

Tree Scribe

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THE BOOKER PRIZE

A NEW chapter opens in the history of Tilhill with the recent announcement that the company is to become part of Booker McConnell PLC, while retaining and continuing to operate with its own separate identity as Tilhill Forestry Ltd.

For some time, consideration has been given by the Tilhill Board to the best methods of securing the long-term future and development of the company, and exploratory discussions have been held over the years with Booker McConnell and others with a view to overcoming the limitations that exist in remaining small and independent, in the same mould as the other British forestry companies.

SHRINKING RESOURCE

The international aspects of forestry daily become more important — a shrinking resource in the face of world population pressures. Linkages with agriculture are fundamental, both in relation to the production of food surpluses in the EEC and the USA and the encroachment of cultivation on the tropical forest.

Expertise in landscaping, amenity woodland and conservation are all in increasing demand, to set alongside the essential requirement of timber production. Optimal land use management and basic resource production are the fields in which Tilhill has much to contribute and in which the new partnership has been forged.

PARENT COMPANY

Tilhill's new parent company in Booker McConnell is Booker Agriculture International Ltd (BAI) with its headquarters in London. BAI is a subsidiary of Ibec Inc of the USA, which itself is 80 per cent owned by Booker McConnell, the balance being owned by members of the Rockefeller family.

BAI is involved in agricultural management and consultancy services both in the UK and overseas; a BAI subsidiary, McConnell Salmon, based in the Western Isles, is a leading producer of farmed salmon.

Ibec has substantial interests in turkey and chicken breeding and has a controlling interest in Wagner Woodlands Inc., a well-respected forest



● The signing ceremony, attended by senior management of the two companies and their advisers. Seated (left to right) are: H. E. Trevan-Hawke, Tilhill's chairman, David Brierton, Tilhill's managing director, Ed Robinson, managing director of BAI and Jim Evans, a director of BAI.

management company in the Northeast USA which is currently expanding into the Southern States.

Tilhill's MD, David Brierton, assisted Ibec with technical advice before they invested in Wagner Woodlands. It has been agreed that Tilhill will take a 20 per cent share in Wagner Woodlands Inc and that David Brierton will join the Board.

In Britain, Tilhill led the way after the war in the development and provision of management and contracting services in forestry, to which were subsequently added nationwide services in landscaping. Throughout this time the company has been in the forefront of forest tree nursery production and pioneered much of today's nursery technology in this country.

NEW CHAPTER

An exciting new chapter in the company's history now opens which it is confidently expected will be for the mutual benefit of the company's clients, customers and employees. The accent will continue to be on high quality of service, integrity and reliability, but now, thanks to an international background, a wider scope of services both at home and abroad is immediately accessible through Tilhill.

Borders boost

A & R BROWNIE Limited have announced plans to build a new £1 million sawmill near Hawick in the Scottish Borders.

The news came as a welcome boost to the Borders forestry industry. When completed, in about two years' time, it will provide an important new sawlog market for timber growers in the area — among them Tilhill's long-standing clients in the Borders.

A & R Brownlie have been in business at Earliston since 1856. The new mill, which will be situated 15 miles away on a 30-acre site at Denholm Mill Farm, will double their local production capacity. At present, the firm handles 20,000 cubic metres of timber a year at Earliston and employs a workforce of 30.

The expansion plan has been motivated by the fact that many Borders plantations are now reaching production and A & R Brownlie have been looking for a suitable site for more than a year close to timber supplies in Roxburghshire and the south-west Borders.

The construction industry will be in the firm's main market, but they intend also to continue producing timber for the mines, the railways and for fencing and packaging.

Mr Sandy Brownlie, chairman of the group which operates as far apart as Inverness-shire and South Wales, stressed that as the project had only just been granted outline planning permission, it was still in its very early stages.

"We are currently building a new sawmill in Boat of Garten," he told *Tree Scribe*, "and until that is running, probably by early next year, we do not expect to be making much progress with Denholm Mill Farm."

Managers meet at Marnhoul

SOLWAY branch was the venue for the autumn Scottish Division managers' meeting on September 28 and 29. Twenty-four Tilhill staff attended the two-day meeting which had as its theme — early thinning in high Yield Class Sitka spruce.

The meeting assembled at Marnhoul Estate which was the first upland afforestation area planted by Solway branch in 1967. The weighted average Yield Class is slightly over 16 but in several areas the Yield Class is as high as 24 and the discussion was concentrated on whether or not these stands should be thinned early — particularly on the more

exposed sites — and, on the more sheltered areas, if selective or mechanical thinning was the better option for maximising the financial return to the client.

The problem of possible shortages of skilled labour and the development of mechanisation were discussed at some length, against the background of a projected volume from first thinnings in Solway Branch rising to 11,000m³ in two years' time.

With the objective being to maximise the sawlog production from the stand, but at the same time ensuring that the stability of the crop was maintained as much as possible, early selective thinning

was considered to be the best option on low windthrow hazard-class sites — providing the markets and labour resources are available and the operation does at least break even.

It was recognised, however, that as the volumes increase dramatically in the next few years, mechanisation will have an increasingly important role in harvesting.

There are also encouraging signs that small roundwood prices are improving, with the prospect of clients in South Scotland achieving positive returns on their early thinnings and, at the same time, improving the quality of their investment.

Shotton's 'shot in the arm' for Marches



Marches branch manager Steele Haughton (right) talks to M and M's sales director Tony Evans about the firm's new export market for playground timber which can be seen in the background.

FORESTRY in Wales and the Welsh Marches is experiencing a new mood of optimism since the decision last year by United Paper Mills of Finland to go ahead with a £135 million development to provide a new integrated pulp and paper mill.

Although not due to go on stream until the summer of 1985 the prospect of a new major centre of demand for small spruce roundwood has already started ripples in the timber marketing pool.

The advent of Shotton is particularly welcome for timber growers in Wales where small roundwood markets have been difficult to find since the closure in 1980 of the Bowater mill at Ellesmere Port.

Since then, growers have found themselves in the position of competing with one another for the same markets. This, coupled with the fact that small roundwood is expensive to harvest and deliver led, predictably, to low returns to the grower.

MARKET

All that now stands to change. Although the Shotton Mill will take three quarters of its annual requirement of 450,000 tonnes from Forestry Commission wood, this still leaves 112,000 tonnes to be supplied by private growers.

"Shotton will provide the stable long-term market for small roundwood that we have been looking for," said Tilhill's Marches branch manager, Steele Haughton, "and the timing is just right, with large areas of spruce plantations planted during the post-war years now ready for thinning."

Based on Church Stretton in Shropshire, the Marches branch manages some 925 hectares of woodland, of which 475 hectares comprise mainly Sitka Spruce plantations in the 20-25 year age range.

Over the next five years the production of small roundwood is forecast at 4,500 cubic metres per annum, building up to 7,500 cubic metres in the early 1990s. Approximately 90 per cent of this production will come from four estates situated in the uplands of Dyfed and Powys which were acquired by the Rolls-Royce Pension Trust over the past four years.



Thinnings work in progress at Bryn Glas, a 39-ha. section of the woodlands in mid-Wales which Marches branch manages on behalf of the Rolls-Royce Pension Fund.

Steele says that a recent strong demand for fencing material has enabled him to make a start on first thinnings at one of the estates belonging to the Pension Trust. His main customer is M. & M. Timber who require regular supplies for their plant which is situated on a former coalmine site near Kidderminster.

Although the company produces mainly treated fencing stakes for agriculture, it is now diversifying into a promising new international market for playground products. First thinnings from Marches branch are thus finding their way into children's playgrounds as far afield as Japan and Mexico.

While acknowledging that the demand for stake material is more than welcome, Steele is looking ahead to Shotton coming on stream to provide him with the alternative market necessary to expand and

diversify his marketing activities.

"There is no doubt," says Steele, "that Shotton will give a much needed 'shot in the arm' to the marketing of small roundwood throughout my branch area. In addition, a major expansion in harvesting and haulage services will be necessary to make sure that the timber moves from the forest to the mill efficiently and economically, all of which adds up to more investment and, most important of all, new jobs."

From an investor's point of view Shotton provides a bulk market for early thinnings which fills an important gap in the timber marketing scene. In Steele's view, now that this gap is about to be filled and taking into account the strong local market for sawlogs, this must attract more investors in forestry to the uplands of Wales.

ICF honours Dame Sylvia

DAME SYLVIA CROWE, former Landscape Consultant to the Forestry Commission, received the first Honorary Fellowship awarded by the Institute of Chartered Foresters at the guest dinner at Exeter on September 17. In making the award, Dallas Mithen, President of the Institute, spoke of Dame Sylvia's outstanding contribution to the landscaping of Britain's young forests so that they became an acceptable part of the countryside.

STUDY TOUR

Some 80 members of the Institute assembled at Exeter University for the annual study tour. During the three days of the tour, nine locations were visited to study and discuss such diverse subjects as the effects of espacement on wood structure, the materials available for the manufacture of tree shelters, and tree planting along trunk roads and motorways.

A visit to a farm estate illustrated how an area of broadleaved woodland could make a contribution to the farm economy. The question of the management of broadleaves was a constant theme running through the tour, culminating in an evening discussion on the Forestry Commission's Consultative Paper, Broadleaves in Britain, when concern was expressed at the insufficient regard given to the wishes of the owner and the lack of emphasis on timber production.

OAK BUTT BOUND FOR WINDSOR



THIS oak butt grown in Crowborough Warren Woodlands has been donated to the Oak Appeal for St George's Chapel, Windsor, by the owners, Earl Castle Stewart and The Hon. Simon Stewart.

Following conversion and seasoning, the timber will be used for repairing the fine and ancient chapel buildings which date from 1140 to 1500 and contain a large quantity of English oak.

The generous response to the appeal from landowners in Sussex and Surrey means that the Deans and Canons of Windsor are now assured of a supply of repair timbers for at least the next 20 years.

A man for all seasons

In a business where physical stamina and a willingness to work outdoors in bad weather is the rule rather than the exception, it takes someone extra special to be singled out as being "tough."

But John Robertson is, by all accounts, something of a character. One of the longest-serving forestry sub-contractors in Scottish Division and by a long chalk the longest in Solway branch, John is known for his reluctance to wear anything more than shirt-sleeves to work in, even in the middle of winter.

Scottish Division general manager Peter Sloan, who was originally responsible for bringing John to work with Tilhill 17 years ago, remembers more than one occasion in a snowstorm when John was digging drains stripped off to the waist!

John started with Tilhill in 1967 as a squad leader in the newly-established Solway branch. He and Peter Sloan had met while John was hedge-cutting on an estate which Peter managed in a previous capacity and, once work in Solway began to build up, John was given work on a regular basis.

"I jumped at the chance," said John, who had spent all his working life until that point finding his own work and often failing to find people either willing



or able to put in the same kind of strenuous day's work which he was capable of doing — and quite obviously relished.

"He was as strong as a bear in those days," recalls Peter, "and would roll up in all weathers on a motorbike with his tools beside him in a sidecar."

In great shape

Life has progressed somewhat since then. Now in his late 50s, John has a van to transport himself and his squad to a worksite, but he's still in great physical shape and can wield his rutter as vigorously as ever.

Working with the Solway branch has given John job stability and enabled him to build up a small squad. John Lochrie and Jim Pickthall work regularly with John on forestry contracts all over the branch's territory as a hard-working and always reliable three-man team. The fourth member is John's five-year-old Jack Russell terrier, Joss, who goes with him everywhere.

As a ditcher, John has few equals. Before specialising in forestry work, he worked a seven-day week clearing hill drains by hand, enjoying the challenge of getting the water to flow again after clearing choked drains of debris and re-cutting the sides with a rutter.

Drain maintenance is still a very large part of his work, especially in the larger forests managed by the branch, and he also handles weeding, planting, fertilising and hedge-cutting. Increasingly, however, because of the growing importance to the branch of landscape contracting, he is being drawn into this type of work, too.

But just as long as he is outdoors, John is happy. A real honest-to-goodness countryman in the classic mould, even his spare time is spent on country matters. Thanks to many years of contented browsing through natural history books at his home in Dalbeattie, there isn't a flower, bird or tree which John cannot name.

WORLD champion dry-stane dyker Eric Boyes was hired by Tilhill's Solway branch to build traditional turf dykes on the A7 Canonbie bypass near Carlisle.

Tilhill's landscape sub-contract, which is now nearing completion, was for tree planting and seeding along seven kilometres of new trunk road which takes traffic past the tiny village of Canonbie and its two narrow bridges.

When the designers specified 565 metres of turf and dyke walls for five new lay-bys, Solway manager Colin Forsyth decided to call in Eric, a local man who does most of the dry-stane dyking in the area.

Current holder of the title for best dyker awarded at the national championships in Gatehouse of Fleet, Eric comes from a long line of dykers and is in great demand from farmers and landowners to repair damaged dykes and build the occasional new one.

Far from being a dying art, dry-stane dyking is flourishing in areas where stone is plentiful as, in the long run, it works out considerably cheaper than fencing due to its greater durability — and usually looks a lot nicer into the bargain.

Eric and his team of two men and an apprentice each build an average of seven yards of wall a day and, for a wall four-and-a-half feet high, they reckon to manhandle around 14 tons of stone.

THE WALL THAT ERIC BUILT



In accordance with the specification, the top of the dyke has been planted with hedging plants.

Ian Roebuck, 20 years a dyker with Eric, and Brian Dickson, who joined the team eight years ago, are also champions. Eric and Ian won the pairs title at Gatehouse and Brian won a hat-trick of awards for the best in the under-25 age group.

But even champions can still learn a thing or two. Until he was asked to handle the Canonbie job, Eric had never built a wall where turf and stones are placed in alternating layers. Evidently quite pleased with his handiwork after some initial reservations about the

finished appearance of the wall, Eric explained to *Tree Scribe* that he had used exactly the same techniques as he would have done for a wall made entirely of stone.

First, he makes a string and wood frame to mark the contour of the dyke and then selects his stones carefully, building the larger ones into the heart of the dyke and using the small material as infill.

"The knack," he said, "is to choose the stone to fit the space, or valuable time is lost in cutting stone unnecessarily."

But the real secret for someone

like Eric who makes his living from dry-stane dyking is a combination of skill and speed. "I have to work quickly enough to make a profit without sacrificing the standard of workmanship," he said.

If Eric's walls last as long as those built by his forebears at the end of the last century, no-one need have any complaints. Walls built for 1½d a yard are still standing 80 years later while those made with concrete have long since succumbed to the joint ravages of frost and wind.

FRED CROZIER couldn't have explained it more graphically if he'd tried.

Pointing a finger at Culford on a map of East Anglia pinned to his office wall, it was obvious at a glance that the branch headquarters, just outside Bury St. Edmunds and once at the heart of the original Anglia branch's territory, now lies at the southern and northernmost extremities of the two new branch areas.

The much larger area covered by the old Anglia branch was divided into two a year ago to take advantage of the potential for further expansion and development in the branch's northern reaches.

The split gave Fred a larger geographic area than his Anglia South colleague Phil Hymers, but less than half the then existing workload. Fred, who returned to Tilhill three years ago after an 18-year absence, now faces the challenging task of building up the company's business in areas where Tilhill has not hitherto had a strong presence.

"That's west into Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, north-west into Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire right up to the southern border of Yorkshire and South Humberside and, to a lesser extent, into cities like Norwich and Great Yarmouth," said Fred casually with a sweep of his hand across the map. "Obviously, it will take time to build up, but the potential is there."

East Anglia is mostly flat, very fertile ground with low rainfall and dry soil. Before the fens were drained, the area's geographical links with the rest of the country were difficult and this has led to a sturdy individualism among the local population. Even today, there are few motorways in East Anglia and the people who live there frequently remark that it is a bit like living on a self-contained island.

IRRIGATION

For the farmers and market gardeners who earn their livelihood from the land, irrigation is a constant problem but the rewards of careful land and water resource management are bumper crops of wheat, barley, sugar beet, vegetables and, of course, bulbs. The light, sandy soil favours pine, and quality hardwoods grow on more fertile sites. One of the private, family-owned estates which Fred "inherited" from Phil has enviable stands of mature oak, ash, beech and sycamore.

But *Tree Scribe's* visit to Anglia North began not in the cool depths of mixed woodlands but in the searing heat of a building site during one of the hottest and driest summers on record. The location was, of all places, a new prison, currently nearing completion and expecting to receive its first "guests" next spring.

It is an unlikely setting for an intensive £80,000 landscape contract, but modern prisons have come a long way since the austere and visually punitive buildings of Victorian times, and both prison staff and inmates alike will be able to enjoy the results of Tilhill's planting work around the prison perimeter and in a series of inner courtyards designed to relieve the inevitable monotony of row upon row of single-storey cell blocks.

HM Prison Wayland is near the site of a former RAF airfield at Watton which is now used as a radar control centre for civil and military aircraft movements. Although the sound of wartime bombers is long gone, the air is still filled with the almost constant scream of jet engines from several RAF and US Airforce bases which use the skies above Norfolk for training.

The maximum-security prison is being built by R. G. Carter Limited for the Property Services Agency and Tilhill began work last December on a sub-contract to topsoil beds and plant trees, shrubs and herbaceous borders.

SECURITY

The contract was not without its difficulties. Labour squads were subjected to strict security measures and much of the planting had to be carried out between areas which had already been paved, calling for careful handling of machinery.

Despite the tree planting, shrub beds and the fine-mesh wire security fence which will enable prisoners to see the countryside beyond, there was no escaping the fact that this was a place of detention and as we walked out through the intimidating double steel prison gates, Fred and I both agreed that even enjoying the results of a Tilhill planting scheme was not worth "doing time" for!

PUTTING NEW BRANCH ON

Val Pettit visits Tilhill's newest branch, Anglia North, and hears from manager Fred Crozier of his plans for the branch's future.



Tilhill's Culford office, serving both Anglia branches, which was purpose built in 1981.

BRANCH secretary Christine Jackson (right) is in her second spell with Tilhill.

She first joined the company in 1978 as a part-time typist for two-and-a-half years and returned just over a year ago to work a four-day week and cover for Anglia South's Edith Mouncey during holidays.

Christine has three children, aged 13, 11 and 8 and in her spare time enjoys keep-fit and Brownies where she is a Brown Owl.



Next on our itinerary was the 165-hectare family-owned Ryston estate which Fred describes enthusiastically as having "tremendous capacity" for growing quality hardwoods. Several different species covering a wide age range are mixed with poplar and young conifers and some of the 200-year-

old hardwood is now being felled and the land re-planted with a similar mixture.

Another family-owned property is the 64-hectare Redisham estate which Tilhill manages. Redisham Hall is the home of Alastair and Alan Palgrave-

Brown who have substantial forestry interests in the area managed by Solway branch.

One of the branch's mainstays for forestry work are the Poplar Estates owned by the Midland Bank Pension Trust where the policy is to clearfell the poplars and return the land to agriculture.

Anglia North has two main poplar holdings, the 556-hectare Bliss estate near Lakenheath in Suffolk and a further 134 hectares at Grange near Bedford. The felling programme at Bliss, which began in 1979, will continue until 1990 with timber from trees originally planted 20 to 30 years ago for the match trade now going for peeler logs, pallet timbers and pulpwood.

"We do most of our own harvesting and marketing in this branch," explained Fred, "and some of our timber goes as far afield as Kent to be made into fruit baskets." Timber is sold either ready for loading at the roadside or delivered direct to the customer. Cleared land at Bliss is being returned gradually to agricultural use where it will earn for its owners a better financial return.

'BLACK GOLD'

At Gillsland, a 40-hectare outlier of the Bliss estate, Fred showed *Tree Scribe* newly-cleared acres of "black gold," the rich black Fen peat now growing enormous potatoes for local markets. Another six-hectare patch has just been felled and is now being de-stumped ready for its new role this autumn.

At Bliss, however, an area of woodland will be retained in poplar for the foreseeable future in order to conserve a habitat of the rare golden oriole which comes from Europe to this part of East Anglia each year to breed.

Bliss is one of the few known UK sites favoured by the birds, which need a largish territory for each pair to breed and rear their young. Ten pairs are thought to return annually to Bliss for the months of May to August and their presence in the wood during the summer means that Fred has to work to carefully drawn-up programmes in order not to disturb them or frighten them away.

Fifty-five miles to the south-west, at Grange, the poplar is also being clearfelled and returned to more profitable use, except that here, the emphasis is on

OUTDOOR MAN LANDS BACK 'INSIDE'!

DOUGLAS LAMONT'S road to his present job as branch forester has been long and beset with wrong turnings but, in arriving at forestry relatively late in life, he has found the lifestyle he loves most. He joined Tilhill in 1983 after spending his early working life in the coal and oil industry, where he was involved in marketing, and in market research, eventually running his own consultancy.

Finding himself with time on his hands, he rented a cottage in the Scottish Highlands and, through a friend, stumbled across the joys of forestry work when he was asked to lend a hand. He liked the work so much that he decided to abandon his previous career and start afresh.

Spells of forestry work as a contractor and also with the Forestry Commission in the North of Scotland led to enrolment on the first-ever full-time forestry course at the Scottish School of Forestry in Inverness from 1981-83 and, before joining Tilhill in November of his qualifying year, he worked briefly with Eagle Star in the Black Isle.

His responsibilities with Anglia North include supervision of landscape work and forestry contracts and helping Fred with the general running of the branch.



Douglas Lamont supervises shrub bed work at HM Wayland Prison.

RANCH ON THE MAP

newest branch, Anglia ger Fred Crozier of his

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Branch manager Fred Crozier (right) with timber contractor Julian Dennis during felling operations at Bliss.

gravel extraction and future recreational and sporting activities.

Mineral and gravel extraction also provides Anglia North with a good many forestry landscape contracts with an amenity bias where carefully-thought-out tree planting can do much to soften the otherwise unsightly scars left on the countryside during and after quarrying operations. One such scheme which the branch has recently completed is in Nottinghamshire on a site restored after the extraction of gypsum for the cement industry. Amenity trees, hedges and a small plantation were planted around a newly-formed lake.

As we drove through the endlessly flat countryside, where extensive and sophisticated irrigation systems testified to the area's lack of dependable rainfall, Fred explained that, despite the high quality of timber grown on estates like Ryston, East Anglia is not in general ideal forestry country. Rainfall is low — between 23 and 27 inches a year on average — causing drought problems for crops where irrigation is not practicable.

The branch depends heavily, therefore, on the growing landscape business but, even here, conditions mean that planting sites have to be closely monitored for signs of drying out. "One month we may have to water constantly," said Fred, "and the next, there's too much rain in a short period, sending the weeds sky-high."

In addition to the current prison contract at Wayland, Anglia North is also handling £6,000 worth of grass-seeding and tree and shrub planting at a new local authority sports centre in King's Lynn and a £7,500 contract for British Telecom's research laboratories at Martlesham Heath near Ipswich.

COVERTS

There is also a steady flow of work from traditional-type forest planting for local estates, tree-planting schemes in conjunction with the Countryside Commission, planting of game coverts on farmland and thinning such as on farms like Trostan, near Bury St Edmunds, where *Tree Scribe* met branch forester Douglas Lamont supervising a harvesting squad.

Expansion in all areas will be gradual, but much groundwork has already been put in by Fred in close liaison with the forestry and landscaping Area Managers to develop new contacts and seek out opportunities to tender for landscape work.

Good headway has already been made and it won't be too long before the large-scale map in Fred's office will have to be replaced by the next in the series to show the new branch's activities to best advantage.

FRED'S FRESH CHALLENGE IN FENLAND

FRED CROZIER made a welcome return to Tilhill in June 1981 in the Thirsk office of H&M Division and, when the Division was re-organised, moved to Anglia branch as assistant to Phil Hymers.

Previously, however, Fred had worked for Tilhill for ten years — from 1953-63 — starting initially as a forester in what is now Southern Division Central branch at Greenhills, working mainly in West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire and soon rising to branch manager. Many of the properties now handled by Central branch were either planted or brought into management during Fred's tenure and have remained in continuous Tilhill management ever since.

In the intervening years, Fred worked for a number of different companies, beginning with the London office of Scottish Land Development where he was involved with the moving and transplanting of large trees for the landscape trade, and returning to forestry in 1967 with the Eastern Woodlands Association in Norwich.

Experience there and later in timber harvesting, sawmilling and fencing contracting with the Bowater Organisation in Brandon near where he now lives gave him an intimate knowledge of the East Anglian forestry scene which he is now able to put to good use with Tilhill.

Fred's wife Jo worked as former Tilhill chairman Archie Atkins' secretary at Greenhills for 20 years, until 1972. The couple met at Greenhills and later married.

A Northumbrian by birth and upbringing who still enjoys the hills, Fred finds himself occasionally wondering how he came to be living and working with such contentment in a landscape as flat as a pancake!

'INSIDE'



tree bed work at HM Wayland Prison.

SCOTTISH



DUNCAN POLLARD joined Argyll branch in July as assistant branch manager. After completing his degree in forestry at Aberdeen University, he went to South Africa and worked for SAPPI Forests (Pty) Limited as a planning forester. A year later, he returned to Aberdeen to enter the honours year and from there joined Tilhill. With hobbies as diverse as ski-ing and underwater map reading, Oban should be an ideal place for him. Six weeks after joining Tilhill, Duncan was married to Catherine Nelson back home in their native Yorkshire.



MARTIN McKENNA joined Central Landscape branch in September as landscape assistant. Before taking up horticulture, he had been a professional musician playing the violin for six years and had been on several tours abroad. His group had released two records before disbanding in 1980.

Martin began his horticultural career with an eighteen-month spell with Renfrew District Council before entering the West of Scotland College of Agriculture where he qualified with an OND in Horticulture and the College Certificate in Beekeeping.



KATHLEEN MEDHURST has joined Central branch as clerkess/typist. Kathleen worked previously for a number of local firms in Stirling and has now settled down nicely in the more rural atmosphere of the branch office.



There are three new faces in Solway branch. **Simon Hart** arrived in July as an assistant branch manager immediately after graduating from Bangor University. His interests include soccer, squash and keeping fit.

LOCAL



Paterson

Forester **John Paterson**, who gained his OND at Newton Rigg, was born and brought up in Dalry which is in the heart of the Solway branch area, so his "patch" is already very familiar to him. In his spare time, John enjoys climbing and hillwalking.

Veronica Wright is the branch's new part-time typist. She replaces Eileen Hart who has retired after eight years' service.

RUNNING TOTAL

CONGRATULATIONS to Tom Dunlop who ran his first half-marathon in Stirling during the summer and raised £170 for the Cancer Research Fund in the process.

Tom, who is assistant branch manager with Scottish Division Central branch, turned in a respectable time of one hour, 46 minutes over the 13-mile course. Said Tom, who trained hard for the race: "It was my first attempt at a half-marathon, but it certainly won't be my last."

The money Tom raised came mainly from colleagues who sponsored him for an average of £3 a head.



SOLWAY branch manager Colin Forsyth (second from right) meets Euro-MP Alasdair Hutton (left) in his South Scotland constituency to discuss private forestry activities and timber production in the area. Also in the picture are (centre) Buccleuch Estates head forester Andy Little and factor Archie Finlay, at whose invitation Tilhill joined the visit to a plantation at Langholm.

DUNCAN FORD joined Anglia South branch as assistant contracts manager in August after graduating with a BSc. Dip.LA from Sheffield. He succeeds Peter Raines who has left to join Brackenwood Nurseries. Duncan's interests include ornithology, cycle touring, badminton and running.

SOUTHERN



DAVID HUNT has joined Berkshire branch as a forester. A local man born and bred in Tidcombe, seven miles from Hungerford, David obtained his OND in forestry at Cumbria College of Agriculture and Forestry immediately before joining Tilhill. Before studying full-time, he worked as a forestry contractor for three years in and around Savernake Forest in Wiltshire, involved mainly in thinning broadleaved plantations, and had a two-year spell with the Forestry Commission, also at Savernake. In his spare time, David enjoys shooting with his two working dogs, fishing, swimming, windsurfing, squash and tennis.



BARRY UPTON joined South East branch in July as landscape supervisor immediately after completing the Pershore OND course in Horticulture. During the course, he spent a year with Paul Temple Limited gaining experience in private and industrial landscaping, and for three-and-a-half years before beginning his studies he was employed by Blakedown Nurseries Limited. His interests include camping, touring and gardening.



H&M

Charlie's new post

CHARLIE FULTON was promoted to the position of Central Regional Manager for Harvesting and Marketing Division on April 2.

Charlie's career in forestry began in 1973 working on a private estate and then for EFG for two years before going to Newton Rigg to study for his forestry OND. As part of his course, he worked for the Forestry Commission and a local authority during his sandwich year.

FORESTER

In 1978, he joined Tilhill as forester with Lothians branch and was promoted to assistant branch manager in 1982 after obtaining his NDF. After six years' involvement in the very broad range of forestry and landscaping operations with the branch, which included the harvesting and marketing of clients' hardwood and softwood timber, Charlie is now settled into his new position and has made his home in Stirling.

NURSERIES

In Nurseries Division, Pamela Olliff began work in August as the new administrative assistant to Margaret Walker. She replaces Ann Jacklin.



David receives his farewell presentation from area manager Andrew Binmore.

SOUTH EAST branch landscape foreman David Martin retired in May after 15½ years' service with Tilhill. He was given a good send-off at Wraybury House when he was presented with a carriage clock and a bottle of malt whisky by his colleagues and with a cheque from the company. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Mick Filtness, who has been with Tilhill since 1977, takes over the job of landscape foreman.

Congratulations

• To Richard Carrick, forester with South West branch, who married Enid Morris in August. Enid comes from mid-Wales and worked until recently for the Forestry Commission.

• To Graeme Woods of Scottish Division Central Landscape branch on his marriage in Wick to Mary Weir.

• To Catriona MacLellan of Argyll branch on her marriage to Patrick McGuire.

• To Phil and Janice Hymers (Anglia South) on the birth of a daughter, Jennifer, on August 12, a sister for Michael, Christine and Katherine.

CONTRACTS ... CONTRACTS ... CONTRACTS



The BP site before Tilhill moved in . . . choked with neglected and overgrown scrub . . . and after, showing the woodland which has been selectively thinned and cleared of undergrowth.

Clearing SOUTHERN the Court...

DURDENT COURT is a modern complex of buildings standing on high ground facing south-east and overlooking the Colne Valley, near Denham in Buckinghamshire.

Visitors may be surprised not to see a country house standing in the parkland when they first arrive. Instead, they find an attractive complex of one-storey brick buildings.

BP purchased this ideally-situated complex in 1980 as a training centre and increased the capacity of the centre to provide 86 bedrooms, diningroom, swimming pool, games room and bar.

BP first approached Tilhill in 1982 with the brief to prepare an improvement scheme for the 20 hectares of parkland surrounding Durdent Court. A landscape report had been prepared in January 1982 by Professor Matthews of Aberdeen University and John Hughes of BP which provided valuable information for the preparation of the Tilhill report.

An intensive tree survey was

SOUTHERN Division Central Landscape branch is putting the finishing touches to a major contract for BP International in Buckinghamshire.

Here, branch manager **Adrian Griffiths** outlines the background to the work and describes how it was carried out.

undertaken by Geoff Turner of Central branch in summer 1982 which involved several hot weeks tramping the kind of jungle-like undergrowth of Durdent Court that only a badly-neglected parkland can produce.

Geoff located many trees of special interest, including a wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) and a bastard service tree (*Sorbus x thurigiaca*). The park has some excellent samples of Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) and several majestic Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea*).

A landscape master plan and a report were produced which, after

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Onshore oil exploration in Hampshire

CENTRAL Landscape branch has recently started work for Messrs Carless Exploration Company at two onshore sites in Hampshire.

The smaller of the two sites is situated just north of Alton on the well-wooded Herriard estate. The contract value was £1500 and involved soil grading, seeding and planting and shrubs and whips in tree shelters. The objective was to screen the entrance to the site and to extend and existing belt of mature Beech reputedly initiated by Repton in the 17th century.

This site is one of a number that Carless have explored in the Alton area and planning permission has recently been granted for further drilling, with provision for a pipeline from the oilfield to a railway storage point some four miles across country. The initial enquiry came in the form of an invitation to tender from James Riley of Colvin and Moggridge, Landscape Consultants, based at Filkins in Gloucestershire.

The other site at Horndean, further south in Hampshire, is located in open countryside. Earthbanks were formed by the main contractors in 1983 and Tilhill commenced planting up the site in June this year, using container-grown stock. Fortunately, there was provision in the bill of quantities to allow for watering which was very necessary during the ensuing drought conditions.

Before planting could commence, some 4500m² of banking had to be stripped clean of grass and weedgrowth and, bearing in mind the very real risk of fire and explosion within the well site, gas detectors had to be carried by the team to check levels during the strimming operation.

Carless have recently completed another well site nearby and, according to latest reports, this strike could be a major find.

● **ANGLIA SOUTH** branch has recently started on the landscaping of two service stations on the A45 for Mobil Oil Limited and Happy Eater Limited. The scheme, which was designed by Tilhill, consists of seeding, tree and shrub planting and maintenance to the value of £22,200.

The branch has also been awarded a contract for preparation, supply, planting and three years' maintenance of transplants and feathered trees on the M11 to the A121 section of the M25 near Loughton, Essex, value £75,000.

● **LANDSCAPE BRANCH** reports contracts from W. Lawrence and Sons Limited of Sawbridge-worth, Hertfordshire, value £58,214, Willett Limited of Croydon, Surrey, value £17,000, a further contract, worth £6,500, from RHM at Windsor for extra landscape maintenance work and a £5,766 contract for A. Hicks Limited of Marlow, Buckinghamshire, for ground preparation, seeding and planting.

More recently, Surrey County Council has awarded the branch a £39,910 contract for landscaping on the A30-M3 Blackwater Valley route and an £11,750 contract has come from Croudace Construction Limited for landscaping 38 dwellings at Hounslow.

● **MARCHES BRANCH** has won a £15,537 contract for tree planting and fencing at ICI Buxton

● **SOUTH EAST BRANCH** are working on contracts totalling more than £87,000. The largest, worth £50,000, is for R. H. Douglas Construction Limited to landscape A. H. Robins' new production facility at Horsham. Other work includes landscaping for Blue Circle Industries at their Southfleet Road quarry, value £12,200, an £11,100 contract to landscape the Albion housing estate for the London Borough of Southwark, a £7,500 contract to carry out final restoration works to the Sledwood waste disposal site at Dover for Kent County Council and a £6,300 contract to landscape the Queen's Road old people's home at Crowborough for East Sussex County Council.

● **SOUTH WEST BRANCH** has won a £9,800 contract for landscape work at a new health centre at Freshwater, Isle of Wight for the Wessex Regional Health Authority.

SCOTTISH DIVISION

● **BORDERS** branch has won a £22,218 landscape contract to carry out minor earthworks, ditching, cultivation, grass seeding and tree planting for British Gas on a 7.4 ha. site at the Wooler Compressor Station.

● **LOTHIANS** branch has been awarded a £12,300 contract from Lothian Regional Council for landscape maintenance work at Bryanswood and Easthouses at Dalkeith in Midlothian.

● The same authority has renewed a year's maintenance contract with Central Landscape branch. Worth £48,000, it covers work at a number of different sites throughout West Lothian.

● **NORTHERN** branch has won a

£27,000 contract for three years' maintenance at RAF Buchan for the Property Services Agency and another, worth £16,000, for two years' landscape maintenance on nine sites in north-west Grampian for the Scottish Development Agency.

● **YORKSHIRE** branch is working on two local authority contracts. The first is for hydraseeding, shrub and bulb planting for phase two of the 3.59 ha. Temple Memorial Park for South Tyneside Borough Council. The contract is worth £37,550 and includes two years' maintenance. The second, for Durham County Council, is for fencing, planting and a year's maintenance at Seaham Grange Industrial Estate, value £25,536.

IN recent years Brazil has experienced a great upsurge in landscaping. The initial and much of the subsequent momentum has been provided by just one man, Roberto Burle Marx.

There is a dearth of literature relating to pre-Burle Marx landscaping. It is apparent however that, in common with other countries, gardens were, in the first place, purely functional, planting consisting primarily of fruit trees etc.

Their development since then up to the Burle Marx era has simply tended to mirror the major European fashions so that a variety of styles exists. Both formal and informal styles are to be found, Praca Paris in Rio de Janeiro being an example of the former, while Parque Laje, also in Rio, which was designed by John Tyndale and is more reminiscent of the teaching of William Robinson, is an example of the latter.

The 1930s saw the beginning of the evolution of the modern Brazilian garden. Burle Marx, in his job as Director of Parks and Gardens in Recife in the north-east of Brazil, grasped the opportunity to inject landscape schemes with a more Brazilian spirit, firstly by the use of an uninhibited and exuberant style, perhaps reflecting the attitudes and way of life of the Brazilian people and, secondly, by using native plants.

In 1935, Burle Marx moved to Rio and, as his work gained wider recognition, commissions began to flood in. At first, these were only within Brazil but then, as his fame spread, he was offered work in other countries, notably in Venezuela, but also in the USA and occasionally in Europe, eg. the gardens of the UNESCO building in Paris.

Despite Burle Marx's work and wide recognition within Brazil, the landscape industry is still very small and there are relatively few practising professionals. The majority of these, amongst them Fernando Chacel and Rosa Kläss, are based in the prosperous south-east of the country.

Most of these professionals

Brazil's exuberant landscaping scene



ADRIAN NORTON, of Southern Division Central Landscape branch, has recently returned from Brazil where he made a detailed study of landscape practices. The trip resulted from the award of a Churchill Fellowship and a John Mount Travel Scholarship.

Churchill Fellowships enable men and women, who might not otherwise have the chance, to travel abroad, both to widen their knowledge in their own field of activity and to gain a better insight into the lives and work of others. As a result of the experience they gain, it is hoped that they will contribute more effectively to their profession, community and country.

Funds are provided by the Churchill Trust which was founded in 1965 as a

result of a national appeal to establish a unique form of perpetual memorial to Sir Winston Churchill. John Mount Travel Scholarships are awarded each year to graduates in horticulture or allied disciplines for study abroad, related either to top fruit production or to amenity horticulture.

So far with the Churchill scheme more than 190 different subjects have been chosen by the 1630 people representing a wide cross-section of the community who have gained awards to travel to almost every country in the world.

In Brazil, Adrian found that despite a recent upsurge in landscaping activity and the great potential which exists for private work the public sector future looks bleak.



An example of Burle Marx's landscaping work in a garden in the capital Brasilia.

appear to work on a design-and-build basis and some of them also provide the plants from their own nurseries.

On visiting sites, one of the most remarkably striking features of relatively newly planted areas is the apparent maturity of the planting. The gardens surrounding

the house of the Brazilian architect Jose Celso Gontijo in Brasilia, for example, had been planted only four months before my visit and yet good cover had already been achieved.

This is obviously partly due to the warmth although, without the high input of both fertilizers and

water specified by the designer, Ney Ururahy, it is likely that growth would have been severely inhibited, for the natural soil of the area is inherently infertile and the dry season is so dry that on occasion humidity levels fall below those of the Sahara.

The cost of this project, which included a fairly large area of hard landscaping, averaged about \$30/m².

Although there seem to be plenty of opportunities to do work for private clients, not only wealthy individuals but also large national and international firms, the future looks bleak as far as the public sector goes.

Despite the fact that there is great potential for large public landscaping schemes, especially in Brasilia, the likelihood of these being implemented is small, for the huge international debt and other more pressing domestic problems render such schemes of low priority.

CLEARING THE COURT

Continued from Page 7

some modification during discussion with BP and Buckinghamshire County Council planners, was adopted in spring 1983. This allowed seeding and container planting to take place during May 1983 around the immediate environs of the centre.

The objective was to restore the parkland to enable BP staff to enjoy the woodland walks and views across the Colne Valley. Screening of the car parks and feature planting around the buildings was also a major consideration and the plan and report also took cognisance of the landscape policy for the upper Colne Valley and the requirements of the client in terms of capital and maintenance costs.

The existing front lawn was of extremely poor quality, with heavily compacted gravelly soil

struggling to support a grass sward. Therefore, one sunny morning last summer, the staff of Durdent Court woke to find a Caterpillar tractor slowly ripping up the existing lawn and, within a few days after regrading, soiling and harrowing, a new seed bed was created, ready for the autumn rains to be followed by the new lush green sward.

Phil Holt commenced work clearing in the woodland areas in May 1983 and this produced some unexpected surprises. Large quantities of builders' debris, deposited over many years, were brought to light as the woodland was opened up. Fortunately, a dell provided a suitable site in which to

dispose properly of the unwanted find.

Phil skilfully cut and cleared his way through each woodland area in turn. By September, phase one of the works was completed leaving a transformed landscape, with glimpses of the former gravel pits in the Colne Valley giving the illusion that extensive lakes lay at the bottom of the park. Elegant groups of Silver Birch now stand proud in clearings formerly enclosed and overgrown for years by Thorn and Elder.

During the following winter, perimeter planting was carried out using indigenous species to infill areas where dead and dangerous trees had been felled. Further

planting of species such as *Platanus acerifolia* (London Plane) and *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse Chestnut) was carried out in the woodland areas to allow the parkland to redevelop.

An arboretum was planted up with species such as *Betula papyrifera* (Paper Birch), *Ailanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven) and *Cedrus libani* (Cedar of Lebanon).

Open ground planting around the car parks was carried out to promote effective screening from the buildings. Species included *Sambucus canadensis* aurea (Golden Elder), *Viburnum fragrans* (Winter flowering) and *Cornus Westonbirt* (Red-stemmed Dogwood). The balance of the tree work has now been completed leaving only a small number of whips to be planted this winter in some of the newly-created woodland glades.

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