

Tree Scribe

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Royal Charter granted to Institute of Foresters



Bill Dodds: see lead story below.



Tilhill's northern annual dinner-dance took place at St Andrews, where golf is king. See page 7.

Bill Dodds — managing director of Fountain Forestry — is about to end his two-year term as president of the Institute of Foresters on the threshold of its elevation to the ranks of those bodies which hold a Royal Charter. He is quick to point out that this success is the result of the efforts of successive presidents and council over the last 67 years.

He sees the charter as a coming of age for the Institute and a great opportunity to unite all professional foresters under one banner, to improve their status within the industry and to further the cause of forestry in this country.

Seven years ago he says the suggestion did not meet with unanimous approval. His own view at that time was that it might not be worth the very large commitment of time, energy and resources needed to attain a successful conclusion: 'I felt that it might turn out to be a rather ephemeral kind of advantage for

the forest industry, but I now see it, historically, as an important and logical development.'

Foresters first organised themselves in 1925 as the Society of Foresters of Great Britain — 'a learned society at that time' he says. 'In 1973 we became the Institute and now we are the Chartered Institute'.

I wanted to know if this meant a more stringent selection procedure.

'Very much so. Foresters will clear a number of hurdles before they can become corporate members as fully qualified professional foresters.

'They must first have an acceptable qualification and professional forestry experience before they can be considered as applicants, followed by a formal examination, though certain qualifications will carry partial exemption from the full course of the Institute's examinations.

'But each and every new

member will have to go through the second, professional examination after two years experience following the initial application.'

Will not this put a big strain on the Institute's resources, with only 1000 members?

'Yes, our Training Education and Research Committee together with the panel of examiners will have to work very hard. It is going to be a major part of our workload and it is receiving high priority under the new constitution.

The initial approach in an application for a Royal Charter, said Bill Dodds, is made to the Privy Council, in fact to the Clerk of the Council who outlines the procedure to the applicant: the appointment of a solicitor knowledgeable in this specialised field and the preparation of a petition involve a timescale of years rather than months.

I asked him what real advantages will accrue to members, now the charter has been granted. Won't it just cost

more?

'I think what is most interesting is that to start with, the objectives have changed: they are more expansive; our philosophy has been restated, with the aim to maintain and improve the standards of forestry, rather than to improve the standards and status of foresters as laid down before.

'The advantage to members is that we are now fully qualified to represent professional forestry. Members will have the privilege and status of being part of the officially recognised body representing the profession of forestry.' — The only body to do so? — 'Yes.'

'You could say we've done the easy bit in acquiring the charter and now we must prove ourselves worthy of it — members must play their full role in the forestry profession of the future and become more involved in their Institute.'

Continued on page 3

Tilhill's executives have played their part in the growth in size and status of the newly-chartered Institute of Foresters. David Brierton is completing his four year term as a member of Council and has just retired as chairman of the Policy and Legislation Committee. Bob Gray continues as a member of council, joined by Peter Sloan after the April AGM. Sandy

Macpherson is a past member of Council. In addition to individual members, the company itself contributed to the appeal for funds to support the charter petition.

Tilhill encourages all qualified staff to be members of the Institute and supports the concept that any improvement in the status of the Institute is good for the industry as a whole.

Caberboard take over Scotboard factory

CABERBOARD, the Bison-owned chipboard manufacturers at Stirling, announce that they have concluded arrangements to take over the former Scotboard factory at Irvine, shut by British Plasterboard last autumn. Caberboard plan to reopen the plant this year after completely refurbishing it and,

because the product will be high quality particleboard for the furniture industry, their raw material requirement will be for a high proportion of small roundwood. This will account for a significant redirection of pulpwood presently being exported.



Pacific North-west : the perfect tour

— a glass of chilled white with the freshly-baked salmon

David G. G. reports on the ECE timber committee study tour

Our background picture shows the north-east edge of the blast zone from the Mount St Helen eruption. Salvage operations can be seen under-way in the devastated forest.

You know how it is with parties — some 'click' right at the beginning and never look back. So it is with forestry tours and this one, the ECE timber committee tour in the Pacific Northwest of the USA in September 1981, surely sets the standard for all the rest to emulate.

There is a kaleidoscope of memories — the perfect weather with a cloudless sky and temperatures in the low 80's; representatives of 16 nations, the majority from Europe, communicating in English, French and Russian; the magnificent forests of Douglas fir; the splendid hospitality and warmth of our American hosts; the efficient and unobtrusive behind-the-scenes organisation that kept the tour flowing smoothly along.

The wine of the country flowed too. Not all American wine comes from California we were soon and happily to learn. Both Washington and Oregon produce excellent wine, reserves of which the considerate US Forest Service carried in the chuckwagon which shepherded the two big Trailways coaches around the forests. A glass of chilled white with the freshly-baked salmon at the picnic lunch in a grove of 200 feet tall Douglas has the edge on cheese sandwiches and Thermos tea in 20 year old Scots pine.

Washington ranks only behind Oregon in standing softwood volume and annual cut. 54% of the State's area is forest (9.4 million hectares), of which 7.2 million hectares are commercial forests and, of these, 52% is publicly owned. Because 'old growth' natural forest is still being cut in Western Washington, the annual cut there exceeds net annual increment by 32%. Processing plants include 182 sawmills, 36 plywood factories and 26 pulpmills. Energy in the form of hydroelectric power is cheap.

The tour convened in Seattle and moved off the next day to

the Olympic peninsula, where visits were made to part of the Olympic National Forest, its seed orchard producing genetically selected Douglas fir seed, and to the Shelton Co-operative Sustained Yield Unit. The latter combines 49,000 hectares of National Forest with 100,000 hectares of Simpson Timber Company forest under unique joint management for 100 years from 1946, achieving sustained yield from previously separately owned unbalanced age classes.

The following day gave a glimpse of the Weyerhaeuser empire, which since 1900 has become the world's largest private forest owner (2.4 million hectares). The local Mima nursery employs techniques very similar to our own Greenhills nursery and the scale is also close, with an annual production of 8 million transplants and 9 million 1 u 1 seedlings. The quality of the latter is however still not up to that of conventional transplants.

Intensive management is applied on the favourably sited 194,000 hectares Twin Harbors tree farm, which originated from uniform natural regeneration of Douglas fir ('second-growth') after the virgin forest was logged. Yield class was estimated to be in the range of 18 to 24.

Allowing for the fact that neither this tree farm nor the British forest estate is yet in full production, nevertheless the present annual cut from this one holding is equivalent to 50% of the entire total annual British cut.

The final day in Washington was spent in the Gifford Pinchot national forest on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains and surrounding the now infamous Mount St Helens which erupted in May 1980, lost some 1300 feet of its height and caused widespread devastation.

The forest to the north was

stripped and laid flat like matchsticks by the blast. In September 1981 Mount St Helens was still puffing and understandably is treated with considerable respect. Radio control was maintained while our buses wound their way up a restricted road to the eastern edge of the blast zone to overlook a salvage harvesting operation. Of note was the rapidity with which the ash overlay had been absorbed into the living forest, although it was still visible in heaps where it had been cleared from the forest roads, and in the devastated area the first pioneers in the ground vegetation beginning to push through the layer of pumice ash.

Western Oregon, west of the Cascade Mountains, is 80% covered by forest land, and the entire state has just under 10 million hectares of commercial forest. In the west Douglas fir is the principal species, in the east Ponderosa pine.

As in Washington, the recession and the massive downturn in house construction in the USA have bitten hard and many mills are either shut or operating on short time. No sawlogs originating from national forests may be exported, but there is no restriction on logs from private sector forests: from Oregon alone annual sawlog exports have reached 2.8 million cubic metres, mainly to Japan.

The tour was based mainly in Portland from which day trips were made to:-

Tillamook Burn, an area of 140,000 hectares on the seaward side of Portland burned by forest fires in 1933, 1939 and 1945, now rehabilitated by the State Forest Service, financed by bonds, and due to reach commercial maturity around 2010.

Deschutes National Forest, 4 million hectares on the dry eastern slopes of the Cascades, with Ponderosa pine the dominant species and shelterwood regeneration practised. The

older, fat specimens are distinctly orange-hued, rejoicing in the name 'yellow-bellies'. Our visit was an added burden to the forest staff, because they had a forest fire on their hands, started by lightning strike on one of the prominent peaks: we were treated to the spectacle of the fire being repeatedly bombed from the air with fire retardant powder. The return journey was via the Warm Spring Indian Reservation where the tribes manage their forest and obtain a gross revenue of 30 million dollars a year from timber processing.

Columbia River Gorge: on its lower reaches a tributary forms the Multnomah Falls, second highest in the USA, and nearby is the first hydroelectric station built on the Columbia, Bonneville Dam. The salmon were running and were seen in their hundreds passing up the fish ladder.

The tour visited only the north-west section of California, calling at Scotia, one of the few remaining company towns, where the Pacific Lumber Co operates a plywood mill and sawmill, with the raw material drawn from its own 67,000 hectares of redwood forest, managed for sustained yield.

Highlight of the tour was the all-too-brief stroll through one of the reserved groves of coast redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*, in the Humboldt State Park. These particular trees were 1200 to 1500 years old and over 300 feet tall; the density of stocking and the massive scale render photography quite inadequate for such an awe-inspiring phenomenon. Noticeably even the most boisterous voices in the party were stilled in this cathedral.

These notes do scant justice to a tour which was full of interest, stimulation and pleasure. Great credit is due to the organisers and the many generous hosts.

The page three profile — Bob Gray



Bob Gray, long-established director of Tilhill's Southern division talked to Tree Scribe's reporter of his earlier career in the colonial service with some nostalgia: 'It was a pity it all had to end in 1961,' he says, 'but we knew from the outset that we were sowing the seeds of our own displacement.'

Bob still has the precise accent of the Border country, notwithstanding his sojourn in the South. His interest in forestry began at school in Berwick-upon-Tweed, stimulated by family friends who enjoyed a successful career overseas. As he put it 'to be engaged in forestry and travel abroad seemed irresistible.'

After obtaining his BSc degree in forestry at Edinburgh University he applied for a job in the Colonial Service with a preference for either Malaya or Kenya. But as Nigeria in West Africa turned out to be the only option he went there, and in his own words 'spent 15 happy and rewarding years.'

Initially as an assistant conservator his job was to help establish forest reserves so that Nigeria would have a forest estate capable of providing all her internal timber requirements and a healthy export trade in addition. In a country where communications were primitive to say the least these early years were spent trudging through tropical rain forest, complete with tent and carriers (real 'Saunders of the River stuff' he says) marking boundaries and making inventories of the growing stock.

Even these early days were not without their labour problems; he recalls being stranded in a very outlandish spot because the carriers were demanding an increase of 2d over the approved rate of 1/6d per day!

By the early 1950s the acquisition stage was largely over, and a start made on organising the orderly exploitation and regeneration of large tracts of previously unworked rain forest, while at the same time policing the reserves which were constantly under threat from the native farmers who wanted the land for growing crops.

Bob was quick to comment that no-one had been able to

show the farmer how to grow two yams where one grew before, so his appetite for new forest land to clear and farm for a year or two, and then move on, was insatiable.

Looking back Bob reflects wryly on the controversies which divided his colleagues into those who advocated regenerating the forest by natural means, and those who saw a shift to plantation forestry as the answer to the problem. 'For myself,' he says, 'I rather favoured compensatory plantations and would certainly like to go back and see what the Nigerian foresters have made of it all.'

But in general what had life in Africa given him? In his view a good measure of patience and tolerance. Patience, because by the nature of things nothing happened quickly, tolerance, because compared with the privileged expatriates, the country folk led a hard and uncertain existence.

With the granting of independence, two daughters to educate, and some financial incentive from a grateful government, 1961 seemed a good year to head back to Britain: a richer man in more ways than one.

Reminiscing about this period in his career he recalls the scarcity of job opportunities, and the prospect of possibly having to leave forestry was not to his liking. But Lady Fortune smiled and the next four years were spent in Perth working in private forestry under another excolonial — the perfect recipe for re-entry into the UK scene, but tinged with some discomfort as the transition from thinking in square miles and feet of girth to acres and inches diameter did not come easy.

Archie Aitkins' offer to join Tilhill in Surrey was both flattering and disruptive. To move from Scotland to the south of England to practise forestry had an illogical ring, but perhaps the restlessness of African days

played its part in making what was a difficult decision. The spring of 1964 saw his move to Surrey to run the then local company, Tilhill Forestry Ltd.

The length of Bob's career with Tilhill has already overtaken that of his colonial service days and over the years he has presided over the emergence of the present day Southern division by a process of amalgamation and addition.

FRONTIERS

'Perhaps the single largest move forward was when we took over a small company in East Anglia,' he says, 'and built it up into a major branch, although for all kinds of reasons we have been able to keep our frontiers moving outwards and we will continue to do so.'

Thus speaks the man who has made the transition from colonial

civil servant to one wholly committed to giving a good service to his clients and at the same time running a profitable enterprise.

Forestry in the South, he maintains, has very close connections with farming and sport. You have to be able to talk farming and shooting, and to exercise that 'African tolerance with those only interested in amenity and preservation of the *status quo* in the countryside.'

As a sportsman himself he claims to shoot badly in the winter and to be humiliated by his golf in the summer. But fishing, now there is the true healer; the therapeutic effect of the passing stream has no equal.

In his experience, the sport reached its climax in Africa where rivers abound with unwary fish — and no charge for a fishing permit!

Royal Charter for foresters

Do you expect to recruit more members? Or, more to the point, are there more foresters to recruit who are appropriately qualified?

'We'd like to be almost twice as large — there are about 1800/1900 foresters in the country, and many who are not members in the Forestry Commission. Though we'll need a change of heart there, to some extent, and FC staff will need to see the advantages and recognise the improved status as part of their career structure.'

Is the relationship between the Institute and the Commission fraught in any way?

'It's certainly not fraught. The relationship is mutually helpful and productive. We have the forestry commissioner in charge of harvesting and marketing as our vice president elect and senior people in the Commission management structure on our council. Our only problem is we haven't yet got enough of their

staff, foresters, into our ranks.'

What in fact is membership going to cost?

'We have proposals to put before the annual meeting to raise the fees for fellows to £40 per annum, and members to £30, but this reflects no more than the effect of inflation on the present subscriptions since they were last raised.'

How will the tougher entry procedures for the Institute affect the forestry companies in the industry and their attitude to entrants?

'Certainly in my own company we shall insist on the same standards for advancement as those of the Institute. I think it'll make quite a bit of difference to a young man's career prospects.'

The award of the charter to the new Institute of Chartered Foresters was celebrated at a buffet luncheon on April 2, where the guest of honour was Lord Mansfield, the Minister of State for Scotland. □

Solway works the 'topex fac



Team leader of Solway's office staff is Irene Bond, newly returned from a place in the sun on the Costa del Sol for a two week winter break. She's been two years full-time with Tilhill and is in charge of calculating invoices and supervising the general workflow.



Sandra Lunn is Harvesting and Marketing regional manager Adam Ritchie's new morning-only help — 3 weeks' service up to the moment of interview — across the room from Eileen Hart who had made a point of coming to the office in the morning to be 'processed' by Tree Scribe as she is normally an 'afternoon-only' person.



Eileen has the uncanny knack of being able to type and talk at the same time, and claims that as she is typing away her mind is completely detached — as if she is on autopilot. She also works very fast: 'The steam comes out of the typewriter sometimes,' she says. 'And from me too.'

Colin Forsyth's Solway branch brings the phrase 'large scale afforestation' to most Tilhill minds. And justifiably so: it's the branch with the biggest managed area — 10,000 ha — mainly due to an investment client who bought up over 6,000 ha during the late 60s and early 70s, as a result of which planting could then proceed at a rate of something over 1,000 ha per annum.

That 'land bank' was finally depleted in 1976 by which time Peter Sloan, the man in the driving seat at that time, had introduced smaller, individual estate owners to the Tilhill management service and the pension funds were just beginning to look on forestry as a valuable component of their investment portfolios.

Colin, an Edinburgh graduate, joined Solway in 1974 after a 'rather unrewarding' stint with a local authority. But if his career got a slow start it quickly accelerated with Tilhill and he made it to branch manager in just two years, taking over when P Sloan got promotion to area manager.

Married, with two young daughters, Colin's interests outwith Tilhill include fishing, skiing, squash and tennis. He has also recently been elected to the South West regional committee of Timber Growers Scotland.

Ninety per cent of his managed estates and contractor workload

are north of the border in Dumfries and Galloway, but the landscaping activity mostly lies south, especially in the Liverpool/Manchester/Blackburn/Preston area.

Like the rest of the forestry industry the Solway branch is land hungry, with the stranglehold of clearance procedures through the forestry authority acting as a major constraint on the acquisition of sufficiently large acres of acceptable quality planting land. So landscaping work assumes an important long-term role in shaping the revenue mix.

Although 20 per cent of the Dumfries and Galloway region is under trees Colin feels that the farming/forestry balance is not yet right: 'Many hill sheep farms still have very low stocking levels, yet approvals for planting — even for this marginal land — are not coming forward as we would like,' he says.

Because of such constraints Solway planted only 500 ha last year.

The first pension fund to invest in the big Solway branch territory was Rolls Royce in 1978. The most recent acquisition has been by another large fund — a very attractive block in south Cumbria. Pension funds, like foresters, look a long way forward and appreciate the security of an eventual real return, net of inflation.

The Solway branch was set up



in the mid-60s serving mixed estates local to Carlisle, but soon assumed new dimensions with a large scale afforestation programme, combined with the management of more stocked woodland estates over a large geographic area.

Colin produced the salient statistics about Solway: the largest single unit lies to the north of Eskdalemuir, made up of Midgehope, Glenkerry, West Buccleuch and Meerlees — 2095.6 ha; the same client has another 4,000 ha with Tilhill in other blocks all dating from the late 60s and early 70s, such as Marnhoul, 223 ha, which joined the scheme of things in 1967; Billholm, 818 ha which was planted between '68 and '70, and Wolfehopelee, 157 ha in 1976.

LARGE-SCALE AFFORESTATION

Colin is cheek by jowl with the Borders branch but the relationship is, though healthily competitive, a happy one: for historic reasons he has cherished estates deep in their territory near Hawick and they in his at in Langholm.

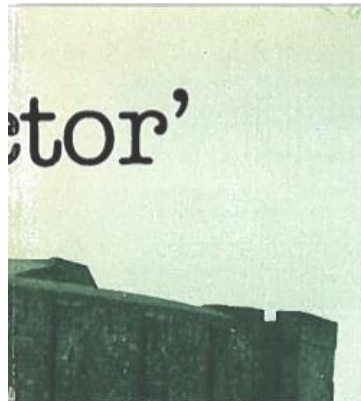
His parish is extensive and distances considerable, even by Tilhill standards: a return trip to a site in Manchester is 270 miles.

A relatively new management tool, with particular application to Solway, is the recent publication of the Forestry Commission work on national zones for windspeed. As Colin points out, 'If you know that after reaching a certain height your forest is living on borrowed time then your plans for roads and extraction method are affected.'

'You don't thin in some areas of highest windthrow hazard, and therefore may well be able to save on roading costs for a harvesting policy of clearfell-only.'

Plantations are classified by windzone, elevation, topographic shelter (measured by what the Forestry Commission know as the topex factor which is derived from eight horizon-readings and reflects the relative exposure of the site), soil type and available rooting depth. Sitka spruce was chosen by the Forestry Commission for this research to provide a common reference point and the study was carried out over several years, taking into account a variety of age classes up to maturity on a wide range of sites. The result is a well-researched basis of windthrow hazard classification.

And, as Colin explained as we drove out to Billholm, the windthrow hazard study is a valuable tool for the forest manager. His roading programme this year will cost £300,000 — so accuracy matters. For a private investor the

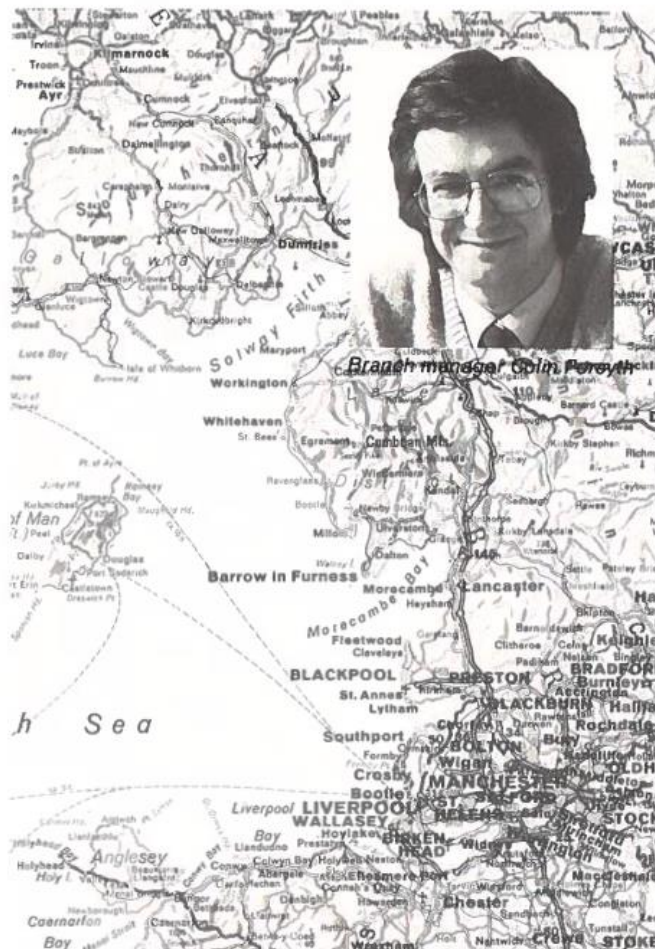


final road network is most advantageously established some eight years before serious harvesting starts, and the classification of windthrow hazard by area is essential in formulating harvesting priorities in south Scotland.

Up on Billholm Colin showed me a 13-year old sitka crop, and already many of the stems were of sufficient size to produce chipwood lengths. Plenty of roading material from the Silurian shales is to hand so the network grows at a good rate. In a few areas where the peat cover is deepest, the visual symptoms of potassium and phosphate deficiencies — yellowing of the needles and stunted growth — dictate imminent helicopter intervention with an application of 575 kg per ha of phosphate and potash mixture.

Lodgepole pine, planted in the localised areas of poorest peat and where heather is found, marks the lower end of the yield class spectrum — 10 — as opposed to up to 22 for the best of the sitka.

The estimated yield class average for this estate is almost 17, a powerful example of what sitka can do on this typically good, extensive Borders hill land and already a tribute to the foresight of the client who made the investment and the care with which it has been nurtured by Tilhill. □



Branch manager Colin Percey

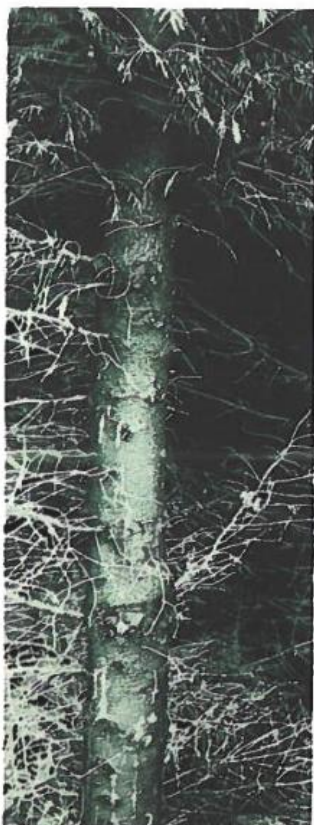


Finlay Mitchell joined Tilhill at Old Sauchie six years ago, moved to the Highland branch with Peter Fitch in 1978 two years later (after a four-month sabbatical in the USA looking at logging systems and machinery demonstrations on the West Coast). Then he came to Carlisle.

Finlay, who hails from Berwick on Tweed, is a bachelor who loves bees. He has three hives in the heather of a secret lodgepole pine plantation, and has bought a house where he grows young pine from seed, including in his collection unusual species such as the sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*) — with the largest cone of all — stone or umbrella pine (*Pinus pinea*), and pitch pine (*Pinus palustris*).

Landscaping is his current Tilhill preoccupation with a large sand-dune reclamation and coastal protection project to get his teeth stuck into.

A series of 70 year Corsican pine plantations need careful thinning — and marketing — to leave essential protection and there's fencing and under-planting to be done on 18 ins of pure sand, using container grown stock and liberal use of the anti-transpirant spray.



13-year old sitka going well

Peter Middleton hails from Cheshire, but comes fresh to Tilhill from two years in Indonesia where he'd been working at Irian Jaya in charge of the felling and exporting of hardwood logs.

He speaks of some 80 different species including matao, intsia (ironwood) and mixed red and white species with hundreds more not marketable.



Though life was good in Indonesia some 30 per cent of concessionaires had gone or were going broke in the face of the world recession and it was time to leave.

Now he's feeling the cold in charge of estates west of the A74 to Kirkcudbright. And like everyone else is keeping an eye on the landscaping opportunities.

Peter is a keen rugby and squash player.



Mark Cocks, abm, is the youngest recruit to Solway who joined Tilhill in 1979 after graduating from Bangor University. He met his wife at Bangor at that time, also a forestry student, but she is now finishing a general degree at the Open University.

Now he's in charge of a large slice of Colin's roading programme and very enthusiastic about the windthrow hazard study, having walked all the woodlands to complete a windthrow hazard classification to help formulate the management regime.

People and Places

St Andrews: Northern festivities



Guests and staff at the northern annual dinner/dance get a sight of the new Royal Charter of the Institute of Foresters. Guest of honour was Bill Dodds, now immediate past-president.

Change-round



Graham Drennan-Smith

From the beginning of February the Harvesting and Marketing division has been slimmed down to three region offices, based at Stirling, Jedburgh and Carlisle which together cover the southern half of Scotland and the north of England.

This area coincides with that in which the greatest amount of private large-scale afforestation has taken place and in which therefore the greatest concentration of future increased production will take place.

These three regions continue under the management of Alan Robbins, John Jackson and Adam Ritchie. The new manager for the division is Graham Drennan-Smith, who started his career with Tilhill in Scotland and most recently has been the H & M division's southern area manager. The division's HQ is now at Old Sauchie.

Graham succeeds Steven Macpherson who has transferred back to the Scottish division in a new post concerned with the development of the company's landscaping activity.

Butler extraordinary



Variety is the spice of an assistant branch manager's life. Asked to set aside his wet-weather clothing for one day and assist at a buffet lunch given in the old shooting lodge at Griffin Forest, Aberfeldy, during the six-monthly inspection by clients, Fenning Welstead decided that if he was going to 'butle' he might as well dress for the part and donned full Highland dress — much to the surprise and delight of the investment managers of the Midland Bank Pension Trust.

Long service

Mrs Kath Davies, nursery worker, retired from Culford Nursery on Wednesday March 10 1982 on her 60th birthday after more than 27 years service.

Kath started work in September 1954 with Whitmore's Timber Company who at that time owned Culford Forestry Services and Culford Nursery.

When Whitmore's sawmilling premises were compulsorily purchased in 1971 to make way for the A45 bypass, Culford Forestry Services and nursery were purchased by Tilhill. At that time Kath and four others were employed full time in the nursery. In recent years the nursery has reduced in size and Kath has managed much of the work herself with the help of some casual labour when required.

Kath was presented with a cheque by RT Gray on behalf of Tilhill at a small ceremony held at Anglia branch on March 10. In addition Anglia branch staff, and sub-contractors operating from Culford made a small presentation to Kath.

Birthdays

Congratulations to Mark and Gina Hudson (South-East branch) on their son Nicholas Jack who was born on November 13 1981.

We are pleased to announce the safe arrival in this world of a third son — Colin — to Helen Fitch, wife of Peter, Highland branch manager.

New graduate



PJ Hewitson joined Southern Landscape branch in October 1981 as a landscape assistant, having previously graduated with a BSc (For) from Aberdeen University in 1978, followed by a Diploma in landscape Architecture from Sheffield University in 1981. He is shortly to be transferred to South-East branch to replace JI Robinson who left to take up an appointment in Hong Kong.

Readers Write

From Mr DC Fisher of the Forestry Commission

To: the editor

FORESTRY GRANT SCHEME

We were interested to see the useful summary of the Forestry Grant Scheme in the October edition of Tree Scribe. This publicity for the new scheme is most welcome, as indeed are Mr Brierton's kind remarks about the Forestry Commission on page 1. I hope you will forgive me, however, if I put the record straight on a point about which there seems to be a good deal of misunderstanding.

The point in question concerns the protection against the imposition of Tree Preservation Orders. The essential point which tends to be misunderstood, and which is not brought out in your article, is that the Commission's consent to the making of a TPO is only required if the woodland concerned has been grant-aided.

Under the Town and Country Planning Acts, woodlands which are dedicated and being managed in accordance with an approved plan of operations are immune from the imposition of a TPO whether or not they have been grant-aided. For woodlands other than dedicated woodlands, however, the position is that they are not protected against TPOs unless they have been grant-aided by the Forestry Commission.

If they have been grant-aided, a TPO can only be placed on them if the Forestry Commission consents, and such consent will normally be withheld if the woods are being satisfactorily managed. If they were being managed in accordance with an approved plan under the Forestry Grant Scheme, this would be regarded as evidence of good management.

I am sorry that this explanation has been somewhat lengthy but I think it is important that the principle should be understood now to avoid any misunderstandings in the future.

Disposal of Forestry Commission assets

The Forestry Commission has got under way its programme of sales of land and forests, designed at the behest of Government to realise £40 million, phased as £10 million in the first year and £15 million in each of the two succeeding years.

So far the largest single realisation has been the Loch Moss Plantations near Dumfries, extending to 2700 acres and stocked with 4 to 19 years old lodgepole pine. The sale price was over £2 million, but the attraction here was the underlying deposits of horticultural peat and the purchaser, John Nixon, a landowner and farmer from Kings Lynn in Norfolk, is chairman of

a company with substantial peat interests in both the UK and on the Continent.

Elsewhere very many of the lots on offer have been small in extent and fragmented, some with difficult access. The Commission can hardly be blamed for using this opportunity to seek to rationalise its holdings and to try to offload some of the areas of more questionable quality it has acquired in the course of a previously vigorous purchasing policy. Buyers are said to have been found for some of these small lots, but the serious and committed forestry investor requires better quality than has generally been the case

in what the Commission has so far presented to the market.

There have been two notable exceptions amongst the otherwise generally unexciting presentations and fortuitously both have gone to a pension fund purchaser and both are being brought under Tilhill management. One area is a compact block of 95 hectares called Brafferton Spring Wood near Boroughbridge in Yorkshire.

EXTENSIVE

Nearly half the area is Scots pine in the 16 - 25 years age bracket and a further 28 hectares are Corsican pine aged 15 - 25

years; the terrain is level and access good.

The other area is Berrybush, 712 hectares of young plantation in South Scotland lying between the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys in a locality much favoured for extensive afforestation in the 60s and 70s. Before being purchased by the Forestry Commission and planted in 1975-77 mainly with sitka spruce, the land was a Buccleuch hill farm.

If future presentations to the market by the Forestry Commission include properties of a quality to match Brafferton and Berrybush, there will be a ready response from potential purchasers.

CONTRACTS

Scottish division

Central Landscape branch have been awarded a contract from **British Gas** for reinstatement works at Bathgate Compressor Station, value £8,500.

Central Landscape branch has managed to secure a £54,000 landscaping contract from **Strathclyde Regional Council** in the face of very fierce competition both from private contractors and direct works departments. It is understood that the four lowest tenders were all within £2-3,000 of each other.

It is also significant that this is the first motorway planting contract from Strathclyde Regional Council to be awarded to a private contractor; the previous practice was to give the work to the parks department.

The contract involves supplying and planting over 1000 standard trees and 30,000 shrubs along the newly opened M77 Drumbreck Road connection in Glasgow and is due for completion by May 1982, with a 2 year maintenance period thereafter.

The same branch has been awarded a contract for £11,000 for tree felling, tree surgery, planting and fencing for the Scottish Special Housing Association at Erskine.

Central Landscape branch has been awarded a £36,000 contract by **Dunfermline District Council** for landscaping work in Rosyth, involving top-soiling, seeding, drainage of playing fields, fencing and planting trees and shrubs to be completed by June 1982.

PSA - tree felling and surgery **RAF Leuchars**, value £2,600
Caberboard - tree planting at Cowie factory, value £5,200

Calor Gas - soiling and planting at Stirling depot, value £4,500
West Lothian District Council - grass seeding and turfing, Whitburn Cemetery, value £7,100.

Scottish Development Agency - land renewal project **Brownsburn, Airdrie**, value £43,000.

Biwater Shellabear - tree planting and seeding, West Lothian, value £30,000

A Russell of Denny - fencing, seeding and planting, Bonnybridge, value £10,000

For the second consecutive year, Central Forestry have successfully tendered for a fencing and planting contract, under the auspices of the **Central Scotland Woodland Project**. The contract, worth £50,400, involves erecting approximately 5300 metres of fencing and the planting of some 40,000 plants around the villages of Plains and Caldercruix, near Airdrie. The ultimate aim of this work is to improve the environment around these settlements.

Central Forestry have successfully tendered for a £5,085 fencing and planting contract at **Tillicoultry Quarries**.

The work involves the establishment of 5 ha of mixed woodland on the south facing slopes of the screening wall of the quarry and is one of the local authority's conditions which will

Southern division

Planting for **Southern Gas** at Henley - on - Thames, value £8,000

Planting and turfing for **City of Westminster**, value £11,000

Landscaping design and construction in large garden, Sussex, value £13,500

Landscaping on new building site at Bognor, value £15,000

Landscaping for **Wimpey** at Tadley and Winnersh, value £14,000

Planting and seeding for the **Southern Water Authority** at Whitchurch, value £7,000

allow further quarrying to be carried out.

East Yorks branch have recently been awarded the Felling By-pass phase II contract from **Tyne and Wear County Council**. The contract is worth £62,552 and involves the pit planting of whips (7888), standards (199), ground works, shrub bed preparation, grass seeding, fencing work, planting shrubs (4203), laying footpath and 12 months associated maintenance works. Part of the work involves the preparation and planting of a large shrub bed outside of the Gateshead Athletics Stadium. East Yorks branch: contract worth £16,843 for **ICI Wilton Perimeter, Project H1562**. This is for soiling and seeding, fencing, tree planting and 5 years maintenance for initial capital works.

Northern branch: a contract for **Robertsons of Elgin**, 30 houses at Grantown on Spey, (Dulaig Ph II). Timber screen and trip rail fencing, value £10,036.

Northern branch: contracts worth £38,683 with **Scottish Malt Distillers** at Roseisle Maltings, Elgin, Moray, for grass seeding, standard tree and shrub planting, supply and spread of topsoil, ploughing, fencing, forestry screen planting and fertiliser application.

Solway branch: £6,300 contract with **PSA** for fencing and planting

at Kircudbright and £10,400 contract with **Merseyside CC** for thinning, fencing and planting at Formby.

Borders branch: Megget Dam - £32,000 contract for upland tree planting as landscaping for the new reservoir. This is a major engineering project in the Megget Valley to the west of St Mary's Loch which lies north east of Moffat. Its aim is the provision of a large reservoir of water to supply the Edinburgh area. The site engineers are **RH Cuthbertson & Partners** and the main contractors, **Whatlings**.

Burnhills Quarry: £31,000 contract for fencing and planting on a rehabilitated quarry/refuse tip site which lies near Blaydon to the west of Newcastle upon Tyne. Employers are **Tyne and Wear County Council**.

£7,000 contract to plant two areas with assorted tree species as part of the **Aberdeen University/Dept of Energy** biomass production evaluation on the farms of Kilham and Marlefield.

GRAFTING ON

Rhododendron ponticum in young plantations usually spells heavy weeding and cleaning costs to the forester. Martin Giles in South West branch has been able to turn the tables and reports receiving a useful income for one of his estates from the collection of *ponticum* seedlings on a 40 acre planting site and sale to local nurserymen for grafting and growing on. □

Chairman's statement

Reproduced by permission of chairman HE Trevan-Hawke from the company's accounts for the year ended September 30, 1981.

The year was notable for the Government's statement on forestry policy, made in December 1980, followed in the summer by the announcement of the new grants scheme for planting effective from October 1981, and a revision in the rates of grant for the Dedication Schemes. The policy review contained the statement:

With the projected rise in demand for timber into the next century and with the world's forests likely to come under increasing pressure, the Government believe that long-term confidence in forestry and wood processing industries in this country is fully justified. We look for a steadily increasing proportion of our requirements of timber to come from our own resources.

In keeping with this policy and

with the government's wish to see a greater proportion of new planting undertaken by the private sector, the revised levels of planting grant were substantially increased from those obtaining before, and the tax arrangements for forestry were continued.

Thus, a favourable situation has been created for the future which the company will exploit to the full, but in the meantime the recession has continued to affect the market for timber adversely. While timber prices appear to have reached a floor, the total volume marketed by your company was reduced by 24 per cent, reflecting the flexibility available to timber growers in delaying fellings until the market improves. However, temporary surpluses of small roundwood have occurred and the company undertook its first major direct export contract of pulpwood to Scandinavia and has renewed this contract for a second year.

For the longer term, I welcome the initiatives taken by the Welsh Development Agency and by the Scottish Development Agency in conjunction with the Highlands and Islands Development Board aimed at promoting new investment in timber-processing plant. I am particularly pleased that the managing director is a member of the steering group for the Scottish study.

Unlike the timber market, the recession had no effect, in the year under review, on our volume of landscaping work. There are signs, however, that orders will be harder to win in this sector in the current year.

Continuing our progressive development, the area planted was the highest since 1973; production in the nursery has been increased, aided by the full commissioning of the new humidity-controlled cold store; our staff at Culford have been moved into a new purpose-built office; and our headquarters staff have been re-housed in more permanent

accommodation at Greenhills.

In the year now current we are re-structuring our Harvesting and Marketing division to put it on a better basis for the future, planning our withdrawal from two small loss-making activities and taking advantage of opportunities that have been found to reduce overheads at headquarters.

It is a tribute to the organisation created by the founder of the company, Archie Aitkins, OBE, that in the year in which he retired a record profit can be announced.

I have no doubt that our company will not be immune from the recession, but the enthusiasm and efficiency of the organisation that has been handed over to me give confidence in our ability to meet the challenge, and my thanks are due to all the staff who have contributed to the company's success so far and on whom its continuing success is dependent.

Strategic review for Scotland nears completion

A major strategic review of the Scottish wood processing industry commissioned by the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board is now in progress.

The study, which began in mid-winter follows preparatory work initiated by the Scottish office and will be completed by June this year.

It is being undertaken by consultants Arthur D Little, working with a steering group chaired by the SDA and including membership from the HADB, the Scottish Office, the Forestry Commission and the private timber growers in Scotland.

Tilhill MD David Brierton is one of the timber growers' representatives on the steering group, the other being Tony Claridge, secretary of Timber Growers Scotland.

The review reflects forestry's importance both as a raw material for a wide range of products and as a major employer, especially in the rural areas where it is frequently the dominant sector in the local economy. Continuous afforestation programmes undertaken during the post-war period both by the Forestry Commission and the private sector have resulted in a steadily increasing supply of Scottish-grown timber, principally of softwood. By the end

of the century the total availability of wood from Scotland will be more than double the present level.

Following the Government's review of forestry policy, the results of which were announced in 1980, these afforestation programmes are expected to continue to grow.

The wood processing industry in Scotland has shown considerable development during the post-1960 period, which can usefully be divided into three distinct phases.

The '60s were largely dominated by the construction of pulp mills to serve the paper and packaging industry, characterised by the Wiggins Teape mill at Lochaber.

The '70s saw the advent of particle board plants, which in Scotland were represented by the facilities of Caberboard at Cowie and Scotboard at Irvine.

Since the late '70s the focus of development has switched to the saw-milling sector, with heavy investments in large modern sawmills such as Riddochs at Kilmallie in Inverness-shire.

The '80s have seen much of this growth come to an end, and there has recently been a substantial contraction of wood processing capacity in the UK. The most visible examples of this decline seen in Scotland are the

closures of the Wiggins Teape pulp mill at Corpach and of the Scotboard factory at Irvine.

There is, therefore, an obvious imbalance between the availability of domestically grown timber and the demand from the indigenous wood processing companies.

A short term solution has been found in the export of Scottish pulp wood to Scandinavia for processing there, but it is clear that Scotland is not using this valuable natural resource in an optimum manner to maximise added value and employment in Scotland, and reduce the import deficit on timber and wood products that faces both Scotland and GB.

The increasing availability of locally grown softwood offers a distinct opportunity to expand the wood processing industry in Scotland and this is the focus of the review by Little which will have two main interrelated objectives:

- The formulation of a long term development strategy for the wood processing industries in Scotland.
- The identification of a number of specific investment and development projects in support of the long term strategy which are capable of being immediately financed and implemented by the public and private sector in Scotland.

ERRATUM

It is regretted that in Tree Scribe 10 an error occurred in transposition of hectares to acres: in the second paragraph of page 5 the figure of £7,000 should be per hectare.

WINNERS

A case of Glenmorangie, that most coveted of prizes, has gone to each of the branch/regional managers who achieved the highest profitability in their divisions for the year ended September 1981. They were:—

Scottish division
GW Russell — Central Landscape branch

Southern division
FS Haughton — Marches branch

H & M division
J Jackson — Borders region

Distinctions

Congratulations to Bill Dickson (Highland branch) and Charlie Fulton (Lothians branch) who have just been notified that they have passed their written and oral exams for the National Diploma in Forestry (NDF). Each has been promoted to assistant branch manager.

Bill Dickson achieved passes with distinction in two papers — in policy, law, planning and economics, and in harvesting, marketing and utilisation. Tilhill has been told informally this is the first time for many years that distinctions have been awarded. □