



No. 2

Tree Scribe

THE HOUSE JOURNAL OF TILHILL

DECEMBER 1977

NEW UNITY FOR TILHILL

PLOUGHING FOR LARGE SCALE AFFORESTATION

Ploughing for large scale afforestation—see our centre pages—at Howpasley, Borthwick Water, 13 miles south west of Hawick, where area rainfall is 50-60 inches per year.



1650 acres on this estate have been afforested over the past six years.

Two ploughs—a single furrow tine and double furrow mouldboard—were reaching well into the compacted layer of boulder clay below a thin layer of peat.

The crawlers are fitted with extra wide, extra long tracks for low ground pressure and were ploughing at six feet spacings.

The double furrow was working the easier slopes while the more agile single—seen here—took on the rougher stuff. After ploughing is completed the tractors work in tandem to haul a deep cutting 'humpy' plough across the furrows, providing an overall drainage system.

GRANTS: FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

The Forestry Committee of Great Britain has had discussions with the Forestry Commission following the announcement of the new levels of Forestry Commission grants, and has agreed further improvements.

Dedication Basis III Management Grant

It was originally proposed that the management grant of £3 per hectare per annum for conifers under 25 years old and hardwoods under 50 years would be payable quinquennially in arrears.

It has now been agreed that this grant will be paid annually.

Dedication Basis III Management Grant

This revised grant was set at a mean rate of £2.11 per hectare per annum 'to be apportioned'. The apportionment has been agreed as:

	Old rate	New rate
First 40 hectares	£2.63 per hectare	£3.44 per hectare
Next 40 hectares	£1.77 per hectare	£2.32 per hectare
Remainder	£1.09 per hectare	£1.43 per hectare

Both of the above grants together with the revised planting grants were effective from October 1 1977.

TILHILL has streamlined its structure bringing all the group companies into one operational company. The single company is the former group holding company, Tilhill Forestry Advisory Ltd, but the new trading style for the whole enterprise is now simply TILHILL.

Managing director David Brierton, announcing the change, says that the group as it formerly was functioned in very many respects as a single company, with a unified purpose and much cross-fertilisation between management and contracting, marketing, plant supplies, landscaping, head office administration and accounting.

The re-structure to a single trading company recognises and underpins this cohesion and identity of purpose and gives a new sense of direction to TILHILL for the challenges and expansion that lie ahead.

Previously the operational arms of the organisation traded as individual subsidiary limited companies — Tilhill Forestry Ltd (directed by Mr R T Gray), Tilhill Forestry (Scotland)

Ltd (directed by Mr A F Macpherson, both in woodland management, contracting and landscaping; Tilhill Forestry (Marketing) Ltd (directed by Mr N H Gore) in harvesting and marketing roundwood, and Tilhill Forestry (Nurseries) Ltd (directed by Mr J B White) in planting stock production.

The former operational subsidiary companies will continue to have their own shape and fields of responsibilities in the form of operating divisions under the charge of these same divisional directors and separate divisional accountability will be maintained.

The four operational divisions are designated Southern, Scottish, Nurseries, and Harvesting and Marketing.

CTT AMELIORATION

The forestry industry's plea for more appropriate CTT arrangements for growing timber has met with a further response from Government.

In his autumn mini-budget the Chancellor announced an improvement in the Capital Transfer Tax treatment of timber at death.

If the deferral option is exercised CTT will still be assessed on the proceeds of realisation, but the latter will be abated by 50 per cent in respect of business assets relief up to a ceiling of £500,000.

Thereafter the rate of relief falls to 30 per cent.



At Tilhill southern annual dinner dance held at Frensham Ponds near the group's Farnham, Surrey headquarters chairman Archie Aitkins in exuberant mood leads the toasting.

Also in the group are wife and co-director Margot (left), Southern division director Bob Gray (end of table, left) and (right) director and accountant Edwin Rowell.

NEW AREA MANAGER



Farnham based Ian Stephen has been promoted to area manager, central and south-east region of the Southern division. He continues as Central branch manager but will in addition have responsibility for the south-east branch. (More staff movements on page 8).

'SOFT' LANDSCAPING —

Landscaping is the art which brings a building, or group of buildings, to visual completion. Its value, as a foil to the hard symmetry of contemporary architecture, cannot be overstated.

The natural and contrasting forms provided by trees and shrubs have become an integral part of modern design in major building projects: in the majority of cases planning permission is not granted before a landscape scheme has been prepared in detail and approved by the local planning authority.

LANDSCAPING—GOOD GROWTH

Landscaping has been a Tilhill activity ever since Bob Galloway was able to persuade the Walton and Weybridge Urban District Council of 1964 to let Tilhill design and carry out the landscaping of their newly constructed town centre. The project, worth £12,000, was Tilhill's first landscaping venture.

Even though forestry has been the foundation on which the fortunes of Tilhill have been built, from this early start landscaping has developed on a countrywide basis and the '70s are witnessing its growth as a major constituent of the company's business and a valuable contributor to profit.

Landscaping has a particular value to the operating branches. The provision of the skills and labour in planting of ornamental trees and shrubs, turfing, seeding and summer maintenance helps branches to even out their work load over the year and to bridge gaps between one seasonal activity and another.

Contracts carried out now span the length and breadth of the country and embrace a wide range of sites, including housing developments and factories as well as such diverse locations as whisky distilleries, oil rig bases, schools and technical colleges, police headquarters and motor car proving grounds.

Tilhill helps to make not only a more productive and beautiful countryside in forestry but also a more attractive environment on developed sites.



'Early in the season containerised plants and trees had to be found at very short notice to provide a suitably attractive setting for this magnificent country house . . .'

The evergreens in the foreground are *Cryptomeria japonica* Elegans and *Thuja occidentalis* 'Rheingold'

In the counties of Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey and Middlesex, Tilhill can now see the more matured effect of the landscaping schemes associated with major building projects which they carried out in the 60s and early 70s.

Imposing building

Fanum House, landscaped by Tilhill to a design by Gordon Patterson is one of the most interesting examples in the area. The Automobile Association headquarters is an imposing building of massive proportions with its extensive first floor acting as a base for a multi-storey tower block rising squarely above it.

Interior courtyards are a feature of the design where the potential of soft landscaping brings the pleasing effects of growing plants into the middle of a large and busy office.

In one instance a hornbeam of erect form stands over dense ground cover of cotoneaster and hypericum — a good example of the softening effect of trees and shrubs on the geometrical lines of this massive structure much appreciated by the scores of clerical workers at the surrounding desks.

Another example of landscaping by Tilhill, this time to a design by Milner White, may be seen at 'Berkhouse', the nearby headquarters of Streetley Chemicals.

Horse chestnuts, beech and silver birch demonstrate how the rather severe lines of most modern buildings require the softening and contrasting effects of natural tree forms to embellish the overall design.

Trees of tall habit were planted in the autumn of 1970 and show their value in softening the massive bulk of the building.



Tilhill landscaping contracts manager David Eyton-Jones talks to landscaping director Bob Galloway as Nigel Thorne tows the 'Hayter'. Foreground colour is provided by block planting of gorse (*Ulex Europaeus*).

Three Barrows — as you were

In the 19th century English country gardens were constructed on a scale which seems lavish to us today, with an abundance of features and interesting detail offering delights to which children, family groups and old people could all respond.

Now in post fuel-crisis years a house set in 135 acres can be an embarrassment if resources are not available to maintain it as envisaged by its designer.

Following years of neglect Three Barrows estate, Elstead, Surrey is at last being restored to its former glory by the new owner Mr Ahmed Mannai, an Arab businessman, who has chosen to make a home in England, a country for which he has a great affection.

The main contractor is Allan Taylor and Co of Headley Down, Hampshire, and Tilhill have been commissioned to implement the designer's plans for restoring and improving the greater part of the gardens, amenity woodlands and surrounding pastureland.

Introduced by forestry consultant Peter Garthwaite, the client's designer Dick Baker, who specialises in the design work of large houses for private clients, invited Bob Galloway of Tilhill to assist in organising the work. Together they evolved a plan to meet the client's wishes in putting the estate to rights.

Wealth of Colour

A lot of thought went into the detailed planning. A major requirement was for a wealth of summer and autumn colour with plenty of densely planted ground cover for ease of maintenance.

Opening up alcoves in the approach avenue of rhododendron thickets has made room for turf recesses, exposing specimen trees and creating vantage points for the positioning of classical Greek statues each with an illuminated backdrop after dark.

Mature Scots pine and larch dominate the main approaches

to the house from the north. Tilhill have bordered the reconstructed drive with new turf and cleaned up hundreds of conifers, flush-cutting dead branches to give a clean, long-legged appearance to the trees as prominent features in the newly seeded and turfed areas surrounding the house.

The client has set some exacting deadlines for the completion of certain phases of the work. Containerised plants and trees in substantial sizes and of first class quality had to be found at very short notice in May and June this year to provide a suitably attractive setting for this magnificent country house which itself has been completely refurbished inside and out.

6,250 new trees

In the immediate vicinity of the house and approaches Tilhill has so far planted 6,250 new trees and plants of all sizes and established turfed lawn areas extending to 3,000 sq m.

1600 m of fencing, partly chain mesh supported by angle iron posts and partly post and wire will encircle the perimeter.

Over the years the woodland gardens of select rhododendrons and azaleas, part of the layout as conceived by its original designers — that remarkable Victorian partnership of Sir Edwin Lutyens and his associate Gertrude Jekyll — have become overgrown and moribund. These are contained in what was a mixed coniferous and deciduous amenity woodland area surrounding the house, and now are in the process of being reinstated.

New woodland glades have been formed and seeded with grass to be edged with choice azaleas, rhododendrons and colourful maples to blend with the original woodland garden.

Play features

Carefully constructed arched tunnels have been cut through the overgrown rhododendron thickets as play features for

A VITAL TRANSFORMATION

Heavy ground cover comprising prostrate junipers, pinus mugo, cotoneaster, and cornus in variety, keep the surrounds of the building maintenance-free and provide all the year round interest and colour.

It is not only individually large buildings such as company headquarters which merit this type of treatment. In even greater need are the new residential developments which without landscaping would otherwise be bleak.

New towns like Bracknell where cost is a critical factor often require much to be made of relatively little.

Existing silver birch and pines were integrated into a new planting design and enhanced with additional trees planted over a dense ground cover of gaultheria, lavender, santolina, laurestinus and berberis which lend colour and interest to the sidewalks. A bright display of Vinca Variegata contrasts with the foliage of established birch and pines.

At Oatlands Park, Weybridge, Tilhill were invited to prepare a comprehensive scheme for presentation to the Planning Authority comprising tree retention proposals in a heavily wooded amenity area and detailed landscaping recommendations, all designed to preserve the beauty of this highly valued residential development. The design theme revolved around the establishment of heavy ground cover under a light top canopy provided mainly by Gleditsias, acacias and silver birch to give a two storey effect near the houses.

Dominant groups

More dominant groups of larger growing, longer lived tree species such as limes, horse chestnuts, London planes, oaks etc. occupy the open spaces. Heavy-headed standards of the evergreen tree Cotoneaster Cornubia underplanted with



Fanum House, the Automobile Association headquarters — an imposing building of massive proportions. Tilhill's landscaping softens its hard, severe outlines.

vincas and rhododendrons have been skilfully used to ameliorate any sense of starkness, otherwise inevitable on this new estate and help to make it a more pleasant and relaxing place to live in.

At Staines Reservoir an extensive landscaping plan has recently been executed which is being followed by maintenance of the seeded and planted areas and a new contract to construct a car park, dinghy storage area and slipway.

Gravel workings

The North Surrey Water Authority asked Tilhill to convert rough gravel workings covering a considerable area into a leisure area to serve sailing, fishing and other recreational interests.

Tilhill landscaping director Bob Galloway says that a rudimentary peninsula flung up by the gravel company's dragline was exploited to form the

centre-piece of the scheme. Heavy earth moving equipment graded and shaped the rough surfaces into attractive contours, and spread some five thousand cubic metres of top soil prior to the whole area being seeded with grass.

Remedial treatment was carried out to the existing trees and large areas group-planted with shrubs, predominantly dogwoods, under a variety of standard and feathered trees. Now that the grass is in its second season and already well established the additional work of constructing a car park, dinghy storage area and a slipway at the location of the new club-house has begun.

Town centre landmark

Walton-on-Thames' new town centre was Tilhill's first landscaping contract. Started in 1965 it included seeding, turfing and tree and shrub planting

often in situations not conducive to plant growth. The whitebeam (pictured) needed a built-in drip feed system to provide it with enough moisture in a wide paved area and to counter the effect of heat-reflecting plate glass windows of the surrounding shops. This special measure to get the tree established and to stop the crown wilting can be seen to have worked well: it has now become a town centre landmark.

Silver birch transplanted from Greenhills are showing that 12 years on they are beginning to dominate the broad walk-way of the Walton-on-Thames town centre. Now 40 ft. high they are showing 10/15 ft. growth since they were first re-established in this town centre.

Opposite the residential part of this town centre a large 'Rivers' purple beech planted by Tilhill is also becoming a well known feature.

children, emphasising the leisure role of the property.

Long established specimen trees including copper beech, red oak, tulip trees, Parottia persica and many varieties of fine conifers have undergone tree surgery to safeguard their health and appearance. A four acre section of commercial woodland not visible from the house which was destroyed by fire last summer is being replanted by Tilhill to restore this commercial woodland asset to full stocking.

The hay crops in the fields surrounding the house have been cut, baled, carted and stacked in order to clear the surrounding pasture land prior to restoration treatment, and the orchard cleared of existing sterile trees, ploughed and manured in preparation for restocking by Tilhill.

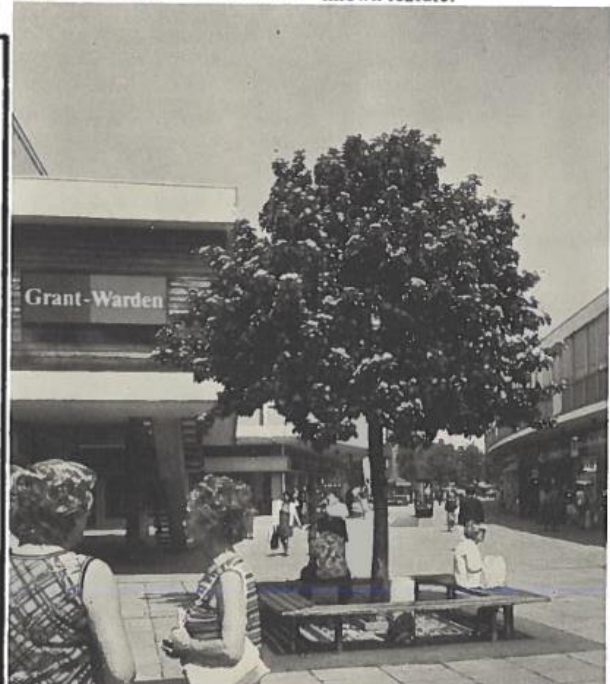
Reinstatement of the orchard and the adjoining pastureland is being carried out to recommendations supplied by Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd.

Finally, below the planted terraces on the south side of the house a long hidden 'ha-ha' has been discovered and is being

restored by Tilhill as an appropriate demarcation between the pasture land and the ornamental gardens, and extended eastwards to continue the existing feature.



Landscape ganger Roy King waters in the new laid turf around the tennis courts.



Walton-on-Thames' white beam needed a built-in drip-feed, to establish this tree successfully in extremely adverse conditions.

TODAY'S A - tomorrow



Top: Crossing a gully or 'sike' — Peter Sloan shows the scale of a forester's rudimentary but practical bridge formed by placing a large diameter culvert pipe, and infilling.



Argyll branch manager Vaughan Hammond and Peter Sloan are pictured with this pile of pulp wood, the remnants of a clear fell sold to a timber merchant.

Saw logs went to Central Scotland and north west England.

The 10.2 ha will be replanted in February — weather permitting — with spruce, larch and lodgepole pine, all varieties which suit growing conditions on the site.

Below: Vaughan Hammond — the longterm objective is a fully balanced age structure.



Large scale afforestation in the uplands of Scotland probably began with the Dukes of Atholl in the later years of the eighteenth century, when the planting of extensive areas in the valleys of the Tay, Tummel and Garry in Perthshire was undertaken. The practice was continued elsewhere in the nineteenth century by the "improving lairds".

Some notable forests have resulted. At Ardverikie by Loch Laggan the extensive planting was carried out at the end of the last century. At Corroir by Loch Ossian pioneering work was done early this century in extensive afforestation at high elevations on low fertility soils.

A further major impetus came with entry of the State into this field, as a result of the realisation of the need in Britain to replace timber felled in World War I and to create a strategic reserve. This has been followed by a substantial upturn in private sector planting over the last twenty-five years, in which companies such as Tihill have played a major role, both in stimulation and execution.

Many fine coniferous forests which today are seen as permanent and productive features of the rural scene stem from the activities of the large-scale planters. In the same way the plantations created by afforestation today will mature into the forests of tomorrow.

Mostly the sites planted are of otherwise low productivity and low fertility, and generally poorly drained. Preparation of the ground is required before successful tree planting can follow.

Steam ploughing

Ploughing has been used to prepare sites for planting as early as 1803. Later in that century fourteen steam traction engines were reported to be ploughing as a team in Sutherland, where they prepared 1,829 acres in four years.

When Mark L. Anderson was Research Officer for the Forestry Commission in Scotland in the 1920s he simulated 'ploughed lazy beds' dug by hand and included a measure of fertiliser. The young

trees planted atop the turned over turfs close to the drainage furrows did well and were a forerunner of the accepted methods to follow.

While the scene was set for faster progress by more mechanised means it was twenty years before ploughing deep peat superseded the hand-cut turf method, with the technology married to the capabilities of modern tractors and hill and drainage ploughs.

Tihill's Peter Sloan is something of an authority on large scale afforestation and has planned and executed the planting of something in excess of 20,000 acres in south Scotland and northwest England over the last ten years.

Peter came to forestry rather late in life by present-day standards. After National Service plus two years increasing disenchantment with city life he joined the Forestry Commission as a forest worker. He made his way up the career ladder via the Benmore Forestry School and the subsequent attainment of a National Diploma in Forestry. He moved to the private sector in 1960 and joined Tihill in 1965 where he is now western and northern area manager for the Scottish division.

His first major challenge was to establish the Solway Branch. He recalled wryly that pickings were slim at first and on many a day he chewed his knuckles and wondered where the next job of work was going to come from to keep his branch afloat. But he succeeded.

Peter showed me examples of 20th century methods at work from this year's planting to trees he was responsible for planting some ten years ago.

The fundamentals

I asked Peter Sloan to outline the fundamentals:

"I can't emphasise too strongly that the prime requisite for good afforestation results lies in starting with top quality plants and maintaining them in good condition from their source at the nursery to their final location in the plough turf.

"Soil preparation and planting methods are directly controllable by the forester, but the average forester often has no control over plant supplies until the plants arrive on a lorry at roadside adjacent to the area to be planted. What happens to them between lifting in the nursery and arrival at the planting site is often wholly unknown to him.

"In Tihill, with our own nursery, cold-store facilities and refrigerated container transport, we can be

AFFORESTATION

row's forests

er confident the plants will arrive in good condition and then it is up to us to keep them in good shape. It is vital that from the time the plants leave the nursery they are treated with intensive care until they are planted and can establish themselves.

"Afforestation on a large scale is not intrinsically more difficult than planting up half an acre. But the difference in scale magnifies any faults and problems so the margin for error is, in fact, narrower. It is a paradox that in many ways you have less room to manoeuvre.

"At planting time cold winds are the enemy. Desiccation and irreversible damage can take place within hours. A reliable planting team, who not only have a very competent planting technique but also make absolutely sure that the roots of the plants are minimally exposed between unloading from the lorry and their new start in life on the hillside, is worth a great deal.

"None of what I have said lessens the need for careful planning and execution of ploughing and cross-draining, siting and construction of forest roads or attention to post-planting after-care, but a few hours of less than optimum quality of ploughing, drainage or road construction will not jeopardise the success of the venture, as would a few hours slipshod handling of plants."

Among the examples I saw of Peter Sloan's afforestation work was Billholm in Dumfriesshire which he started planting nine years ago and which has burgeoned under his care. I was able to record that it already contains Sitka 20 feet in height.

No friend

Heather may be sought after by tourists but it's no great friend to the forester. Peter Sloan told me that after planting heather sometimes re-invades to contest the territory and manages to prevent nitrogen being taken up by the young spruce. Chemical spraying is then necessary to kill the heather and release the nitrogen to the trees.

When I was at Stennishope in the Border hills of south Scotland this summer some of last season's planting was beginning to feel the effects of competing grass and bracken growth, and weeding was about to begin. In their second growing season earlier planting was already clear of grass and to an extent bracken. Robert Gray, an assistant manager in the Borders branch, said that by the fourth growing season only the thickest bracken patches would need attention.

Bracken, he said, provides a physical threat as well as one of competition; in winter the dead bracken gets packed down by snow and rain to form a thick mat which can crush and smother the young

trees.

There were few other enemies, he said. Fungal diseases were not a threat, but outbreaks of defoliating insects - spruce aphids - had caused temporary setbacks in the growth of spruce in some parts of the Borders in recent years.

Other forest properties managed by Tilhill include those which constituted the large scale afforestation schemes of the 1920s. Here the timber is approaching commercial maturity, fellingings have already taken place and a more balanced structure of age classes is being formed within classic forest conditions.

One of these is situated just east of Oban in Argyll. Owned by a local family, Glencruitten Estate afforested some 600 acres of poor hill within the space of a few years in the 1920s. Today the resulting forest adorns the landscape and the owners greatly value the amenity created. Pupils from local schools make regular visits to study the flora and fauna.

Some 335 acres of larch, spruce and other conifers date from the original planting and these now-maturing crops provide the yield for the annual felling programmes. The timber is good quality sawlog standard and plays its part in the increasing acceptability of British softwood for all purposes. Tilhill's Argyll branch manager, Vaughan Hammond, explained that the balance of the acreage constitutes



Billholm, Dumfriesshire: a Sloan-vintage Sitka spruce planted nine years ago and already twenty feet high.

younger age classes, being areas planted after previous fellingings and windblows and that the longterm objective was a fully balanced age structure.

Certainly the evidence of Glencruitten and other mature forests like it reflect great credit on the foresight of those who planted them and bode well for the forests of the future now being created in today's large scale afforestation programmes.

David Reade

Floating over bottomless peat

'Drainage first, second and last' says Peter Sloan. Here in the Cheviots roadmaking specialists J C Bartle are laying down an all weather standard forest road capable of withstanding use by traffic of up to 10 ton axle loads.

Much depends on the material available. Here shale deposits are used to make the road over the less obliging carboniferous sandstone/red sandstone, using dumptrucks as opposed to lorries to transport the material.

In places where the peat lies 'bottomless' the road must be floated as a raft by continuous infilling. But deep drainage

ditches are clawed out on both sides along its length by JCB digger.

Where a gully, or 'sike' must be crossed it is lined with reinforced culvert pipes and infilled with shale.

The same technique is used to make a practical bridge in deeper gullies with larger diameter pipes.

All roads have 300m distanced clearings as passing places and for fire-fighting purposes.

Here the road will loop for 2,500m round the young forest, linking up with the established 9,000m system and the

Hawick/Newcastleton B road. Langside and Stennishope for-

ests amount to 2,000 acres, managed by Tilhill since 1974.





LIGHTNING STRIKES AT SLEEPIESHILL



Photograph: Northern Scot, Moray and Nairn Express.

Several European silver fir trees stand in the woodlands of Sleepieshill Estate, Moray. At about twenty eight metres tall they are a full head and shoulders above the surrounding pines and broadleaved trees, writes John Lambert, Northern branch manager.

Perhaps because of their height one of them earthed a lightning charge during a spring storm early this year. The electrical energy vaporised the sap and resin and the tree exploded.

The stem was measured at a breast height diameter of a little over one metre and was supported by a ring of root buttresses four metres in diameter. An approximate ring count showed that the tree was about one hundred and twenty years old. Early growth was fast but the last twenty to thirty years' growth was very much slower, this being reflected in the thin crowns of similar trees.

Many exotic conifers have

been introduced to Morayshire to provide faster volume growth of timber than the native Scots pine. Specimens of the European silver fir, *Abies alba* Miller, (*A. pectinata* de Candolle), have survived to indicate a life span in Scotland of up to 300 years.

The first planting of this species in Britain is believed to have been in 1603 at Harefield Park near Uxbridge, Middlesex. In 1854 Loudon mentions the use of the tree to 'distinguish the residence of the large landed proprietor from those of his more humble neighbours'.

Unfortunately planting of this splendid tree is now almost non-existent in Britain because of its susceptibility to severe attack by the insect *Adelges nusslini*. There are some forty species of the genus *Abies*, the true firs. Nowadays most forestry planting of this genus is confined to two species *A. grandis* Lindley the grand fir, and *A. nobilis* Lindley (*A. procera* Rehder) the noble fir.

TRANSATLANTIC SETTLER

Richard Cooper's forest background is Ontario, a province five times as big as the UK. And as Harvesting and Marketing regional manager John Barnes' 'number one' at Thirsk (see Tree Scribe I) Richard has come here to stay.

Not just because his new wife is English (from Leicester) and he likes the country on a personal level. But because the British forestry industry in his view is at a more interesting stage of development than in Canada.

During his forestry degree course in Ontario he took time out to work here on a private estate: 'I've been trying to get back ever since' he told Tree Scribe.

Canada

The forestry industry in Canada, both private and state, does not in general practise good forest management, in Richard's view. A rapid exhaustion of natural resources is shaping events there in an historically predictable way — without an adequate replanting programme the industry must undergo major trauma sooner rather than later.

'The forests go on forever' is a remark still heard in Canada, he says. But in fact the never-ending forests are coming to an end, and this is especially true for Ontario: 'With the idea that there was always a forest "on the other side of the hill", good forest management has not been practised on existing, accessible forest land,' says Richard.

What kind of preparation is his Canadian forestry education and experience for the British forestry industry and Thirsk?

The theories, principles and practices of forestry including silviculture, mensuration and management are much the same over there. But most of his decisions, he says, were marketing and harvesting ones, involving dealings with outside contractors for the felling, forwarding and selling of an annual 330,000m³ of softwood and hardwood.

He feels there is room for a lot of change in forestry attitudes across the Atlantic.

UK planting

Prior to the 1972 reduction in UK planting rates, the level of planting in the UK was approximately the same as the level of planting in Ontario, although harvesting levels are markedly higher in Ontario. The logging industry is more involved with production than where or when tomorrow's forest is to be found. And state/political involvement in forestry has come too late to rationalise the industry.

So Richard, learning a new forestry terminology — 'I asked John Barnes 200 questions twice' — with his English wife and new daughter is settling down happily into his cottage-and-quarter-acre near Newark, Notts, and looking forward to finding out more about traditional British things like real ale, home baked bread and the produce of his own garden.

NEW VOICES IN THIRSK

Bill Glen was born in Redruth but went with his parents to Canada, writes Andrew Binmore. He graduated from the University of New Brunswick in 1975 with a BSc in forestry.

After gaining experience of the commercial world Bill and his wife have come to the UK to become involved in the British forestry scene. Bill had a six months spell working with the forestry squad in the Borders earlier this year and now comes as assistant branch manager to Thirsk. Bill is a keen

flyer and holds a pilot's licence.

The new voice you may hear on the telephone at the Thirsk office belongs to Wyn Blackmore. After 27 years serving world wide in Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps — latterly at Edinburgh — Wyn has entered the business world again.

She comes to assist the present secretary, Anne Cartwright, who has been keeping the office running smoothly for the past three years.

RAPID GROWTH IN EAST YORKSHIRE



1: Andrew Binmore inspects selective felling done to encourage natural regeneration.

PLANTING GRANT WITHOUT PLANTING

The Forestry Commission will pay planting grant for natural regeneration provided that the naturally regenerated trees have been spaced out to normally accepted distances and that their quality is sufficiently good to produce a reasonable crop of timber, writes Lothian branch manager Colin Calvert.

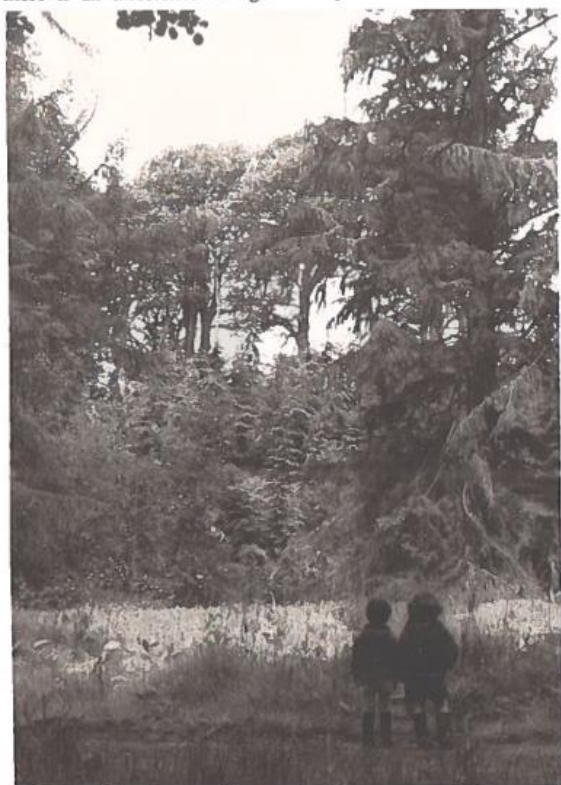
At Yester Estate, 20 miles east of Edinburgh, the fertile soil and other favourable factors provide ideal growing conditions for species which seed prolifically like sycamore, ash, beech and western hemlock.

The woodlands around the village have a high amenity value but because of the regime followed by the previous owner there is an imbalance of age

classes and many overmature stands.

The current management remit is to increase productivity while paying high regard to amenity. Regeneration of the older woodlands plays a great part in this and existing regeneration is therefore encouraged by silvicultural techniques and supplemented where necessary by additional nursery stock.

In gaps created by windthrow, natural regeneration is frequently dense, and at the sapling stage is thinned to more regular spacing. Judicious fellings to create favourable conditions for natural regeneration are also carried out and the size of existing groups is increased as necessary.



Respaced natural regeneration of Western hemlock and sycamore in windblown gap in mature hardwood/conifer woodland.

In October of 1975 Andrew Binmore — then Tilhill's new East Yorkshire manager — took over a modest office in Thirsk and started work. Two years later from handsome new offices across the square — shared with John Barnes of Harvesting and Marketing — he can look back both on 1976, a year when turnover was increased by 74 per cent, and 1977 with a further 25 per cent increase, and look forward to a budgeted 50 per cent increase in 1978.

The major expansion which has taken place is evidenced by his new assistant branch manager, Canadian Bill Glen and now two part-time secretaries and a junior, his original secretary Ann Cartwright having been joined by new secretary Wyn Blackmore and junior clerk Susan Dennis.

Harvesting and Marketing regional manager John Barnes has his own new assistant — Richard Cooper, also from Canada, who is based at Newark, Notts.

Landscape project

An important landscaping project for Andrew is ICI's reservoir complex near to Wilton Castle Estate, Middlesbrough, where a plan for 7.5 acres of new planting was accepted early last year. ICI brought in Tilhill to execute this landscaping work because they were particularly concerned that extra care should be taken in this kind of situation where industry and parkland meet.

Underplanting has also been carried out to thicken up the existing woodlands in an endeavour to perpetuate mixed woodland cover of varying canopy height.

Seventeen different varieties — all forest trees — were planted in an intimate mixture to maintain the nature of this part of Wilton Castle Woodlands. As large landowners with woods which are an important element in the north Cleveland landscape, ICI's rehabilitation programme is forward-looking, says Andrew Binmore.

Phase one is complete, all fencing and preparatory work having been carried out last year and planting this. Phase two is ready to go — a woodland and landscaping plan to integrate a large new reservoir into the overall scheme.

Go-ahead Yorkshire farmers and estates have also provided

Andrew with steady growth ever since he took over. Silvicultural operations on an ever-widening scale have been carried out by Andrew's labour squad.

The Countryside Commission — who are able to offer generous grants for tree planting — have given a grant for the planting of 120 standard single new trees and 1.2 acres of forest transplants on grounds of amenity. A second scheme involving a further 224 trees has also been approved for grant aid.

Both Andrew Binmore and John Barnes have put in a lot of hard work building up a portfolio of smaller jobs: on a fifty acre plot owned by a shooting syndicate but providing valuable farm shelter Tilhill carry out the forestry work on sound forestry principles but with an eye to providing good sport.

Mutually compatible

These are mutually compatible aims: financial self-sufficiency is an early prospect.

Another task is provided by 160 acres of originally well planted woodland on Humber-side which had fallen into disrepair. It is being tidied up in the interests of good silviculture, but again with consideration for shooting interests.

At Brawith, nearby, 12 acres of woodland have had a selective felling this year and Andrew is hopeful of natural regeneration to recreate good quality woodland. Thick patches of promising natural seedling regeneration have already begun.

In the past few days two more contracts have come Andrew's way, at Harrogate and Pickering. Pickering will present the most exacting set of problems. Set in the heart of North Yorkshire's tourist region it must be managed from the joint amenity and economic points of view.

Andrew's plan for it comprises an intimate mixture of larch, spruce and pine according to the varying ground conditions, with a sprinkling of hardwoods on the lower, less exposed edges of the block.

As we go to press the news is that Andrew has just won a major landscaping contract with Cleveland District Council.

So far, Tilhill's growth in north east Yorkshire has been confined mainly to the eastern and northern areas. Now the plan is to look west to more 'virgin' territory for new business.



2: Bill Glen inspects young mixed conifers on a rich site.

STP AWAITS BUYER

An announcement is expected shortly on the identity of the new owner of Scottish Timber Products chip-board factory at Stirling.

STP was forced to cease trading on September 14 following a collapse during the summer in the furniture market. The secured creditors were invited to appoint a receiver. The receiver continued the operation at a reduced level of throughput, providing employment for about half the workforce while using up the stocks of timber in the logyard.

While the plant was in operation under receivership discussions were held with various potential buyers from both the UK and overseas, all of whom have visited the plant. Government agencies in Scotland (the Scottish Economic Planning Department and the Scottish Development Agency) are keen

to play a part in a re-financed company but require the initiative to come from a recognised industrial company.

No acceptable offer was forthcoming up to the time when the logyard stock of wood ran out on November 7. On that day most of the remaining workforce were laid off and arrangements made to close down the machinery.

At the end of that week however the receiver announced that he had received an offer which would be considered by the secured creditors and gave other interested potential buyers until noon on November 21 to lodge their offers.

As Tree Scribe goes to press it is expected that the name of the successful buyer will shortly be made known and it is anticipated that arrangements may then be made for the plant to resume production in the near future.

STAFF MOVEMENTS

PETER SLOAN, northern and western area manager of the Scottish division is now operative from Scottish division headquarters at Old Sauchie, Stirling.

The move is designed to facilitate his coverage of the area for which he is responsible.

ROGER LEWIS is appointed branch manager, Southeast branch, Southern division, based at Crowborough. Roger was formerly senior assistant branch manager at Crowborough to Antony Spencer who has left to take up an appointment with Strutt and Parker in Edinburgh.

DAVID MASON has been appointed assistant regional manager, Southern region, Harvesting and Marketing division.

BIG TIMBER IN ARGYLL



The
st Tree

by Vaughan Hammond

High quality larch and Douglas fir sawlogs were the produce from a recent felling operation at Cairndow in Argyll on an estate managed from the Tilhill office in Oban and the operation supervised by Oban staff.

The felling was carried out by experienced father and son team Jim and Stuart Strathie — a tricky job as the big larch trees were growing in a steep sided river gorge and many of the trees had to be skidded upstream in the valley bottom.

Prime knot free larch butt logs have been despatched to boat builders for planks for cladding boats. This is a demanding market where only material of the highest specification is acceptable. The remainder of the timber has been despatched to various local sawmills.

Two huge Douglas firs were also felled to take advantage of the machinery and squad on site.

Cairndow — no stranger to big timber — boasts the tallest tree in the United Kingdom, one of the many attractions to this popular woodland garden. This Grand Fir was found to be 175 ft tall in 1969.

By February 1977 it was 1-88 ft high and had a permanent place in the record books.



Tilhill forester Bob Wilson stands beside extracted butt log.

TWIN OPPORTUNITIES



Harvesting and Marketing division director Noel Gore symbolically hands over the latest price list of the West Midland Timber Treatment Company to the safe keeping of new manager Phil Hymer.



Moisture content must be 28 per cent or less before treatment to ensure adequate absorption of preservative. Here plant manager Walter Steele shows Phil Hymer the moisture content of this batch of stakes using an electric moisture meter — in which the electrical resistance between two electrodes increases as the water content diminishes, enabling the moisture content to be read off on a dial.



A full 6½ m³ load of stakes emerges — Tanalised — from the West Midland Timber Treatment Company pressure/vacuum cylinder under the watchful eye of plant operator Frank O'Neill.

Londoner Phil Hymer has moved from forestry management in the north with Tilhill in Lhanbryde to take over as branch manager in the Welsh Marches, based at Church Stretton, Shropshire.

A step up for Phil. And the post carries an additional responsibility: the management of the West Midland Timber Treatment Co, situated at nearby Ditton Priors.

These two functions are mutually beneficial, sales in one field opening opportunities in the other. His woodland management and landscaping responsibilities should mean good fencing business together with sales of tree stakes. Similarly sales from the treatment plant may bring to light opportunities for contract work.

To make things more interesting an additional fast drying kiln, increasing capacity by 50 per cent, has just been installed at Ditton Priors. A 200,000 piece output last year is followed by a target this year of 220,000 pieces.

West Midland Timber Treatment is a partnership comprising the Burwaton, Willey and Colonel Maxwell's estates together with Tilhill who manage

it. The company was formed in 1969 to produce and sell 'Tanalised' fencing materials to a high quality standard.

An excellent reputation has been built up on Forest Brand quality products of Tanalised British timber — half round pointed stakes, half sawn posts and rails, round struts and posts and round pointed stakes — delivered or collected for destinations all over the UK.

The WMTT motto — as retail to Tree Scribe by Noel Gore — 'One complaint per annum is tolerable, two demand a full scale enquiry' — reflects the confidence invested in the products and Phil inherits a small but highly effective workforce in plant manager Walter Steele who took over a year ago, and Frank O'Neill, the resident qualified treatment plant operator.

Rugby playing Phil — Moray's 1st XV captain last season — joined Tilhill on graduation from Aberdeen University. He assisted branch manager John Lambert in the management of woodland estates of varying sizes and complexity across the breadth of the north of Scotland and the establishment of major afforestation schemes.