

## Mr. A. C. Forbes, O.B.E.

By the death of Mr. A. C. Forbes, forestry circles in Great Britain and in Ireland have lost a good friend and one who was keenly interested in the forest and the work of the forest.

Mr. Forbes attended the University of Edinburgh as an arts student in the year 1890-91; he then left the University and went to Germany, to take forestry courses there. On his return to Britain the possibilities open to him were mainly in estate forestry, and for a time he was forester on the Marquis of Bath's Longleat estate. He became lecturer in forestry in 1904 at the Armstrong College of Science at Newcastle upon Tyne. It was during this period that his first book, "English Estate Forestry", was published (September 1904), and a second edition in 1906. He became director of forestry in Ireland in 1907. During the First World War he was Government controller of timber in Great Britain and was made O.B.E. for his services.

On its inauguration in 1920, Forbes was appointed to the Forestry Commission. It was during this period that he published his later book, "The Development of British Forestry". Perhaps the greatest work carried out by Forbes was that which

he did for many private-estate woods in the British Isles. Certainly it was in that work that his heart was wrapped up, for it was work of which he had great knowledge. In his first book (1904) Forbes put on record what may be termed English practice of forestry on the big and small privately owned estates in the country; and this he was enabled to do adequately since he had been a forester in charge of considerable areas. He himself says that the book was intended to be suggestive rather than instructive to the practical forester; but there is a good deal more in its pages than what the practical forester at the beginning of this century was acquainted with. He showed clearly, perhaps for the first time, that both sport and landscape effect could be obtained in conjunction with a sustained annual yield of timber from the woods.

His claim that English estate forestry was sufficiently distinct from Continental or even Scottish forestry to be entitled to regard it as a separate subject has scarcely been maintained. Modifications of the management there may have to be; but these cannot be regarded as entitling the matter to be a separate subject. This being said, there is no doubt that the work of Mr. Forbes had considerable influence in shaping British forestry. E. P. STEBBING

## NEWS and VIEWS

## Museum of the History of Science, Oxford:

Dr. C. Josten

DR. CONRAD JOSTEN has been appointed curator of the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford, in succession to Dr. F. Sherwood Taylor, who has become director of the Science Museum. Dr. Josten studied at the Universities of Geneva, Freiburg i.B. and Bonn, and was awarded the degree of LL.D. (*Doctor iuris utriusque*) at the University of Erlangen. From the year 1935 he took up the study of ancient scientific instruments, of which he made a considerable collection, and also interested himself in the history of alchemy and early astronomy. During the War his opposition to the Nazi regime necessitated his disappearance; but in 1948 he was able to go to Oxford and to study the Ashmolean MSS. in the Bodleian Library. Dr. Josten first published an unknown alchemical text of Robert Fludd; a critical edition and translation of the early alchemical "Letter of John Dastin to Pope John XXII"; a study of the alchemist, William Backhouse of Swallowfield, the instructor of Elias Ashmole; and during the past two years he has been working on a biography of that remarkable personage. Dr. Josten has succeeded in solving the cipher in which many of Ashmole's notes are written and will be able to show in a new light the founder of the Ashmolean Museum, whose former home is now possessed by the Museum of the History of Science.

## Aeronautical Engineering at Cairo:

Prof. E. W. C. Wilkins

E. W. C. WILKINS, who has just been appointed to the chair of aeronautical engineering at Fouad I University, Cairo, joined the staff of the Oxford University Engineering Science Department at the end of 1947. Since then he has taken part in the lecturing and tutoring work of the Department and, in addition, has assisted the professor of engineering science with the financial and administrative work of the Department. Immediately prior to going to

Oxford, Prof. Wilkins had spent fourteen years with the Bristol Aeroplane Co., which he joined in 1934 as a technical assistant, becoming, finally, chief airworthiness engineer, his last responsibility in this capacity being the airworthiness of the Brabazon air-liner. Before going to the Bristol Aeroplane Co. he was a lecturer in engineering at London, and before that research engineer with the Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron and Coal Co. while holding an 1851 Exhibition awarded to him in 1928. He has been a member of various aeronautical committees for a number of years, and was latterly chairman of the Royal Aeronautical Society's Detail Design Committee.

## Heinrich Christian Schumacher, 1780-1850

ON December 28 the centenary occurs of the death of Heinrich Christian Schumacher, who in 1821 founded the *Astronomische Nachrichten*, which, wrote Grant in 1852, "has perhaps contributed more towards the improvement of astronomical science, in all its branches, than any similar publication has ever done". Born on September 3, 1780, at Bramstedt in Holstein, Schumacher distinguished himself in mathematics and astronomy and after studying at the University of Göttingen took the degree of doctor of law. At the age of thirty he was made a professor extraordinary in the University of Copenhagen, where after a year or two at Mannheim Observatory, he was elected to the chair of astronomy. In 1821, the year he founded the famous periodical, he was appointed director of the newly erected observatory at Altona, where he remained until his death. Among his other activities were the trigonometrical survey of parts of Denmark, the measurement of an arc of the meridian and the determination of the longitude of Altona Observatory. He was also for some time the collaborator with Bessel in the editing of the "Astronomisches Jahrbuch". Both his son Richard Schumacher and his nephew Christian Andreas Schumacher were associated with his work for Denmark.