

DENDROLOGIST'S 3,000 SAMPLES

ARE YOU ANOTHER JOE STEARNS?

WE ARE ALL collectors, in one way or another - numismatists, lithologists, herpetologists, speleologists or just plain ordinary people who love to harbour things in the garden shed because, one day, "they may come in handy". But who among us may claim to be a dendrologist? We may be accused of misusing the word, for it really means a student of trees, but the person we have in mind is the man (or woman) who systematically collects samples of timber.

The question springs from our having read an article in an American magazine of the fervour of one Joe Stearns, of Berwick, Maryland, whose wood samples "rank among the top five of the world's comparatively few private wood collections." What Joe can do in the way of collecting, we thought, someone in this country should be able to emulate, in quality if not in quantity. But please read on.

Joe Stearns has collected more than 3,000 different specimens of timber (some, of course, from the same family of trees) and holds 100,000 extra 6 inches by 3 inches by half an inch blocks to exchange with other collectors. (It has been estimated, we gather, that there are more than 25,000 different timber species in the world.) Joe says there is romance and adventure in every block of wood that has come his way. His Pink Ivory, it is claimed, is the sacred wood of the Zulus; the history of his Thuya goes back to the building of Solomon's Temple and beyond. He has samples of timber from Russian Olive; from the toothache tree, the thorns of which, it is said, are chewed by humans who have neglected their molars and seek relief from pain; from Purple Heart from South America; and red Padouk from Nigeria. He has pieces of vivid green Paw Paw wood and Desert Ironwood, and so on, seemingly almost ad infinitum.

There is in being, it seems, a Wood Collectors Society with nearly 200 members. Another point of interest is that the world's largest collection of wood specimens is said to be held by Yale University, which has some 14,000 samples. So Joe and Yale appear to hold two of the "top five" collections who holds the others? Perhaps some dendrologist among our readers can tell us and at the same time give us some information about his or her own collection.

THE SPARROW LIVES FOR 40 YEARS?

INEQUALITIES IN AGES

NOT FAR from Friston Forest, which the Commission has formed on the downs near Eastbourne, in Sussex, are Wannock Gardens, which are much visited by holiday-makers who in seeking the home-made scene encounter some remarkable horticultural achievements and comment on country life. Dallying there the other day (while on official leave, of course) we came across the following data on "strange inequalities in animal ages." Some of the claims may be challenged by readers.

The whale, it is said, lives for 500 years, sparrow for 40 years, cat for 20-30 years, and blackbird for 18 years. The carp lives for 200 years, the squirrel six years (far too long, if grey!), bear 50 years, swan 150 years, canary 22 years, toad 40 years and goose 80 years. And so the list goes on - moth $3\frac{1}{2}$ days, turtle 350 years, mayfly four hours, dragon fly seven weeks, house fly four months, snail $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, pigeon 20 years, mouse six years, hog 20 years, raven 100 years, rabbit 10 years, parrot 100 years, lion 35 years, golden eagle 100 years, and elephant 150 years.

A little controversial, perhaps!

A GOLFING FEAT

FOR THE FIRST TIME, the Forestry Commission has won the Patton-Macdougall cup, a golfing trophy much coveted by Civil Servants in Scotland. It was first presented for competition in 1900. Those responsible for securing the cup were District Officer IAN S. WATT and Executive Officer J. HOGARTH, both of Director, Scotland's Acquisitions staff. Playing as partners they started from a field of 88 contestants and beat the Ministry of Works pair in the finals, which were held on the Prestonfield Course at Edinburgh.

This was indeed an achievement and it is hoped that Messrs. Watt and Hogarth will bring in many more such "acquisitions" in the future!

~~THE~~ DIRECTOR'S STAFF IN THE CHILTERN

MORE than 30 members of the staff of Director, England, took part in a recent educational visit to the Chilterns. The itinerary was arranged by District Officer

R. H. KENDALL, who awaited the party, and before visiting the Commission's woodlands at Watlington, the visitors went to the Forest Products Research Laboratory at Princes Risborough, where a tour was conducted by Mr. F. G. O. PEARSON. Great interest was shown in the individual laboratories and saw mill, the wood seasoning shed and the vaporised kilns and sections in which tests of timber take place.

A picnic lunch was partaken at an inn at Watlington which is opposite the site on which the Commission proposes to build some 20 houses (it is assumed, of course, that the proximity of the inn and building site is purely fortuitous!). The party was joined by the Director for England, Mr. O. J. SANGAR, State Forest Officer D. GRANT and Forester R. SCHOFIELD and then followed an enjoyable tour of Queen's Wood, where efforts are being made to restock, where possible, with natural regeneration of beech and oak.

Industrial Visit in North Scotland

On the recent autumn holiday a party from the North Scotland Conservancy Office at Inverness made an instructive tour of the workshops of a local firm, Resistance Welders, Ltd. It was the welding technique evolved by this firm which made possible the construction of Pluto (Pipe Line Under the Ocean) which, immediately after D-Day, was to supply our forces in France with petrol. The visitors were shown a drawing of a welding machine and then saw operations in the various sections of the works, through to the main assembly shop. It was noted that the machines produced by the firm are used to weld a very wide range of articles, such as railway buffers, window frames, bicycles and car wheels.

~~THE~~ THOSE FOREST ANAGRAMS

HERE are the answers to the forest anagrams published last month. We hope readers who attempted to "unravel" them were a hundred per cent successful.

1. TAIR ONEN, S(W);
2. CLYDESDALE, S(S);
3. THETFORD CHASE, E(E);
4. RINGWOOD, NEW;
5. HALDON, DARTMOOR SW(E);
6. TENTSUIR, E(S);
7. TARENIG, N(W) plus DEAN;
8. STRATHDEARN, N(S);
9. WALTERSLADE, SE(E);
10. AMPELFORTH, NE(E);
11. GARELOCHHEAD, W(S);
12. THORNTWHAITE, NW(E).

Following is another collection of anagrams, this time from a Headquarters reader for whom, clearly, crossword puzzles present few problems. There is one for each Conservancy and New Forest. Answers will be given next month.

1. A TABLE DIET;
2. CRASH IN LOCH ARD;
3. GLEN COCOA;
4. I CALL THEO;
5. LEARN LOTS;
6. REVIVE LINER;
7. LOT WANTING;
8. MOTHER'S TORN;
9. NO ALCHEMIST;
10. OO! SHREW'D;
11. RED GRAIN;
12. THESE FALL.

~~THE~~ THE PRAYER OF THE TREE

SOME TIME AGO we asked if any reader could throw light on the authorship of the poem "The Prayer of the Tree".

AND A LITTER WARNING

Mr. J. J. LAWRIE, writing from the Forest Office, Hargoisa, Somaliland, says: "It may be of interest

that this poem appears in the preface of a little booklet - West African Forestry, by R. L. Brooks - published in 1949. Brooks says 'The inscription is shown in woods, parks and gardens in Portugal to remind people of the value of trees'. This may provide a clue or a false trail." Unfortunately there is no clue, for we have heard from elsewhere of the association with Portugal.

Forester D. V. MARSHALL, of Willingham, East England, recalls seeing the poem during the war but is certain no author's name appeared with it. At the Bath and West show this year the Queen Mother saw the verse and commented that she first came across it as a child. It seems, therefore, that we must accept the fact that today the poem is credited to no-one in particular.

Forester Marshall sends us another poem issued, it is thought, by the Holiday Fellowship. It is worth quoting:

Friend, when you stray or sit and take your ease
On moor or fell or under spreading trees,
Pray leave no traces of your wayside meal,
No paper bag, no scattered orange peel;
Nor daily journal littered on the grass,
Others may view these with distaste and pass.
Let no one say and say it to your shame,
That all was beauty here, until you came!

~~THE~~ THE DEAN SCHOOL AND
DEHRA DUN

OUR NOTE in August, which reported the Director General as referring to The Dean School as probably the oldest forestry school in the Commonwealth has brought the following note from District Officer T. V. DENT, of the East England Conservancy. "Dehra Dun Forest School in India," he says, "has been overlooked. That establishment, the Indian Forestry Rangers College, is comparable in scope and size to our own Dean School. With the exception of a two-years break in the 1930's the Dehra Dun College has, for 75 years, sent out to all parts of India a steady stream of excellent men, well trained for their careers as foresters and having a deep sense of tradition."

~~THE~~ A FORTHCOMING DINNER

ONCE MORE we are glad to assist the Edinburgh University Forestry Society, by drawing attention to the fact that the annual dinner is to be held on 25th November at the George Hotel, Edinburgh, at 6.30 p.m. The Presidential Address will be given by the Earl of Cawdor. All ex-members of the Society are cordially invited to attend; the hon. secretary is Mr. W. S. B. HUTCHINGS whose address, of course, is 10, George Square, Edinburgh.

~~THE~~ THE TREE WITH ANTLERS

WHEN LOOKING the other day at some photographs of unusual malformations in trees in Britain, we were reminded of freaks in various other parts of the world. For example, an oak in the Austrian Tyrol grew with antlers protruding like branches from its trunk. Many years before an avalanche had killed a stag and carried the body to a spot where the head covered an acorn. This sprouted and with the passing of years encased the skull of the stag. When the tree reached maturity only the antlers could be seen, projecting from the stem.

Then there is the case of the tree in the Botanical Gardens in Cape Town that "swallowed" a water pump, while the baobab of Central Africa is said to consume dead people. In actual fact it is an undeserved reputation, based on the habit of natives of using the hollow trunk as a very convenient mausoleum.

At home we have the shrew ash, deriving the name from the old-time custom of impaling live shrews on the branches. This was done in the belief that contact with a shrew would involve great pain and the possible loss of a limb, yet an antidote could be made from a piece of ash in which a shrew had been imprisoned. In this case any malformation would be small but the cause is of interest.

We have no personal knowledge of the following, though the tree concerned may be known to some of our readers. We are informed that an ancient plane that exists in Westgate Gardens, Canterbury, has within it an iron seat. Apparently the entire seat was "consumed" in about 60 years.

Perhaps you know of a curious instance of malformation or "conduct" by a tree. If so, we shall be glad to hear about it.

~~ANOTHER~~ ANOTHER STRANGELY-NAMED
INN

"YE OLD TRIP TO JERUSALEM" is another strange inn name noticed by a reader. The hostelry concerned is at Nottingham and is said to be the oldest in England, having existed since 1189. It is built against the famous Castle Rock and most of its rooms are actually hewn out of the rock, a soft sandstone. Here the Crusaders are said to have halted before setting out to fight the Saracens - hence the name, it being understood that "tryppe" is an old word for "halt".

To the list of unusual memorials, which have been described from time to time, we must add the stone in Morangie Forest, North Scotland. This was "erected to the memory of Geordie, killed by a road hog at Perth in 1926". A record of service with a Highland regiment in the first world war is given and reveals that Geordie was a horse.

~~£7 8s.~~ £7 8s. WORTH OF TAILS

IT IS REPORTED that a member of the public (an engineer by trade) recently presented no fewer than 148 grey squirrel tails to the appropriate quarter and received £7 8s. under the shilling bonus scheme. The tails represented a two month's "bag". Is it known whether this is a record?

~~THE~~ RHYME ABOUT FIREWOOD

acknowledgements to "Punch".

WITH WINTER just around the corner, here is yet another amusing rhyme about firewood. It is printed with

Logs to burn, logs to burn
Logs to save the coal a turn.
Here's a word to make you wise
When you hear the woodman's cries.
Never heed his usual tale
That he has good logs for sale,
But read these lines and really learn
The proper kind of logs to burn.

Oak logs will warm you well
If they're old and dry.
Larch logs of pinewood smell,
But the sparks will fly.
Beech logs for Christmas time;
Yew logs heat well;
"Scots" logs it is a crime
For anyone to sell.
Birch logs will burn too fast,
Chestnut scarce at all;
Hawthorn logs are good to last
If cut in the Fall.

Holly logs will burn like wax;
You should burn them green.
Elm logs like smouldering flax
No flame to be seen.
Pear logs and Apple logs,
They will scent your room.
Cherry logs across the dogs
Smell like flowers in bloom.
But Ash logs, all smooth and gray,
Burn them green or old;
Buy up all that come your way;
They're worth their weight in gold.

~~THE~~ TESTING THE BRAKES

OR AN EFFECTIVE FULL STOP!

test the caravan brakes," says one of them, leaping into the now vacated driving seat of the van. The vehicles move forward, the van is then reversed; there is an anguished cry from the second, watching policeman and - crash! The caravan has been backed by its policeman driver into his own stationary motorcycle.

The test, presumably, was regarded as satisfactory, for no more was said about the caravan brakes.

~~THE~~ PERSONAL, ETC.

Mr. S. M. PETRIE, formerly District Officer in the Cowal area, West Scotland Conservancy, has been presented by wellwishers with a brief case and wallet, to mark the occasion of his transfer on promotion to York as State Forest Officer in the North East England Conservancy. The gifts were handed to Mr. Petrie by the Conservator, West Scotland (Mr. J. E. JAMES) during a social evening in a Loch Eck hotel, enjoyed by supervisory staff from Cowal forests.

We omitted to mention, last month, the presentation of a cheque, subscribed to by staff in The Dean, to Mr. J. Q. WILLIAMSON, formerly Deputy Surveyor, to mark his departure to South Wales as Conservator.

At Headquarters, Miss SYBIL PRICE was presented with a travelling bag; she has left to join the Air Ministry in Cheshire as a Clerical Assistant.

Notice soon posted in the Woking Office, headquarters of the South East England Conservancy: "But in these cases we still have judgement here, that we but teach bloody instructions, which, being taught return to plague the inventor. This even handed justice commends the ingredients of our poisoned Chalice to our own lips." Macbeth I - VII.

~~THE~~ TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters:

Divisional Officer P. F. GARTHWITE from York to Woking. District Officers W. D. HILDANE from York to Thetford Chase, E(E); T. V. DENT from Lincoln, E(E), to York; J. N. KENNEDY from Woodbridge, E(E), to Ipswich, E(E). Foresters J. M. JUDGE from Redesdale, NE(E), to Lyndhurst, New; D. M. WILKINSON from Loch Eck, W(S), to Loch Ard, W(S); E. J. D. WILKINSON from Headquarters (Agricultural Show Unit) to Research, Alice Holt Lodge. Foremen H. F. STICKLAND from Research, Wareham, to Sherwood, NW(E); A. J. CUNNINGHAM from Loch Ard to Loch Eck; R. M. BROWN from Sherwood to Research, Alice Holt Lodge; J. B. WHITE from Thetford Chase to Hovingham, E(E). Clerk of Works C. T. MEEKING from Dymock and Wyre, SW(E), to Talybont, S(W).