Tree Scribe

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PULPMILL PROSPECT

FOLLOWING the pulpmill closures at Fort William, Ellesmere Port and St Anne's Board, there has been a massive surplus of small roundwood available in the country, only partially relieved by the temporary and marginal expedient of exporting pulpwood to Scandinavia.

The first sign of hope of a reversal in this process comes with the announcement that a major Finnish forest products company, United Paper Mills, is considering the possibility of setting up a large integrated pulp and paper mill at Shotton in the northeast of Wales at a projected total cost of £135 million.

Raw material would be drawn from Wales, North England and, to a limited extent, South Scotland, a catchment area similar to the former Bowater site at nearby Ellesmere Port. Direct employment in the proposed mill is put at 275, which is of particular significance in an area suffering badly from unemployment following the closure of the steelworks at Shotton. Upstream employment in forestry, harvesting and haulage would account for at least a further 1000 jobs.

Government finance will, without doubt, feature significantly in the total finance package, as it would for any major manufacturing investment in any field in a development area.

Certainly this initiative by United Paper Mills deserves every possible support. Its go-ahead would reverse the trend in exporting valuable raw material (and jobs) to processing plants abroad, a trade from which even the most underdeveloped of countries now shrink, and serve to reduce the massive import bill in pulp and paper.

It would start to put flesh or, perhaps better, muscle, on the bones of the Government's forestry policy statement of December 1980 and signal the resurgence of investment in modern plant for the conversion of industrial wood so urgently needed in the country.

Change of name

FROM October 1, TILHILL has changed its registered name from Tilhill Forestry Advisory Ltd. to Tilhill Forestry Ltd.

The company was originally formed in 1948 as "The Tilhill Forestry and Advisory Company Ltd." and this was foreshortened in 1965 to "Tilhill Forestry Advisory Ltd." For some time it has been felt that in this latter style the retention of the adjective "Advisory" has jarred on some ears attuned to good English usage and a correction was overdue.

The trading style of the company remains unaltered as TILHILL.

NEW INSTITUTE 'IN BUSINESS'

AT an Extraordinary General Meeting held in Gatehouse of Fleet on September 14, members of the Institute voted unanimously to wind up the former Institute of Foresters and to transfer its assets to the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

This was followed by the first Extraordinary General Meeting of the Institute of Chartered Foresters at which members voted to approve the adoption of the General Regulations, and elected the Honorary Officers, Councillors and the auditor.

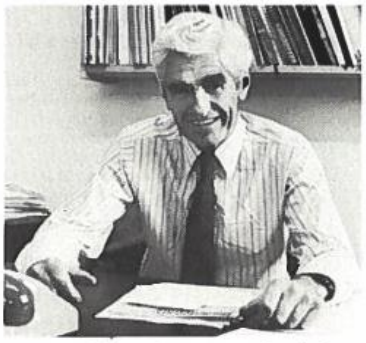
Thus, following upon the granting by Her Majesty the Queen of a Royal Charter on February 10, 1982, the Institute of Chartered Foresters is now formally "in business."

Tilhill is one of the largest (if not the largest) private employers of professionally qualified foresters in Great Britain and presently numbers 40 Chartered Foresters amongst its staff, of whom 11 were present at this historic meeting.

INSIDE

Impressive output

WHERE has output reached an impressive 35 million seedlings and transplants a year from just 200 acres? And who has led the way in pioneering new techniques? Read about Tilhill's own nursery, unique in UK forestry, and the man who runs it in our special centrespread feature on pages 4 and 5.



John White, the man at the helm.

Planting ceremony

● ICF President Dr Bill Mutch (left) and South Scotland Conservator John Davies prepare to plant a tree to commemorate the award of the Charter to the Institute of Foresters. The ceremony took place during the annual study tour held during September in southwest Scotland. Full report — back page.

The Great Spruce Bark Beetle

New pest or temporary infestation?

THE Great Spruce Bark Beetle (Dendroctonus micans) was discovered during August on a private estate in Shropshire and has now been identified in several crops of Norway and Sitka spruce within 60 miles of Ludlow.

This is the first known occurrence of this beetle in British woodland, though it has been present in forests in Holland, Denmark and the northern part of West Germany for many years. It mainly attacks Spruce, with Sitka being most vulnerable, but has been found in most coniferous species. Trees of around 25 years old and over which are under some form of stress — for example as a result of insufficient water, disease or poor soil conditions — are particularly at risk.

The female beetle bores into the stem of the tree at points from the buttress up into the crown. In Norway spruce this tends to be within the first 20 feet; in Sitka it has been found up to about 50 feet.

After eating out a small

Continued on back page

Industrial blight spells big business for branch

Steven Macpherson (left) and Graham Russell check the quality of containerised plant material for next year's planting programme.

EXPANSION is the name of the game at the Scottish Division's central landscaping branch.

The branch has made impressive inroads into the landscaping market since it was set up only three years ago and now faces an optimistic future.

Its success, spelled out by the fact that nearly half the Scottish Division's landscaping turnover now comes from the central landscape branch, fully justifies the decision to set up a specialist branch in this part of Scotland.

Though rurally located amid prime farmland against a magnificent backdrop of mountains, the branch's headquarters at Old Sauchie is perfectly situated to take advantage of the trend towards urban rehabilitation thanks to a network of motorways which can speed the landscape team to a huge variety of locations in the industrial belt of central Scotland.

Branch secretary Helen Cully manning the department's busy phone.

Ease of access to the vast areas of industrial blight afflicting this part of the country has been a major contributory factor in the branch's ability to break into the rehabilitation scene.

LEGACY

The unwelcome legacy of our less environmentally-aware forefathers has meant big business for landscaping firms. In spite of the cut-backs, the Scottish Development Agency is spending money on cleaning up areas devastated by mining and heavy engineering and turning them into much-needed amenity ground or new developments. The SDA has more than £20 million a year ear-marked for such rehabilitation work.

Graeme Woods (left) and Peter Raines deeply immersed in the planning stages of a project.

"With that kind of money at their disposal," said branch manager Graham Russell, "it's business worth chasing and we at Tilhill aim to increase our share of it."

Landscaping is by no means new to Tilhill. Though a feature of the company's activities for many years, it has been partly overshadowed by the traditional practice of forestry. The company's enviable reputation has been built on this rather than on landscaping as Steven Macpherson, Scottish Division's area manager for landscape services, has found in the course of his roving remit to drum up new work.

REAL POTENTIAL

"Everyone has heard of us," said Steven, "but often only in our role as a forestry firm. My job is to change that impression by persuading more and more local authorities to think of us as landscape specialists, too."

Aside from the two specialist landscape branches, one in Scotland and the other based at Greenhills, all Tilhill's branches handle landscaping work, some of them in quite a big way. There's little doubt, however, that it's in the devastated industrial heartlands, ravaged by decades of exploitation and neglect, that the real potential lies.

Even in the comparatively short time since the Scottish central landscape branch was set up as a separate entity specifically to exploit this potential, there's been a shift in emphasis from small re-seeding and fencing jobs and landscaping work for modestly-sized housing estates to environmental improvement contracts where Tilhill is acting as the main contractor and seeing the whole job through from start to finish.

GOOD EXAMPLE

A look at some of the branch's recent contracts reflects this trend. Work is being tackled now that wouldn't have been dreamed of a few years ago — jobs such as an ambitious re-seeding and planting programme on an unsightly disused shale bing in West Lothian.

"This is a good example of our move into large-scale reclamation work," said Graham Russell. "The contract, which was funded by the SDA, was to re-seed 12 ha of burnt shale and plant it with 18,000 containerised trees in order to rehabilitate an ugly industrial eyesore."

But while the branch has one eye firmly on the developing potential of large-scale work, it isn't doing so at the expense either of quality or of the small "bread and butter" contracts which still form a large part of the turnover.

"We give every bit as much care and attention to a job worth £1000 as to one costing £100,000," said Graham.

Landscape team . . .

GRAHAM RUSSELL, winner of the Division's Glenmorangie Prize for three years running, came to Tilhill after gaining a B.Sc. in ecological science with honours in forestry from Edinburgh University. Experience as an assistant branch manager at Gifford and at central branch, where he had special responsibility for landscaping, preceded his appointment as manager of the new central landscaping branch in 1979.

STEVEN MACPHERSON, Tilhill's roving northern ambassador for landscaping services, joined the company in 1970 as manager of the Lothians branch in Gifford. Landscaping was part of his remit when he became manager of Borders branch and later as southeast area manager and he assumed full-time responsibility for it earlier this year after a spell heading up Harvesting and Marketing Division. "The bulk of invitations for tender start to come in around November and December," said Steven, "so it's too soon yet to measure the success I've had with local authorities and Government bodies in flying the flag for Tilhill landscaping."

WHEN landscape architect Peter Raines joined the new branch as senior assistant from Newport Borough Council in 1979, he brought with him another dimension to Tilhill's landscape services — the capacity to "design and build." Though Peter's main responsibility is in running the contracting side of the business, he can also advise clients who are looking for more specific requirements for their landscaping schemes and, where necessary, design the entire layout.

GRAEME WOODS is the branch's most recent recruit. He joined in May this year to supplement the supervision capability as part of the planned growth in landscaping work. After graduating in forestry from Aberdeen, he gained practical landscaping experience working for Tilhill's East Yorks branch.

LANDSCAPE supervisor Bob Stainton is a product of the Askham Bryan College of Agriculture and Horticulture in York. He joined the branch in 1981 and is responsible for much of the day-to-day supervision of contract works. In addition, he ensures that the branch's ever-increasing plant and machinery resources are maintained in tip-top condition.

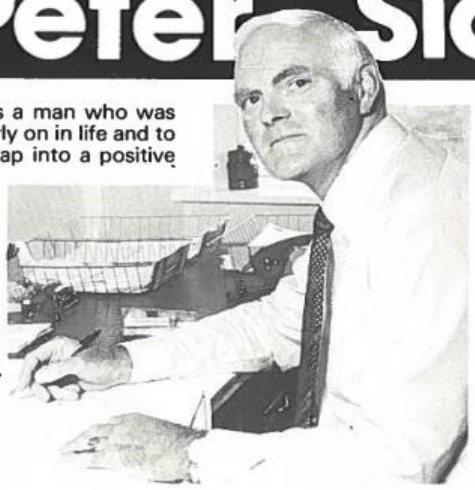
PROFILE: Peter Sloan

TILHILL'S newest board member, Peter Sloan, is a man who was lucky enough to recognise the rebel in himself early on in life and to channel what in others might have proved a handicap into a positive asset. His appointment as a Director in October has given him an opportunity to reflect over his life and the path which has brought him to a high point in an exciting and worthwhile career in forestry.

Peter is a man of considerable energy — both physical and mental — who has given 17 years of his life to Tilhill, but he had no inkling of the recognition being planned of his dedication, integrity and hard work, nor of the future role he would be playing in Tilhill's management policies.

The rebellious streak in Peter's nature when young made him realise at the age of 22 and city born and bred, that he didn't see himself in a pinstripe suit for the rest of his days.

Like many active young men with outdoor interests and energy to spare, he resented the constrictions of office life and was all for heading impulsively for New Zealand when his parents gently pushed him in the direction of forestry as an alternative way of absorbing a young man's restlessness.



VAL PETTIT talks to Scottish Division's general manager PETER SLOAN and looks back over his career in forestry.

'Looking back, it's obvious now that I've never run my life on 'master plan' lines. Instead, I've always enjoyed working hard towards relatively short-term objectives, never leaving one job before I had the next lined up and responding to opportunities when they presented themselves.'

First steps

The local labour exchange came up with an opening as a Forestry Commission worker and within a week of the subject first being mentioned, Peter had taken the first humble steps into a career which was to prove immensely satisfying and absorb him for a lifetime.

Peter's boss with the Edinburgh structural engineering firm where he was training in cost accounting was sceptical when his promising young employee handed in his notice and announced his plans. But Peter was undismayed at the prospect of calloused hands and a sore back. In fact, he revelled in it.

"I suppose you could say I was a drop-out long before the word was ever coined," says Peter with a smile.

Like others of his generation, Peter fell for the romantic, motion-picture image which forestry offered — the healthy outdoor life, check-shirted lumberjacks felling trees, rippling muscles and hearty companionship. Some couldn't come to terms with the reality, but Peter did and the two years he subsequently spent at the now-defunct Benmore Forestry School in Argyll were among the happiest of his life.

It was there that he met his wife May, but a Forestry Commission ganger's wage wasn't a lot in those days on which to set up home and Peter, then charged with the unenviable task of knocking an ill-disciplined brashing squad into some kind of shape, had had enough of dark winter days in the depths of the Loch Eckside forests.

So, he took a year off and used his considerable muscle power to earn good money labouring on the big hydro-electric schemes which were then in progress all over the north and west of Scotland.

Forestry still called, though, but Peter quickly learned that if he wanted his old job back, he'd have to earn it by accepting a labouring job once more and working his way back up through the ranks — something he achieved within a matter of months.

Alongside Peter's rapidly expanding experience, however, there developed an increasing awareness of the fact that neither his temperament nor his way of doing things matched the Forestry Commission's expectations and it wasn't much longer before he'd made the momentous decision to put his energies to more productive use in the field of private forestry.

As a prelude to entering the private sector, he acquired his Royal Scottish Senior Forester's certificate and then got a job on a private estate at Barwhillanty near Castle Douglas. His job description of Head Forester carried the ponderous appendage of "estate manager" and the four-and-a-half years he spent looking after farm buildings, agricultural grant applications, a small sawmill and a small nursery as well as some 2000 acres of woods and plantations gave him such valuable all-round experience that he would now not hesitate to recommend it to other young foresters embarking on a similar career path.

This period of Peter's life is also memorable because it included the time when he sat and obtained the coveted National Diploma in Forestry — an achievement which still stands out as a personal highlight in Peter's career.

With this qualification safely under his belt, it was time to move on again — this time for good, though Peter was not to know it at the time. A colleague tipped him off about a job going with Tilhill. He applied, was hired by Tilhill MD David Brierton and given the challenging task of setting up a new branch at Solway.

Typically, he didn't find the project at all daunting. "Though I might now with hindsight," he concedes.

The new branch built up steadily under Peter's guiding hand and then blossomed when the family firm of PB Forestry Lands Ltd. came on the scene. Initially, they disclosed plans to plant only 1000 acres, but eventually planted 18,000 acres of land acquired on their behalf by Tilhill.

Progression up the promotion ladder followed steadily from that point on — Solway branch manager for 11 years led to Area Manager Southwest for a further two with the additional responsibility of over-seeing the Lancashire branch.

The next step — appointment as Area Manager North and West — precipitated the Sloan family's move north from Carlisle to settle in the Stirling area. The job of General Manager for Scottish Division followed in 1979 in a management structure reorganisation.

"Looking back," says Peter, "it's obvious now that I've never run my life on 'master plan' lines. Instead, I've always enjoyed working hard towards relatively short-term objectives, never leaving one job before I had the next lined up and responding to opportunities when they presented themselves."

It appears to have been a successful formula in Peter's case. He's a well-liked man, extremely good at his job and with a great capacity for hard work. He's increasingly involved in forestry policy and earlier this year was elected to the Council of the Institute of Chartered Foresters. He's also a member of the Institute's policy and legislation committee.

Regrets? Very few and certainly none associated with his deliberate decision to stay in this country rather than follow his earlier inclination to go to the other side of the world.

"Two years of National Service, mostly in Malaya, got the 'overseas bug' out of my system," says Peter.

For recreation, Peter swims regularly at the Stirling University pool and likes to holiday in the sun once or twice a year.

Ironically, the career pattern in the Sloan family has now come full circle. Peter's son Michael is studying cost and management accountancy — the very subject his father turned his back on all those years ago in favour of forestry.

Forest products strategy for Scotland

THE study undertaken by consultants Arthur D. Little is now nearing completion. While the working document, commissioned conjointly by the Scottish Development Agency, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Forestry Commission, will not be published, it is understood that its findings will be presented to Ministers, the directors of the sponsoring bodies and the private growers' representatives early in November.

This will be followed early in 1983 by presentations in three locations of North, Central and South Scotland to invited audiences of those involved in the forestry and forest products industries.

The study has had two main inter-related 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 sectors in Scotland.**

A feature of the work of the Steering Group for the study has been the close co-operation of the representatives of the SDA, HIDB, Forestry Commission, Timber Growers Scotland and the Scottish Economic Planning Department, and it is to be hoped that this effective co-ordination of purpose will be maintained in the development of the strategy.

● *Charlie Scott assembling irrigation pipes.*

● *Keeping it in the family. David and Margaret Walk with daughter Sarah.*

From small b

THIRTY-FIVE years ago, where Tilhill's nurseries now flourish, the poor sandy soil was capable of supporting only scrub and heathland — an unlikely setting, on the face of it, for the site of one of the UK's foremost producers of young trees.

But, as any nurseryman will tell you, a light, sandy soil has considerable advantages and low fertility allows you to mould the nutrient status to suit your own needs.

These advantages have been put to good effect at Greenhills, headquarters of Tilhill's thriving Nurseries Division.

Seeing the 200 acres of seedlings and first and second year transplants today it must have been difficult, all those years ago, to imagine that a large part of the nation's private timber growing stock would begin its life there.

Today, the Nurseries Division, under the enthusiastic supervision of its director John White, produces annually some 20 million seedlings and has a production capacity of 15 million transplants, the bulk of which are destined for the replanting and afforestion projects of Tilhill's own clients.

The Greenhills nurseries hold a special place in Tilhill's history. The establishment of a service to provide good planting stock followed hard on the heels of the embryo forestry advisory service set up after the war.

To today's generation of foresters, it seems a logical step to take, but there weren't then — and still aren't — many UK forestry companies which are backed up by their own nurseries.

Pioneering spirit

This pioneering spirit was to become a hallmark of Tilhill's nursery operation throughout the succeeding decades and is largely responsible for making the Nurseries Division what it is today.

After initial steps to provide the free-draining but infertile soil with water and essential nutrients, Tilhill pursued a policy of innovation combined with time-honoured horticultural practices — a philosophy vindicated in the efficient, highly-successful and large-scale production of top-quality plants.

The nursery's catalogue list differs little from the standard stock range offered by other commercial growers — in other words, there is the complete range of forest species, from the much-in-demand Sitka spruce to the more specialist hardwoods grown mainly for southern climates — but what does set Tilhill apart from its competitors is the notable number of "firsts" it has notched up over the years.

It was, for example, the first forest tree nursery in the UK to use sterilised seedbeds, a practice which, along with the introduction of humidity-controlled cold store facilities, has now been adopted by other growers. It is one of very few nurseries to use large-scale irrigation and uses water drawn from Tilhill's two five-million gallon reservoirs constructed within its own grounds. Water from the same source is also harnessed for a revolutionary method of frost protection.

Cold storage

Humidity-controlled cold storage is, perhaps, the single most significant facility which has altered traditional practices in the nursery and contributed to its commercial success, especially in view of the fact that a very high proportion of the transplants grown there goes to markets much further north.

The first cold store was built in 1964 and although it still has an important role to play, it now operates in tandem with a large new "humicold" store, built only two years ago, which keeps the plants in an environment of high-humidity, slow-moving air as well as at a controlled temperature. The high humidity keeps the root systems moist and prevents the plants from drying out.

Both stores involved substantial capital investment on the part of Tilhill's management who successfully interpreted the signs for an upturn in forestry investment.

Between them, the two cold stores have a total storage capacity of seven million plants, carrying the stock for 7000 acres of planting. Where the facility really scores is in giving Tilhill the best of both worlds — the benefit of a long growing season in the mild south of England and the ability to extend the planting season in Scotland into the early summer.

Because young trees must be transported and planted only during their dormant phase, the cold store keeps them in suspended animation, for periods of up to six months if necessary, for planting when local conditions are just right.

Loading bay

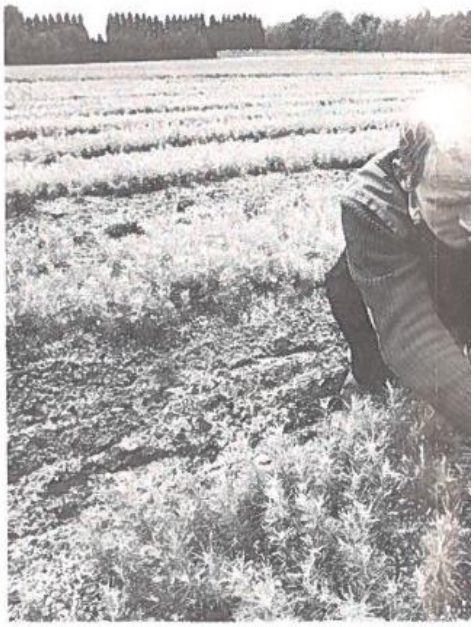
The despatch of young trees is another area where Tilhill has moved with the times. It is probably the only UK tree nursery to link its cold store to a fully-integrated and insulated loading bay where the young plants are protected from a sudden change in environment while they are loaded up for delivery.

And, to complete the picture, there's one more technological innovation which Tilhill has exploited to ensure that its products reach their ultimate destination in prime condition — and that's the use of specialised transportation.

The two lorries which beat a path between Surrey and the markets further north are both specially equipped with chiller units which are cleverly used to prevent over-heating in warm weather and as protection from frost in extreme cold weather during transportation.

Tilhill's special blend of traditional and modern techniques spans the entire production spectrum, culminating in delivery to the client's site but beginning two or three years earlier with the planting of the seed.

The concept of large-scale sterilisation of seedbeds which Tilhill pioneered early in its history is now fairly common practice with other growers. It works by rotovating in a chemical powder called Dazomet and then covering the area with polythene sheeting. Dazomet, in contact with the moist soil, gives off a gas which, unable to escape because of the sheeting, kills off any weed seeds present which would otherwise have competed with the tree seedlings. This, together with fertilisers, enables seedlings to be grown so successfully that they can be transplanted after only one year instead of two.



Nursery manager Peter Gatfield examine

Kind climate

Ironically, Surrey's kind climate which provides nurserymen with a long growing season frequently has a sting in its tail in the form of early and late frosts which can cause irreparable damage to young plants.

Walker

● *John Simmons makes a routine inspection of one of the reservoir liners for possible damage.*

● *Protective spraying in progress. The man behind the mask is Rob Durrant.*

beginnings...

examines one-year Sitka spruce seedlings.

To the layman, it must seem like a form of madness to spray young trees with water as a way of avoiding frost damage, but it works. The system was originally developed by fruit growers but has now been successfully adapted for forest trees.

Tilhill's staff keep an eye on local weather forecasts and when the temperature looks like hitting the danger mark, an alarm bell sounds and a duty nurseryman turns out during the night to turn on the sprinkler system for the duration of the frost. The water covering the plants quickly freezes, providing a protective coating of ice. Without it, the frost would penetrate the plant and damage the cell tissue.

Water from the two reservoirs, the second of which was excavated to coincide with the new cold store and the addition of a further 41 acres to the nursery area, provides the necessary irrigation water in hot dry spells during the growing season. Well-planned irrigation ensures that the plant does not have to send roots deep into the ground for moisture and encourages the well-developed fibrous root system so highly prized in quality nursery stock.

Here again, the old and the new meet in harmony. Tilhill, always anxious to set and follow new trends, never does so at the expense of proven traditional ways.

Technology has yet to find an artificial substitute for good old-fashioned hop waste to use in conjunction with inorganic fertilisers and irrigation techniques and — surprisingly — Tilhill still prefers to transplant most of its seedlings by hand for the simple reason that they find it more efficient to do so.

Massive increase

Efficiency, then, is the key to the Nurseries Division's massive increase in transplant production in the last seven years. When John White first took the helm in 1975, transplants numbered 5.3 million. By 1978, production had increased to 9.2 million and then by 1982, thanks to the investment programme, there was a further dramatic leap to the present figure of 15 million.

Tilhill's strictly commercial approach and flexibility of operation is a perfect match for John White's personal philosophy in the way he manages Britain's largest private forest nursery.

"It is," he says, "no good growing a good plant if it doesn't earn a profit for the company. Here at Greenhills, we use every facility at our disposal to keep stock losses to a minimum and achieve good quality control. And, most important of all, we provide our clients with the continuity and consistency of service which is so essential.

"It would be pointless to grow trees which leave the nursery in perfect condition but which deterioriated by the time they had arrived at the planting site where, after all, most clients see their investment for the first time.

"That's why we take so much care not only in growing the plants but also in their delivery from the nursery."

WHEN John White first took over running the nurseries in 1975, he brought with him a rare attribute which has been invaluable in nursery work. As a forester himself — he worked with the Forestry Commission for 23 years — he has first-hand knowledge of the type of trees which foresters want. Not all nurserymen can claim that. Born and bred in Lincolnshire, John spent all his spare time as a youth working on farms and followed his brother into forestry after a brief sojourn in the Palestine Police. He came to Tilhill in 1971 when the company acquired a business in East Anglia where he was based and was the manager of the Anglia branch at Bury St Edmunds.

THE WALKERS have made working at Greenhills a real family affair. Margaret joined as nurseries office manager just over three years ago, daughter Sarah is the office junior at head office and now husband David has completed the team by coming in as cold store and despatch supervisor at the beginning of September. Margaret's office is the nerve-centre of the nursery and is a hive of activity, especially during the autumn and winter when the orders for trees start flooding in, both from inside and outside the Tilhill organisation. From March onwards, the main despatching to Scotland starts and then there's a brief lull in the summer to catch up on the backlog of other work before the cycle starts all over again.

NURSERY manager Peter Gatfield is one of the people with longest service working in Nurseries Division and knows the operation inside out. In his 25 years there, he has progressed through virtually every job, from tractor and lorry driving to irrigation and the early introduction of chemical weed control. He was made foreman in 1969 and promoted to manager in 1973.

TRANSPORT manager Roger Denham could probably find his way to Scotland blindfold after seven years of ferrying a quarter of a million trees at a time from the Greenhills nurseries. He's one of two full-time drivers who makes the regular trip north.

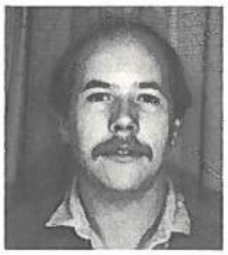
JOHN SIMMONS is a man who can turn his hand to almost any job. As maintenance foreman, he looks after all the nurseries plant and buildings as well as those at head office. He, too, has 25 years' service with Tilhill and helped to supervise the construction of the nurseries cold store.

CHARLIE SCOTT came to Tilhill eleven years ago after long experience in horticulture and running a smallholding. For the last eight years he has been a nursery supervisor.

KEITH PARRATT transferred to the Nurseries Division a year ago after a quarter century of Tilhill service with Southern Division. His job now is to supervise the squads of men working in the nurseries.

People and places

SOUTHERN DIVISION



Landscape role

David Cox joined Southern Division Landscape branch in August as an assistant contracts manager after taking a degree and graduate diploma in landscape architecture at Manchester Polytechnic.

Branch moves

Keith Jeddere-Fisher transferred from South East branch to Southern Division Landscape branch in June and **Raymond Hoare** transferred from Anglia branch to South East branch. Ray is stationed in Kent and is working out of a sub-office which opened in Canterbury in August.

Contracts post

Adrian Griffiths, of Southern Division Landscape branch has recently been promoted to the post of contracts manager.

Happy return

Some of the older hands will be interested to hear that **Fred Crozier** rejoined Southern Division as an assistant branch manager at Anglia branch in October last year. Many will remember his wife, formerly Miss Jo Turner, who was the Chairman's secretary at Greenhills for a good many years.

New arrivals

Congratulations to:

- Janice Hymers, wife of Anglia branch manager Philip, who gave birth to a third child, **Katherine**, in July and
- Keith and Hazel Jeddere-Fisher on the birth of their daughter, **Sarah Hannah**, who arrived noisily on August 18, weighing in at 8 lbs. 2 oz.

THERE was a happy occasion at Greenhills in July when three employees of the Nurseries Division who have between them clocked up 75 years' company service were presented with inscribed silver tankards, gold wristwatches and cash awards.

AWARDS

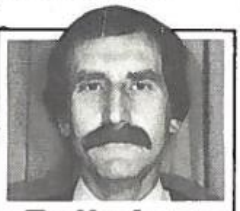
Peter Gatfield, Keith Parratt and John Simmons, who have each completed 25 years' unbroken service, received their awards from Chairman H. E. Trevan-Hawke.

In the picture, from left, are Managing Director David Brierton, Peter Mould, Peter Gatfield, Southern Division Director Bob Gray, Keith Parratt, Chairman H. E. Trevan-Hawke, Nurseries Division Director John White, John Simmons and Financial Director Robin Collet.

The remaining director Sandy Macpherson was away on holiday at the time of the presentation.

Service recognised

TILHILL administrative secretary Peter Mould (left) has received a 25-year long service award. Since joining Tilhill from Lloyds in 1957, Peter has seen the company go from strength to strength, witnessed the build-up of the management team and participated in the successful foundation of much of the present company structure. He was appointed a Trustee of the pension scheme in 1960 and a Director in 1964.



Full-time manager

THEO MARSH (above) has taken over as full-time manager of the Longlyf Treatment Plant at Greenhills.

Theo first joined Tilhill in June 1979 as manager of the West Midland Timber Treatment Company's Tanalith plant and was, for a time, also involved in the joint running of the Longlyf operation.

Evidence of Tilhill's confidence in the market for pressure treated timber products is provided by the creation of a new site office at the Longlyf plant and the purchase of a Bonser LS75 three-ton fork-lift truck.

The truck is used mainly for handling square sawn material from a number of local timber and builders merchants who have a steady year-round requirement for Tanalised timber.

The past few months have seen a rapid development of this aspect of Longlyf's business with a service based on reliability, flexibility and speed.

Site improvements have included the re-surfacing of the extensive road network at the plant. Further expansion of Longlyf's traditional business in preservative-treated fencing timbers and hop poles is also in hand.

SCOTTISH DIVISION

ASHLEY WILLIAMS has joined Borders branch as an assistant branch manager, after graduating from Aberdeen with a B.Sc. (For) in July last year. Survey work in the Border hills should give Ashley plenty of good fitness training as his interests are long distance walking and squash.

Julie McCall joined Scottish head office at Old Sauchie as a clerkess / typist in July. Before Tilhill, she worked for a local civil engineering firm.

Central branch appointments

THERE have been two new appointments at Central branch. Both newcomers are assistant branch managers. Gordon Stewart, who graduated from Edinburgh University in 1981 with a B.Sc. (Hons.) in forestry, undertook sub-contract work with Tilhill before joining the full-time staff.

He also carried out survey and research work with the Forestry Commission and spent two months in Malaysia on a forestry field survey.

Outdoor man

Gordon is very much an outdoor man and is particularly keen on sailing and ski-ing.

Colin MacBrayne arrived at Old Sauchie in August. He is an honours graduate from Aberdeen University and also gained an M.Sc. in aspects of farm-forestry with particular reference to New Zealand where he spent a year studying at the University of Canterbury.

Following his return to the UK, Colin worked at Aberdeen University on research, funded by the UK Atomic Energy Authority, on the potential of forest biomass for energy and the formulation of biomass yield tables. Immediately before joining Tilhill, he worked for EFG in Inverness.

He, too, is a keen sportsman and enjoys squash and golf.

Gordon Stewart, *new abm at Central (Forestry) branch.*

Colin MacBrayne, *new abm at Central (Forestry) branch.*

Computer's scope

A NEW computer has been installed at head office in Greenhills to replace Tilhill's existing machine.

It will improve accounting procedures by offering more facilities, increasing speed and improving accuracy of information. With a storage capacity of 80 million "bytes" or items of information, the Honeywell DPS4 has more than five times the capacity of the former IBM machine which Tilhill bought in 1976.

"We simply outgrew our old machine," said financial director Robin Collet.

Unlike the IBM, the Honeywell DPS4 can perform more than one operation simultaneously and, as the speed of processing is not governed by the print speed, process it dramatically faster. It will now take less than an hour to process the quarterly accounts instead of eight hours as before, although printing will still take up to four hours.

● Computer operator Nigel Stanton and punch operator Gill Long at work on the new computer.

Four visual display units, three in head office and one in Nurseries Division, enable data to be entered, checked and compared with existing information before going into the system. Reports can also be checked on the VDU before being printed, thus saving paper in the event of errors.

One of the printers on the new machine has the facility to compress print in such a manner as to produce reports on normal sized stationery, making reports easier to read, file or transport.

Computer staff Ken Evison and Nigel Stanton travelled every day for two months to Honeywell's Datacentre at Hammersmith to amend, adapt and, in some instances, rewrite the existing 200 programs and procedures to run on the new machine via the VDUs, while Gill Long, assisted by others in the accounts department, "held the fort" at Greenhills.

Though the purchase of the new computer, at a cost of £34,000, opens up scope for a whole new range of computerised facilities, it will, for the time being at least, be confined to accounting.

"But," says Robin Collet, "after a six-month run-in to iron out any teething problems, we can start looking at other applications for it.

"There's no reason why it shouldn't be used for maintaining woodlands records or analysing growth patterns, for example," he said.

Contracts

Scottish Division

SOLWAY BRANCH has been awarded a £9300 contract with the **West Lancashire District Council** which involves earthworks to form screen mounds, seeding and planting.

HIGHLAND BRANCH has received a £4500 contract from **Hanover Housing, Scotland** for tree and shrub planting at sheltered housing in Newtonmore.

Southern Division

CENTRAL LANDSCAPE branch reports a number of successful tenders for landscape contracts —

- Playing fields and all-weather cricket pitch for **Hounslow Borough Council**, value £43,000;
- Landscaping for Croudace at Hampton, value £25,000;
- Landscaping of a housing development at Portsmouth for **Faulkners**, value £24,000;
- Planting and seeding around an old people's home at Walton-on-Thames, value £14,000;
- Landscaping of a prestige development at Salisbury for **Wimpeys**, value £10,000;
- Planting for **Hampshire County Council** for an industrial site near Fareham, value £9000;
- Planting round a supermarket at Didcot, value £9000;
- Landscaping for **Wessex Regional Health Authority** at Winchester, value £9000.

ANGLIA branch has been awarded a contract worth £8360 with the **Anglia Water Authority** for soiling, tree and shrub planting and maintenance at Halstead sewage treatment works.

A similar contract with **British Telecom** is valued at £10,660.

MARCHES branch is to landscape a derelict site at Earlestown Railway Triangle, St Helens, for **Merseyside County Council** under a contract valued at £20,000.

CENTRAL LANDSCAPE branch have begun work on a £30,000 contract, awarded by the **Scottish Development Agency**, to seed and maintain a 12 ha reclaimed site at Bo'ness. Approximately half the site is to be seeded this season with the balance to be completed next spring, followed by a one-year maintenance programme.

They have also won a £10,000 contract from **Marshall of Tillicoultry** for landscaping work at Alloa's Sauchie Hospital and a £7500 contract from **Whatlings Ltd.** for restoring an area used for tipping from the M90 motorway.

This contract involves deep ripping in two directions to relieve compaction, followed by cultivation, fertilising, seeding and fencing of the three ha site.

Next autumn, the area is to be ploughed and planted with commercial forestry species and handed back to the local estate.

EAST YORKS branch have been awarded a £43,233 contract by **Balfour Beatty** for grass seeding, tree and shrub planting at Portrack sewage works and a contract worth £14,783 from **Cleveland County Council** for landscaping, planting and seeding works on the A19 Fleet Bridge road at Billingham.

Other contracts received by this branch are one for £9772 from **Sir Robert McAlpine Project Management Ltd.** for tree and shrub planting at the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association at Middlesbrough, another for just under £6000 from **Fairclough Building Ltd.** for grass seeding and hedge planting at the Catterick Garrison ammunition compound and a further contract worth £3100 from **Phillips Petroleum** for 55 ha of grass cutting and minor grass seeding works at Greatham tank farm.

TIMBER!

RETIRING Rolls-Royce pension trust secretary Derrick Haynes fulfilled a long-held ambition last month when Tilhill arranged for him to fell a tree.

Scottish central branch manager Tom McLellan heard of Mr Haynes' wish and arranged for an informal ceremony to be held on his last routine visit to Rolls-Royce-owned woodlands at Belvidere near Hamilton.

The tree selected, a 16 metre tall, 0.75 cubic metre Sitka spruce, was sent as a sawlog to the local sawmill after the felling ceremony.

New branch opened

SOUTHERN Division has opened another new branch, the Berkshire branch, based at Hungerford and housed in the pleasant surroundings of Church House on the outskirts of the town.

The proximity of the M4 motorway and feeder roads provides the new branch with excellent communications and opens up access to neighbouring counties, hitherto more distant from existing branch offices. There is an existing concentration of managed estates in Berkshire and north Hampshire.

The manager of the new Berkshire branch is Martin Giles (pictured), formerly an assistant branch manager in the Southwest branch. Martin first joined Southern Division in 1972 after four years in West Africa and was initially employed in the Central branch. He gained his National Diploma in Forestry in 1981 and is a Chartered Forester.

Continued from front page

rounded chamber immediately under the bark. the beetle lays its eggs. As they hatch, the larvae feed from the edge of the chamber, enlarging it in an irregular shape. Attacks, particularly in Sitka, result in ring-barking and death of all or part of the tree.

External signs of activity are identified as "resin tubes." The burrowing beetle entering the stem throws out a coarse frass which mixes with exuding resin to form, when fresh, a glistening blob of dark red-brown in which a hole marking the entry point is often quite clear. This later hardens and with addition of more resin will be seen in older workings as dirty grey and hard.

The only satisfactory treatment is to fell the infected tree and strip it of all bark, which should immediately be burned or treated with an approved insecticide on site. The quality of the felled timber is not affected.

At the time of going to press, the number of separate locations of infestation identified in both Forestry Commission and private woodland is less than 20. In all cases, prompt sanitation felling and bark treatment are being carried out. As a further precaution, movement of any infected material is banned and transport of softwood logs in or through the affected district is under licence.

All foresters, not only in or near the affected zone but throughout the country, have been fully alerted to the risk and prompt identification of any fresh outbreak can properly be expected. Although it is only a matter of weeks since the first identification, some comfort is to be taken from the fact that, so far, sightings have been restricted to a relatively confined area of the country.

The original source of the beetle's entry to the country must remain a matter of speculation. A possible, if not probable, cause was the importation allowed of sawlogs from the windblow in Germany.

Whether or not this was the source, the present occurrence serves to underline the necessity for there being no relaxation at any time in the country's plant health defences against the importation of pests or diseases.

Bark Beetle alert

Memorable study tour

THIS year's study tour stood out from its predecessors in a unique and memorable way.

During the three-day tour, history was made when the old Institute of Foresters was wound up and members transferred to the new Institute of Chartered Foresters.

The tour was held in Galloway in southwest Scotland, centred at Gatehouse of Fleet and was attended by about 90 people, including 11 from Tilhill.

Graham Drennan-Smith (left) rests from the rigours of the tour and David Houldershaw (right) seeks refreshment while Vaughan Hammond holds forth on the problems of Arecleoch.

● FOR those who missed it, Bryson Middleton, Scottish Division Southern Area Manager, here reports on the Institute of Chartered Foresters 1982 Autumn Study Tour.

Field trip

The programme included talks, a field trip to study red deer damage, discussions on the problems of acid rain, a look at some of the problems — and solutions — affecting forestry in that part of the country and a visit to two local private estates.

The programme opened with an introductory talk by John Davies, Conservator, South Scotland, who reviewed forestry in the Galloway region.

He told delegates that the three per cent of the area covered with forest in 1945 had increased to 22 per cent today, making forestry a major industry and employer, though unemployment in general was high. The rate of planting had suffered a considerable drop in the last few years.

He identified problems facing foresters in Galloway as damage by pests, especially red deer, the current lack of markets, especially for small roundwood following the closures of Bowaters at Ellesmere Port and Wiggins Teape at Fort William, the liability of trees to windthrow on unstable soils and the need to improve minor county roads in order to transport forest products to markets.

Mr Davies also talked about some of the Forestry Commission's other aims — for example, the landscaping of attractive stretches of tourist routes, the encouragement of wildlife and the provision of low-cost recreational facilities for the public.

On the first day in the field, delegates saw examples of severe damage caused by an estimated population of 3000 red deer in 45,000 ha of forest in the Galloway heartland. Helped by a favourable climate and vegetation, numbers are increasing and there is an urgent need to increase the cull in order to keep damage to an acceptable degree.

Suggested measures to reduce the population include the extention of the shooting season for hinds and more night shooting. CB radios and cross-country motor tricycles are being used to improve communications and transport.

The policy of the Galloway Deer Control Scheme, formed to combat the problem of deer and comprising both the Forestry Commission and the private sector, is to reduce the red deer population in the central zone and prevent the establishment of a resident population in peripheral areas.

The subject of acid rain, recently in the news as a widespread problem in the northern hemisphere, was studied later in the day. Members were given a talk by a team of scientists on studies being carried out on the effect of acid rain on lochs and streams. Acid rain is caused by the emission of air pollutants from industrial centres (power stations being the main culprits).

The rain causes an increase in acidity of the water in lochs and streams and this, in turn, is toxic to fish. Examples were shown of what were once good fishing lochs and which were now largely devoid of fish — Lochgrannoch, for example.

Although not the cause of acid rain, it would appear that the effect of coniferous forests around lochs may speed up the increase in acidity and studies are being undertaken to find ways of ameliorating these effects.

Day one rounded off with an address by the guest speaker, Euro MP Alastair Hutton, who expressed satisfaction with the expansion of forestry in the area and he spoke of his ambitions for greater EEC initiatives in forestry development.

Venue

The forest of Arecleoch was the venue for the second day, beginning with a very well-prepared exhibition of items relevant to the day's programme.

The forest is faced with two factors which give rise to windthrow risk — peaty soil and exposure. Members were shown examples of the Forestry Commission's experiments in growing Sitka spruce as quickly as possible under a liberal fertiliser regime and of respacing trials in plantations in which the earlier practice of close planting at only 1.5 metres had been retained later in the South Conservancy than elsewhere.

The final day of the tour was split into two visits to private properties, Barwhillanty Estate and then the policies of Glenlee House.

The former is a mixed estate of agriculture, forestry and sporting interests, totalling some 4963 acres (2009 ha) of which the forestry area is just under half. The woodland has evolved from 1.7 per cent in 1892 to 5.6 per cent in 1950, after which a plan was prepared progressively to increase the area to its present level.

Most of the estate woodlands are now in the stage of early thinnings and much effort has been applied in evolving suitable thinning methods to deal with the required programmes of work.

Glenlee enjoys topographic shelter from the southwest and the policy gardens now contain Britain's greatest concentration of tall trees. The approach avenue, planted with Douglas firs, now forming a cathedral of stems of 160-170 feet high and with massive girths, is quite spectacular.

Within the sheltered confines of the glen behind the house is a range of exceptional specimens of sequoia, Norway spruce, European larch, cedars and cypress, most of which were so large that after an hour in these woodlands, great trees of 100-120 feet went unremarked, so massive were their neighbours.

The perpetuation of the policy woodlands was the subject of much debate as the area has a very regular age structure. Natural regeneration is now in abundance and is growing vigorously when past the browsing height of a roe deer. The lack of trees of moderate height was due to the severe depredation of rabbits prior to myxomatosis.

At the end of the tour, ICF President, Dr Bill Mutch, expressed his thanks for the support given by members and to all those who had done so much in organising such an excellent and interesting excursion.

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