fish factory in Dunmore East.

Oak sawdust is the only sawdust Mr. Roche will use to smoke fish. Oak gives the desired taste to the meat and will not put a colour on the fish. No other broadleaved species will give the taste that oak can achieve. Conifer sawdust is not suitable for smoking fish — it turns the meat a reddish hue and gives it a sharp taste.

Not only salmon but also mackerel, cod, haddock and herring are smoked at this factory. It takes eight hours to smoke a salmon properly and about half that time to smoke the other species. The factory smokes about 2000 lbs. of fish at a time. To generate smoke, sawdust is fed by an automatic feeder onto a metal plate — 3-4 dessert spoons of sawdust at a time. The smoke produced is led through a series of chimneys into the smoking chamber where the fish are laid out on racks.

All of this brings us back to supply of sawdust. Until recently the factory has been getting its sawdust from a sawmill in Carlow. This sawmill is now experiencing a shortage of suitable oak for its mill. The consequence of this is that Mr. Roche's fish processing has of late to import dried sawdust in 45 kilo bags from Germany!

(Information kindly supplied by George Roche, Dunmore East Ltd.).

### LIFTING AND PLANTING:

(Extract from 'Safe Dates for Handling and Planting Sitka spruce and Douglas fir by P. M. Tabbush).

Planting dates should be chosen to ensure that roots will grow rapidly after planting and before the buds burst in spring. This ensures that the new roots make good contact with soil and are able to supply the needs of the developing shoots.

Douglas fir in particular benefits from warm soils, and cultivation will generally improve its establishment.

For Sitka spruce during 1985/86 at the Northern Research Station Nursery, root growth potential (RGP) for direct lifted plants was high between December and April, but then declined rapidly almost to zero by Mid-May. (RGP is the availability of a plant to make new root growth under nearly ideal conditions). Douglas fir RGP is often lower than that of SS and this may go some way to explain the sensitivity of DF to poor plant handling practices.

### *Autumn Planting:*

Provided shoots have become lignified (hardened) plants may be lifted for autumn planting from early October until the end of November. From then on cold soils will limit establishment success. Sitka spruce is generally less suitable for autumn planting than DF because it tends to be planted on colder sites. The aim is to plant when RGP and soil temperatures are both high. Plants destined for autumn planting should be identified by early August so that nurserymen can condition them to prevent soft extension growth in late season.

(Information kindly supplied by Forestry Commission, Forest Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, Surrey. Research Information Note — safe dates for handling and planting Sitka spruce and Douglas fir — P. M. Tabbush).

### WORLD'S OLDEST WOODEN TEMPLE:

Japan's Horyuji Temple was built in the Seventh Century. It was made of Hinoki Cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) that was 1,000 years old at time of felling. Carpenters of the Asura era (593-710 AD) skilfully joined beams manufactured from right-twisting trees with those from left-twisting trees to prevent warping.

### THE COMING OF TREES:

During the recent construction of a section of the gas pipeline at Newlands Cross, near Dublin, a discovery was made of a number of buried soil horizons. Richard Preece, of Cambridge University, Peter Coxon, of Trinity College, Dublin, and Eric Robinson, of University College, London, analysed pollen grains and animal remains from the exposed layers.

It was established that the Newlands Cross soil was laid down over the span of time between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago. During this 3,000 years the countryside changed from one of open grassland of arctic alpine plants to herbaceous vegetation which in turn gave way to the development of woodland of hazel and elm and oak. It is thought that this reflects the spread of plant species across the Irish sea as the climate improved.

From the same horizons it was established that approximately 7,600 years ago patches of forest were cleared, very likely by burning. The researchers suggest that evidence for this is two-fold — an increase in carbon particles and a temporary decline in the numbers of land snail, *Discus rotundatus*, a species sensitive to forest clearance.

A discovery of a flint flake at a lower level indicates that people were already in Ireland at that time.

(Extracted with kind permission from — New Scientist April 1987)

## TWO VIEWS:

Following poem, from 'Kilcooley: Land and People in Tipperary', by W. Neely, was received from Owen Mooney.

Kilcooley, once the Kilcooley Demesne, owned by the Ponsonbys, is now part of Urlingford Forest. Tom B. Ponsonby (T.B.P.), was the author of the poem and was a keen farmer and forester: he was appointed to the British Forestry Commission after the 1914-18 war. A.C.F as mentioned in the poem was A. C. Forbes, the first director of Forestry in Ireland.

## A FORESTRY PROBLEM

Says T.B.P to A.C.F.—

*"To natures teaching you are deaf.  
You wish to make the forest pines stand stiff in military lines  
and even trees that love to be in each other's company  
you segregate in horrid masses, pretending they are different classes,  
whose dignity would be impaired if they a common table shared.  
This snobbish outlook should not be imposed upon the noble tree"*.

Says C.C.F. to T.B.P.—

*"I do not like modernity which even dares to criticise  
that which the Germans authorise.  
I claim that nature's simple methods should most certainly  
be bettered.  
What is the use of telling me that nature understands the tree.  
This theory long ago was shook By Herr Forestmeisters weighty book".  
"From leading shoot to forest floor the woodland must obey the law  
Let us preserve in sylvan glade the social order man has made.  
The youngest in the nursery must certainly secluded be.*

*Those older must not be allowed their elder brethern to crowd,  
for they, in quiet dignity, like gentlemen in clubs should be.  
Yea further, if I had the art, the sexes would be kept apart.  
What forester who thinks aright can possibly enjoy the sight  
of full grown trees allowed to breed and scatter round them fertile seed  
that might produce a little tree of quite incestuous pedigree.  
No, spare our British forestry from utter immorality"*.

*From such attack, from one so high, poor T.B.P. can but reply.  
He thinks the noble forest trees should be like other families.  
Let Pa and Ma together stand with little trees at either hand  
the older ones protect the young from winter blast and summer sun,  
and those whose type are what we need should certainly be left to breed.  
Despite what German teachers say, his preference is for nature's way.  
Sadly he yields to doctrine brief, that Reason must not shake Belief.  
No voice can charm the adder deaf, nor T.B.P. charm A.C.F.*

### B and B!

It is the nature of forestry that those that work in the profession must, from time to time, take overnight accommodation away from home. On occasion such accommodation can prove less than standards expected. The following extract from Arthur Young's Tour of Ireland, 1775-1779, falls somewhat short of a wholehearted endorsement of one such shelter.

"Slept at Ballyroan, (Queen's County) at an inn kept by three animals, who call themselves women; met with more impertinence than at any other in Ireland. It is an execrable hole".