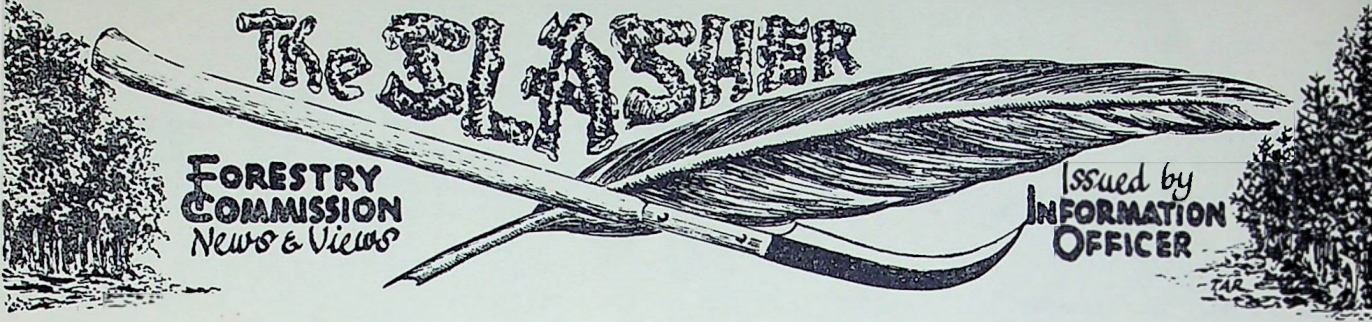




The SLASHER

**FORESTRY
COMMISSION**
News & Views

Issued by
**INFORMATION
OFFICER**

No. 236

August, 1967

WANTED: A MAST FOR THE "NONSUCH"

THE historically famous Hudson Bay Company are having built at Appledore, in Devon, a replica of their 17th century sailing ship the "Nonsuch", using as far as practicable the same species of timber as were used in the original. They are having difficulty in obtaining a Scots pine (first choice) or Norway spruce (second choice) lower main mast, the finished dimensions of which must be:

45 feet long and straight; 12 inches diameter at "the heel";
14 inches diameter at "the partners"; 15 inches diameter, fore and
aft x $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches athwartships at "the hounds" (fairly high up the mast) -
the fatter part of the mast was uppermost in the original ship!

Do you know of a tree in Commission woods, or on a private estate, of Scots pine or Norway spruce, not too heavily branched, that would make such a mast? If you do, please inform Mr. Brian Holtam, Marketing Division, Savile Row, giving details of species, dimensions, location and ownership and also stating whether there are two or three other such trees, in case defects were found on felling.

Apparently Scandinavia, which supplied so many spars for British ships in the 17th century, has no suitable tree! Can we not show that our home grown trees can provide what is required? Douglas fir, and Sitka spruce, which would be technically suitable would not be accepted because they were not available to the shipwrights who built the original "Nonsuch".

** AU REVOIR TO WALTER SMITH

ONE of the most widely known and respected forestry personalities in the North of England, Mr. WALTER SMITH, has retired. Assistant Conservator in the North East Conservancy, his departure follows his 60th birthday and an unfortunate spell of sick leave.

Recently Walter and Mrs. Smith each planted an oak tree at Hamsterley Forest, where he had been Forester 30 years ago. The ceremony, which marked his retirement, took place in the presence of a large number of Commission colleagues and representatives of private forestry. The latter included Mr. THORNTON TREVELYAN, Chairman of the Regional Advisory Committee, and Mrs. TREVELYAN; Lt.Colonel GEORGE STOBART, Divisional Hon.Secretary of the Royal Forestry Society, and other woodland owners and foresters. Commission representatives included the EARL of CARLISLE, one of our Commissioners; the Conservator, Mr. G. E. GODWIN; Mr. GEORGE MACKENZIE, our Conservator East Scotland, an old friend and colleague. The trees planted, Mr. Trevelyan spoke on behalf of the Royal Forestry Society and woodland owners in Northumberland and Durham, and paid tribute to Walter Smith's quite exceptional work and standing in the "private forestry world". He had decided, he said, to commemorate our former colleague in his own way by naming one of his woodland compartments "Compartment Walter Smith". He then presented Walter Smith with a cheque subscribed by members of the Northumberland and Durham Division of the Society. There followed a short tour of Hamsterley Forest.

In the evening, Walter Smith and his wife were the guests of their Conservancy colleagues at dinner in Hexham, attended by some 60 people. He was presented with a cheque from numerous well wishers and the Conservator and others paid tribute to his many years of first class and devoted service to the Commission and to the cause of forestry generally.

A correspondent writes: "Forestry in Northumberland and Durham could have suffered no greater loss than the retirement from active service of Walter Smith, who was held in high esteem by all. Any woodland owner with whom one came in contact would invariably ask 'How is Walter Smith these days? You know, that chap has done more for the Forestry Commission than any other single man in this part of the country.' It is typical of his standing that he was always referred to as Walter, not as Mr. Smith. He earned for himself and thereby for the Commission a quite exceptional degree of affection and trust among private owners".

Walter Smith will continue to live in retirement at his old home at 27 Elvaston Road, Hexham and, it is understood, will always be pleased to see friends and colleagues. We send him our best wishes.

** FIRST PRIZE FOR CARNIVAL FLOAT

TO the townsfolk of Basingstoke the first few days in July mean Carnival Week, which is full of fun and games, from the fair to ladies' football, from dog show and the athletics to bands and the military tattoo. Yet these aside, the highlight is the procession.

This year the Carnival opened with the aim of welcoming London newcomers who have moved to Basingstoke in the expansion scheme. It was only fitting, therefore that the Commission should play an active part and a small committee of the Sylvatica Club conjured with ideas for a float.

The theme chosen was that of proper recreational use of the countryside, with emphasis on fire prevention and the use of official camping sites. This was depicted by a group of city dwellers, appropriately clad in pin-stripes, bowlers and 'brollies', moving towards the country, and a site where a group of youngsters, brightly dressed in leisure clothes, had made camp. The two groups were aptly connected by a figure dressed half in city clothes and half in camping gear who was endeavouring to negotiate a wooden stile. Throughout this scene was placed ample forest produce, forestry tools and fire-fighting equipment. The opportunity was also taken to distribute fire prevention and other Forestry Commission leaflets to some of the crowd of 50,000 people who were lining the processional route.

Came the day, and the reason for such local pride in the Carnival was apparent. Two miles of road were filled solely with exhibits - indeed, when the procession moved off, the head reached the destination before the tail had started out. It came as a great thrill to all concerned when, shortly before "move-off" time, the red card with the words "First Prize" was awarded to the Sylvatica float for the best exhibit in its class, that for trade displays.

The great efforts of the committee, ERIC CUERDEN, BRIAN DONOVAN, TREVOR HALL, DICK SOARS and YVONNE HUDSWELL, and the enthusiastic assistance of Forester BUDGEON of Micheldever, who provided the basic material for dressing the float, and of driver EDDIE HILL, were aptly rewarded.

** NOT FOR DAMSELS

OUR research colleagues announce that Alice Holt have now obtained equipment which amplifies distress calls and which can be made available on request. But hold it, girls! This is not for damsels in distress but is intended to help the Forester who may be plagued by another species of bird, namely the starling.

Alice Holt point out that "prevention of damage by stopping starling flocks from roosting at dusk is effective but difficult". The Mammals Section have acquired equipment which amplifies distress calls of these birds and this has given promising results when used in conjunction with Brooks bird-scaring cartridges. If anyone has need of this equipment the Mammals Section should be contacted to arrange a visit.

** ANOTHER FOREST WALK

ONE of our best known forests, which probably boasts the shortest name in the British gazetteer - Ae, in the South Scotland Conservancy - is among the latest to contribute a new forest walk to the already substantial recreational facilities provided by the Commission. This was opened recently by MAJOR D.C. BOWSER, C.B.E., J.P., of Argaty before a distinguished gathering of foresters, factors and landowners. Major Bowser, a former Forestry Commissioner and erstwhile Chairman of the Commission's Scottish Committee, is a past President of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, members of which were visiting Forest of Ae as part of their annual excursion.

Major Bowser pointed out that where conditions permitted the Commission welcomed the public in their woods and one way of encouraging this was by the laying out of nature trails and forest walks. After cutting a tape Major Bowser joined the first party of foresters to use the walk, which is about $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles long and abounds in scenic beauty and wild life.

Away to the north west, at Inverinan Forest, West Scotland Conservancy, yet another nature trail has been opened. Writing of this, David Stephen, the well known Scottish and eminently knowledgeable journalist who specialises in natural history, says the Commission's policy in the past decade or more has been forward-looking and constructive in wild life management and conservation. Official policy anywhere depends for its success on those who have to interpret it. "It doesn't require a lot of effort nowadays", he goes on, "to think up the names of many Commission officers, at one level or another, who can do this liberally and with great enthusiasm."

A small museum is associated with the nature trail at which, at the time of David Stephen's visit at least, there were on display, live, a pair of foxes, a stoat, weasel, adder, slow-worm, badger, woodmice, field voles, and bank moles and a hedgehog. The foxes, says David Stephen, are conditioned to people, the weasel is a show-off, the stoat is a bit of a recluse and the mice and voles are virtually hand-tame. The badger was taken from a snare somewhere outside the forest and is being nursed back to health.

* NEW TIMBER FARM BUILDING

SOME readers who visited the Royal Show at Stoneleigh, near Warwick, may have looked in at the Farm Buildings Centre and seen the new timber, all-purpose building, to the cost of which the Commission made a contribution.

The Commission, in fact, donated all the structural timber and this was complemented by the gift of board and plywood from development organisations; cash was forthcoming from a number of other bodies interested in the promotion of timber as a raw material for such buildings. The structural timber came from a 51-years old Quality Class 1 stand of Douglas fir in the Dean. The selected stems were thinnings which had an average breast height quarter girth of 9 inches, and when trimmed down to a 5-inch diameter top averaged 23 hoppus feet per tree. Conversion into sawlogs was undertaken by a local Dean sawmiller and, in all, 370 cubic feet of sawn wood went to Princes Risborough for kiln drying before being planed and built up into prefabricated structures by an Ipswich firm. Incidentally, the roof and wall panels are made of hardboard, so that once again the versatility of this commodity is in evidence.

Close to this timber building are similar farm structures in concrete and steel, offering the farming community good opportunity for comparison of the various virtues that are claimed for each particular erection.

** GYPSY MOTH IV

MILLIONS of words have been written about Sir Francis Chichester and his round-the-world voyage in Gypsy Moth IV. Maybe we skipped through most of the reports and therefore our own lack of perception is to blame; the fact remains that the only reference we came across to the constructional use of wood in the boat was in Timber Trades Journal, which recorded: Gypsy Moth IV was built by Camper and Nicholsons, Ltd., of Northam, Southampton, with John Illingworth and Associates as designers. Cold moulded wood construction was employed to combine maximum strength with minimum weight. The hull was built of six layers of thin wood veneers all glued together with the planks of each layer running in a different direction.

We still don't know what species of woods were involved.

** STRAIGHT FLEW THE ARROWS

MOTOR car and motorcycle rallying, hiking, climbing, camping, fishing, pony trekking, sailing, picnicking, the study of flora and fauna; all these pursuits are followed in our forests. But to our knowledge not until recently had our woods or anywhere in Britain been the venue for a European archery championship.

The actual site for this recent event was the Cullaloe section of Blairadam Forest, in East Scotland. Mr. W.F. FRENCH, District Officer,

reports that he was approached for facilities by the President of the Scottish Field Archery Association, with the result that the competition area ultimately provided resembled a golf course, set on which were 56 targets with ranges of from 15 to 80 yards, set in rides and older portions of the forest. There were 150 competitors, mainly from this country, U.S.A. and Germany. Smoking and bringing of bottles into the woods were forbidden on penalty of disqualification from the competition. Litter collection and patrolling of the area were looked after by volunteers from the local archery club and Rover Scouts, who also pruned branches and cut scrub in the "flight paths". It is gratifying to learn that much care was taken by the organisers to ensure that there was no misuse of the site in any way.

The championship was won by Mr. Dick Hoosen, of U.S.A.

It is understood that a number of field archery clubs in Scotland may be seeking courses in our woods: certainly this sport seems to be gaining in popularity, this being evidenced the other day at the annual Game Fair organised in Wiltshire by the Country Landowners' Association.

** A VISIT TO DARTINGTON

THE South West England Conservancy staff made the long journey to Dartington Hall for their annual educational forest visit. They were welcomed by Mr. L. K. Elmhurst who, with his wife, founded this outstanding centre of country education, industry and the arts. To-day, Dartington Woodlands is concentrating on education of young school leavers in forest practice. We had lunch in the mess hut beside an attractive stone-built open fire, converted by the eighteen school leavers from the old kindling shed (reports Assistant Conservator Mr. MORLEY PENISTAN). Mr. R.M. Harley, the Woodlands Manager, and Mr. Bunce, the Head Forester and now Chief Instructor, showed us the wonderful series of timber stands in North Wood planted in the last 40 years - most of the western American conifers, of which the redwood, Sequoia sempervirens, is outstanding. Besides fine trees, the excavated Roman camp overlooking the Dart ford at Staverton was of great interest.

At Dartington Hall we were shown the lovely gardens by a pretty garden apprentice and, after tea in the local Education Centre, in stocking feet (our muddy shoes left at the door) we were shown over the wonderfully restored mediaeval buildings - vast kitchens, comfortable, pannelled solar, where the ladies once retired and the lofty great hall with its banners and tall windows. All these buildings are used each day by musicians, teachers, craftsmen, artists and estate workers and the whole of this large manor house is not only beautiful but very alive. For me the visit was a pilgrimage to a former happy work place and I acted, with the present woodlands staff, as guide throughout the visit.

Other former Dartington "woodlanders" now with the Commission are Assistant Conservators J.T.L. FITZHERBERT and J.B. STOCKS and District Forest Officer J.L.F. FERGUSON, all of whom began their forestry career there with the late world-famous forester, Mr. W.E. Hiley.

** ODD SPOTS

MR. H.O. ARMSTRONG, Head Forester at Bareagle Nursery, South Scotland, has sent along an odd little exhibit. This was turned up during a lifting operation in the nursery and is a Norway spruce seedling, one year old and about three inches tall, which has seeded in the bowl of a smoker's pipe and sent its roots through and out of the narrow stem.

Peterborough, in the Daily Telegraph, recently recorded the following, under the heading "Worse Than Their Bark?": "A house agent's circular describes a garden as attractively laid out 'with carnivorous trees and hedges offering ample seclusion'. Our pines, larches, spruces and firs, etc., may soon be biting each other.

At the Royal Show the following caption was seen in a school exhibit and is reproduced (pardon the pun) without comment: "Red Campion. Male plants continue to flower long after female plants have gone to seed and well into the autumn, which seems rather pointless."

It is recorded that a fox disturbed by trappers at Speymouth bolted and, as it disappeared, dropped a black bundle. This was found to be a seemingly over-fat crow but neatly stowed away under the folded wings were found three tiny pheasant chicks, two baby grouse and a field mouse, all dead. Obviously the fox was carrying his own packed lunch.