

NOTES AND NEWS

By the kindness of Admiral and Mrs. Purefoy, the Summer Meeting this year was held at Shalstone Manor, a fine old house standing in beautiful surroundings between Buckingham and Brackley.

As a contrast to last year, the weather was all that could be desired, and early in the afternoon members and their friends had assembled to the number of 107.

Mr. Maby opened the proceedings with a remarkably lucid address on the somewhat intricate investigations which he and Mr. Franklin have carried out, as members of the Investigation Committee of the B.S.D., during the last few years.

The lecture was followed by a practical demonstration of water finding by Captain Trinder on the large stretch of lawn outside the house, where he located a stream at a depth of about 65 feet.

We were most hospitably entertained to tea inside the house, after which members took the opportunity of demonstrating their own methods and discussing their experiences.

A very pleasant afternoon passed all too quickly.

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In a letter to one of our members, Brigadier-General R. B. D. Blakeney, C.M.G., D.S.O., writes :—" When we were building the railway across the desert from Wadi Halfa to Abu Hamed in 1897 I happened to be temporarily in charge at Railhead. We were half-way across the 230 miles of desert and had instructions to test for water at the commencement of the valley which runs to the wadi from the summit. One afternoon I went to select a suitable site for boring on the projected line of the railway as shown by the survey pegs. Accompanying me was an Arab camelman of the Ababdeh tribe. Having explained to him what I intended to do, he said he would test the place, and he drew a circle with his finger in the sand, walked round it muttering some incantation or other, and made various queer marks on the sand at the four cardinal points. Then he walked round again, with his eyes shut, muttering again. Suddenly he looked up and said, ' Yes, you will find water here.' Boring was accordingly started, and a long time passed while a deep shaft was sunk. Finally, at a depth of 130 feet, water was found, and this was the site of the future No. 6 Station. It may be said to have saved the situation, as it was vitally important to get some reserve of water in the desert and relieve the trains of the dreadful dead weight of sixteen trucks of water behind the engine. Subsequently wells were sunk at various other places but without success.

" Perhaps you will remember that in 1916 there was a wickedly expensive and useless railway built out from near Minieh towards

the Baharia Oasis, from which the Senussi were raiding and threatening Middle Egypt. The only railway available consisted of 2ft. 6in. gauge lines, pulled up from the Delta Railways. The water problem soon became acute, and I remember going out on reconnaissance towards the enemies' zone with armoured cars. We got as far as the most terrible howling wilderness I have ever seen. It looked quite impossible that water could exist in such a place even if rain had ever fallen there. Nevertheless, on our way back, we saw, dumped in the desert, some water boring machinery, brought up by camel. The explanation was this. There was a lance-corporal in the New Zealanders who was a dowser, and the engineer officer in charge of the forward section of the force had sufficient belief in this corporal's faculty not only to bring him specially up to the forward station of the block post chain but also, when he asserted that water could be found in this singularly unpromising place, to bring up the necessary machinery to where, after sinking to a considerable depth, his prediction was verified and tens of thousands of pounds were saved to the British public."

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Mr. F. E. Bramley (B.S.D.) writes :—" I did a rather unusual bit of dowsing for Captain M., who lives near here. He was having a lot of trouble with moles damaging his lawn. He had been trying without success to trap them and was thinking of getting a professional mole catcher to come. I had heard that to be successful the trap should be set in the main run, so I suggested that he should let me try to find the main run for him. I thought that if I used a handful of soil thrown up by the mole it would give me a radiation from where the mole had travelled underground. It acted very well as a sample, so I got them to peg out the direction as my rod dipped each time. The run proved to lead from an adjoining field belonging to a farmer, and I found where the end was in Captain M.'s lawn. On this main run I set the trap and caught the moles. No more damage occurred until recently. Then mole heaps appeared in another part of the lawn ; this was about two-and-a-half months after the first lot of moles had been trapped out. I skinned and cured the hide of the first mole I caught in order to use it for a sample for future occasions. Using this, I found the main run much quicker, and again cleaned out the trouble-maker.

" Just about two months ago the Captain had some newly planted shrubs dying, as the ground was so waterlogged. He thought it was because a spring had broken out there. I could find no spring near the surface to cause the water to lie there, so I said the reason might be through a land-drain being blocked. I used a piece of land drain for a sample and traced out a land drain running under the shrubs. Digging on the line I pegged out, we found a line of the old-fashioned horseshoe land drains,

which had sunk down and become plugged up with clay and so caused the water to lie there. He replaced them with circular land drains and the flooding disappeared. I was successful twice last summer in locating lines of lost drains for farmers who had waterlogged lands."

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A life member, H.M.K., resident in Victoria, Australia, has sent us a cutting from the *Australasian* of March 25th, describing how the dowsing reactions can be produced by means of a scale-buoy :—"The scalebuoy is the trade-marked name given to a scientific instrument which has been devised and perfected by Mr. Abbott after many years of research. It consists of a quartz globe hermetically sealed, containing mercury and combinations of inert gases at less than atmospheric pressure. When agitated strongly the friction of the mercury on the quartz surface generates electrostatic charges of enormous voltage, but no amperage, which in turn produce radiation of energy. The energy possesses the property of changing certain of the physical characteristics of water, and of scale-forming salts present in the water. When agitated and held in proximity of a spouting jet of water the jet immediately collapses in the form of large globules of water. Similarly, when held near globules of water upon a glazed surface, such as glass or a glazed tile, the globules break down and the water evenly wets the surface. Scalebuoys have a practical application in the prevention of scale formation and certain forms of corrosion caused by oxidation. Scale formation as upon boiler tubes or radiator cores takes place because of the magnetic attraction between the scale-forming salts in the water and the metal of the container. By changing the magnetic attraction and thus altering the relation of positives and negatives the scale-buoy causes the disintegration of existing scale and corrosion, and prevents further formation. A physical change is brought about so that the positive and negative relations between matter are temporarily changed. Thus, if there is an intense attraction between two particles of scale-forming salt for each other or between a scale-forming particle and its container, and this attraction or balance is upset or broken, then the scale-forming propensities no longer exist. There are many practical applications of the scalebuoy in preventing scale formation in boilers or the accumulation of scale or deposit of mineral salts in water pipes."

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The same member writes :—"I have had until recently a neighbour who at one time made his living by working at dowsing on the principle of 'No Water—No Pay,' and this man tells me that he always collected his cheque. This man could also distinguish between gold, silver and copper when such metals were concealed in envelopes or handkerchiefs, using the rod. He