

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor welcomes letters from readers for these columns but they should be brief. Photographs, to accompany letters, are invited which illustrate points of interest, or deal with curiosities of nature and of matters concerned with the countryside.

## SMALLHOLDINGS WANTED

SIR,—I have been brought up on a farm of 70 acres; and I view with alarm the practice, in recent years, of larger farmers securing any extra available land. This nearly always consists of small farms: so that it is common to see the buildings and sheds of these holdings lying idle, while there are hundreds of our best young farmers and skilled farm workers just longing for the day when they can secure a place of their own. The smallholding experiment at the Royal Agricultural College shows the practical side of such farming.

Who will give a lead in this matter? Let any man who has an additional farm or smallholding advertise it "to let," and he will be besieged by suitable would-be tenants. Three hundred applied for one council holding.

An ideal memorial in every district would be land on which smallholdings from a quarter to five acres could be planned, with small modern bungalows, so that the partly disabled would have an interest in life, and a means whereby they can augment their pensions. The Land Settlement Scheme, following the first world war, failed because ex-Service men were not given enough training and lacked practical experience. When the depression came they had not a chance.

Under the present training scheme, the great majority of trainees have one aim in view, to farm for themselves. What hope is there, unless landowners and councils provide the holdings?

In Shropshire the majority of the farm-workers have been brought up on holdings from three to ten acres and they make the best type of worker. Many have become tenants of smallholdings. "Three acres and a cow" would spell salvation now, not only for the problem of labour on the land but in the production of food.

R. WINNINGTON  
Ivy House, Barford, near Warwick.

## BURDENS OF MOTORISTS

SIR,—Your correspondent, F. Ellson-Jones, should not overlook the fact that motorists have always been the favourite milch-cows of successive governments. On no other class of the community would Mr. Dalton suggest such a system of taxation as he now intends to inflict upon us.

It boils down to this: That the richer you are, the less you pay, and the poorer you are, the more it costs you. A wealthy man may now buy a car of up to 150 h.p. and costing up to £5,000 and will have only £10 a year Road Tax to pay upon it. Many thousands, like myself, will be constrained to go on using their present cars (if they do not give them up) and be compelled to continue paying their present tax.

My car cost me £230 eight years ago, and I have already paid some £130 on it for Road Tax. And I must continue to pay £16 10s. a year on it in the future, unless

I get rid of it. This is an injustice which cries out for some sort of readjustment.

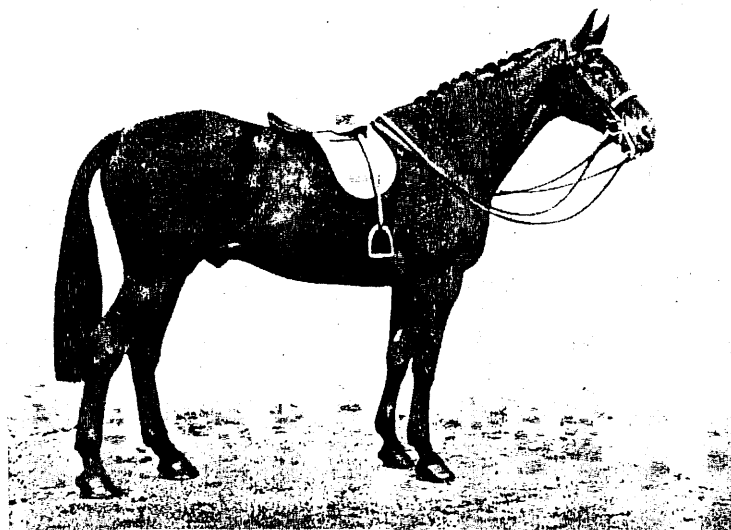
Consider also this further point: My neighbour can afford to buy a new car (any horse power) and must pay only £10 a year tax on it. I cannot afford to buy a new car, so I must now pay a penalty of £16 10s. a year because I am poorer than my neighbour; for that is what it comes to.

We may well ask what is being done with the many millions of pounds being paid in Road Fund Taxation; for we can plainly see how little of it is being spent on the roads today, and this sets up another injustice, in that, whatever "social amenities" this revenue is spent upon, the buyer of a new car will be paying much less towards them than the owners of the older cars, and if there is still a deficit, after they have done so, the general community will have to provide what the buyer of a large

## AN OUTSTANDING HUNTER

SIR,—I am enclosing a photograph of my heavyweight hunter, Darrington, which I think you may like to publish, as he is one of the outstanding show horses of today. He is twelve years old, and is by the thoroughbred horse, Tiro, out of a Cleveland Bay mare.

Darrington commenced his show career by winning the novice hunter class at Olympia in 1939. Last season, he won five firsts and championships, and the heavyweight class at the National Show at the White City. This year he was champion at the Bath and West Show in May. In June he won the heavyweight class at Richmond, and last month he was first and champion at the Royal, Lincoln. He secured similar honours at the Sussex County Show at Chichester and at the South-Eastern Agricultural Show at Tunbridge



MR. DALRYMPLE'S CHAMPION HEAVYWEIGHT HUNTER, DARRINGTON

(See letter "An Outstanding Hunter")

and costly new car has been largely excused.

I wonder if all readers know that it is part of our National Constitution that money raised in taxation for any specific purpose must be expended on that purpose and no other? And how many remember being told not so long ago that when the Road Tax was bringing in nine millions a year, no further increase would be asked from the motorists? Yet we are now paying over one hundred millions a year, and, if there is any class which is deserving of consideration it is the motorists.

K. TREVELLYCK HARDMAN  
110, Singleton Avenue, Birkenhead.

Wells. He was not shown at the International Horse Show, due to its proximity to the Royal, at which he beat the previously unbeaten last year's Dublin champion, Landslide.

J. L. DALRYMPLE  
The White House, Balcombe, Sussex.

## RHINO—BLACK OR WHITE?

SIR,—I would like to assure Dr. Benzon that we are making enquiries into the distribution of the black rhino on the west bank of the Nile, and we have already had news of a twig-eating rhino west of Wau.

I think it would be dangerous to start

making sub-species, as individual animals vary so tremendously. We have two zebras in the Khartoum Zoo both caught by me from the same herd, one of which is maned and the other is maneless. Both have entirely different stripes but surely they are the same species.

It would be very nice to see Dr. Benzon back here again. Surely the rhino investigation would provide him with sufficient excuse for a return journey. To whet his appetite further may I suggest he comes to look for the Forest situtunga, which inhabits the Gallery Forests in the south-west corner of the Sudan. So far only a skin has been obtained. In the same area there is also a giant forest hog, a specimen of which has not yet been secured.

A. FORBES  
(Lt.-Col.) (Game Warden)  
Sudan Government.

## VARIETIES OF COMMON SNIPE

SIR,—I have recently been able to examine specimens of two varieties of the common snipe. The first is the melanistic variety, formerly thought to be a distinct species, and then known as Sabine's Snipe (*Scolopax Sabini*). This is a very beautiful deep chestnut brown bird finely netted with black—the top of the head and primaries being very dark brown, almost black. The label on the case reads as follows: "Sabine's Snipe. Shot by Mr. H. Bennett in the Park Meadow, Stapleford, December 20th, 1873" (the Stapleford referred to is in Wiltshire).

The second specimen is the far rarer white variety. It was shot some 25 years ago on the island of Tiree, when Major C. R. E. Radclyffe had the shooting there, and has remained in his possession to the present time. This bird has all the under parts and primaries pure white. The top of the head and the upper parts are white faintly streaked with light chestnut. The tail is light chestnut.

The snipe seems to be met with as a black variety more frequently than any other bird; also, I believe, it is the only British bird which appears more often as a black than a white variety, and in which the colouring of the black form is constant. Can this be accounted for? No wonder our ancestors thought it a distinct species, but who discovered this mistake?

W. R. THOMPSON  
(Lt.-Col.)

Parkstone, Dorset.

## IN THE KEYHOLE

SIR,—In "Letters in Brief" of your issue of July 26th, a reader describes finding caterpillars in a keyhole. I can quote my experiences in India in similar cases. The operation has been described in some detail in a popular Anglo-Indian book of some fifty years ago, called *Tribes on My Frontier*.

An insect, which appeared to me to be of the Ichneumon fly family, would select a keyhole, or even a key, as the location for operations. Inside this it constructed a narrow cylinder of sand about one inch long, held together by some glutinous material. One egg was laid at the bottom of this cylinder. A series of small spiders or caterpillars were then collected, doped with some poison, and crammed into the cylinder. When full, the cylinder head was closed. On the egg being hatched, the larva had thus a supply of fresh meat to live on.

I once watched the whole operation, in which the cylinder was constructed on a spoke of my bicycle wheel, the cylinder being only connected to the spoke by its base.

W. A. PAYN  
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Central Hotel, Andover.

## YORKSHIRE NATIONAL PARKS

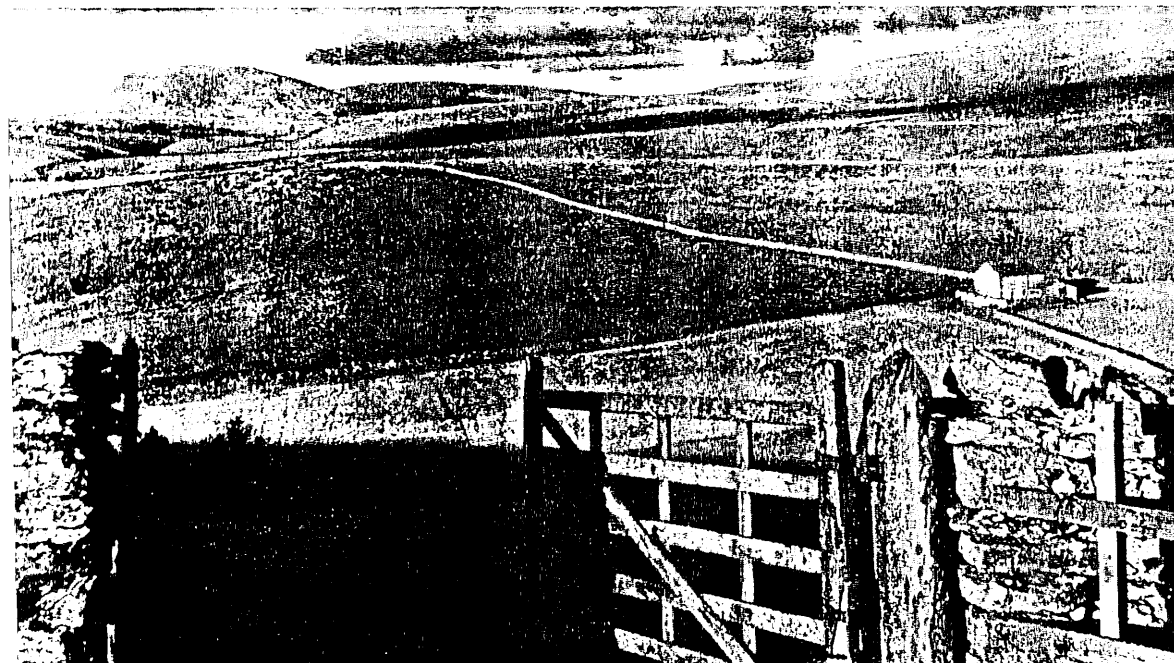
SIR,—The Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire Moors are two extensive areas recently recommended to be established as national parks in the second and third years respectively of a programme put forward by the National Parks Committee of England and Wales.

I enclose herewith a picture of Pen-y-Ghent, one of the famous "Three Peaks," which would be included in the proposed Yorkshire Dales Park in an area of over 600 square miles covering many of the finest tracts of Swaledale, Wensleydale, Wharfedale, Upper Ribblesdale and Malhamdale.

DALESMAN

## ONE OF THE FAMOUS "THREE PEAKS"

(See letter "Yorkshire National Parks")



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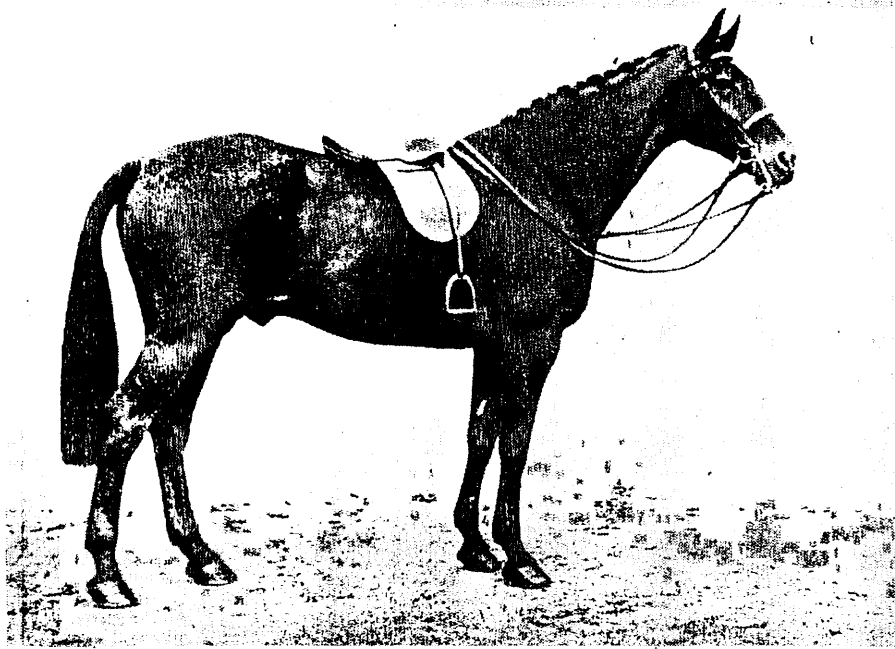
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