

Tree Scribe

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ALL CHANGE

FOLLOWING sweeping and fundamental changes in the fiscal treatment of forestry announced in the Budget speech, and the new grant levels announced eight days later, the forest industry has had thinking to do.

In the Budget, the Chancellor removed forestry from the scope of income tax. This removed the ability to offset establishment costs against income from other sources, sweeping away the main assistance to the establishment of new forests which had existed for decades.

While timber sale revenues are now also untaxed, previously under Schedule B tax was minimal, being on an annual unimproved land rent. Transitional arrangements permit those already in forestry on Budget day to continue claiming tax relief until 1993; without this essential proviso, the current year's programme would have come to an immediate halt.

The new grant system called Woodland Grant Scheme, already dubbed WGS, was greeted with relief when announced one week later by the Secretary of State for Scotland. The grant levels are very substantially increased over those in previous schemes, virtually equating for immediate costs of establishment, with the previous combined effect of tax relief and grant.

As welcome was the re-affirmation of Government's target of 33,000 hectares of new forest annually, and the importance of timber supply to the manufacturing and processing sector of the industry.

The Challenge

While an outsider might ask: what has changed?; nonetheless the change is radical. It will no longer be attractive to borrow to buy forestry land, as interest will not be tax offsetable.

While net establishment costs will be of similar order, and will continue to be attractive to those who already own land, new entrants to land-ownership will be limited to those who do not require to borrow to finance the long-term investment, that is, in financial institutions or very wealthy individuals.

"Old money" will be favoured over new. This may not seem of concern outwith the industry, but to get the necessary new sources of investment in expansion to meet government targets is a formidable challenge.



• Why are these timber men looking so pleased? To find out, turn to our centre spread feature on the cash returns being achieved as early as 16 years old in this Forest of Bowland plantation.

New grant structure — page 12

The Opportunity

It would be bold indeed to predict that the new grant system on its own will enable the desired planting levels to be achieved; only two-thirds of Government's target hectares have been planted in recent years, even with the compelling fiscal incentives which are now abolished; it is difficult to see such radical change not resulting in some loss of momentum, as happened in 1974 when forestry was last affected by major fiscal changes. However, if land prices weaken as a result, the new grant levels will provide a particularly good opportunity for committed investors.

The fundamental changes are undoubtedly a response to the preservation lobby, who have attacked forestry in recent years with increasing zeal, provoked particularly by what they consider to be habitat-damaging afforestation in Caithness. They recently switched their unsuccessful attack from forestry per se, to the fiscal supports of forestry, and scored a bullseye.

The Success Story

It is clear the forest industry, until recently modest in public relations, must improve substantially in this.

The Forestry Industry Committee of Great Britain (FICGB) founded last year, must be supported. Its first publication "Beyond 2000", launched in December, set out clearly and authoritatively, World, European, and British demand for forest products against the dwindling forest resource, and highlighted the success story that is Britain's forest industry of the 80's, with over £650 million invested in new timber using industry and with planned additions of £400 million.

The linkage with post-war afforestation is stressed; such industry exists only because of the availability of the raw material. Britain is a world leader in creating new forests, as opposed simply to mining natural forests.

The Way Ahead

The way ahead for the industry is, as Government has

recently stated, in planting more better ground "down the hill." This is where Tilhill has consistently sought to go.

Despite new criteria for clearance of better quality land for planting announced by the Secretary of State for Scotland in March 1986, the release of such better quality land by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland (DAFS) has been only grudging and in modest quantities.

The Minister of State stated, last December when FICGB launched "Beyond 2000," that the "straitjacket" is off as regards availability of good quality land for forestry. The Forest Industry would be grateful if he would instruct DAFS that this is so; otherwise, with the support structure so radically changed, Government's target for new planting will not even be approached, let alone achieved. Creation of attractive, varied forests can best be achieved on good quality, lower-lying land.

To meet targets by creating such new forests, approval of thousands of hectares of quality land is essential.

Continued on page 12

We report on the massive recovery programme undertaken

THE storm that struck SE England in the early hours of October 16 1987 killing nineteen people, was reportedly the worst storm to hit the South East since 1703.

In the few hours between 2.00 am and 6.30 am, some 16,000 Ha. of woodland were flattened, including many fine collections of old and rare trees.

Within ten days, the Forest Windblow Action Committee (FWAC), was instituted by the Forestry Commission, with membership from the TGUK, BTMA, and the UK Wood Processors Association, under the chairmanship of Mr J. Goodwin (UKWPA). Their remit was "to formulate and action policies which would lead to an orderly and realistic programme to deal with the problem."

Under the leadership of Mr Jim Dewar (FC) heading the Windblow Task Force, they reported to the Forestry Commissioners in early January with an assessment of the damage and an analysis of the markets and resources available to harvest the windblown timber.

First estimates of damage published by FWAC in November were that a total of 3.9 million of timber had been windblown, of which almost equal proportions were conifers and broadleaves. Of the total, however, 2.7 million or 70 per cent is in private ownership, of which some 980,000 is conifer.

In total, the volume represents five years production within the affected area and, in their report to the Forestry Commissioners, FWAC proposed a transport subsidy totalling £2.5 million to encourage, in particular, the rapid movement of pine and beech from the damaged areas, together with a planting supplement expected to total £4 million to assist owners with the considerable extra costs of restoration and replanting. Regrettably, Government has not yet responded to these proposals.

Picking up



● Measuring windblown oak at Oxpasture Woodlands.

Under the chairmanship of Peter Sloan, Tilhill's own Windblow Action Co-ordination Group was set up to co-ordinate damage assessment and harvesting and marketing between the three branches most affected; i.e. Southeast, Central and Anglia forestry branches.

By the time of the first meeting of the group, on November 19, assessments of the damage (which included several aerial surveys), indicated that at least 60,000M³ of timber had been windthrown on Tilhill client's estates, of which 40,000M³ or 67 per cent was conifer.

All branches were quick off the mark at expanding their harvesting resources, with additional production teams being brought in from Wales, northern England and southern Scotland, and some 25 squads were at work by the New Year.

Production during January and February was severely hampered by abnormally high rainfall, and one mini Bruennet forwarder was out of action for several weeks at Blean when it sank some four feet into the London clay. Output increased dramatically during March and currently approaching 6000 tonnes per month are being produced from clients' estates.

It is now expected that, even at the worst hit SE branch, all the conifer will be cleared by late summer, subject to markets remaining firm. Priority has generally been given to dealing with the conifer sawlogs, and in particular the pine, before fungal attack results in blue stain.

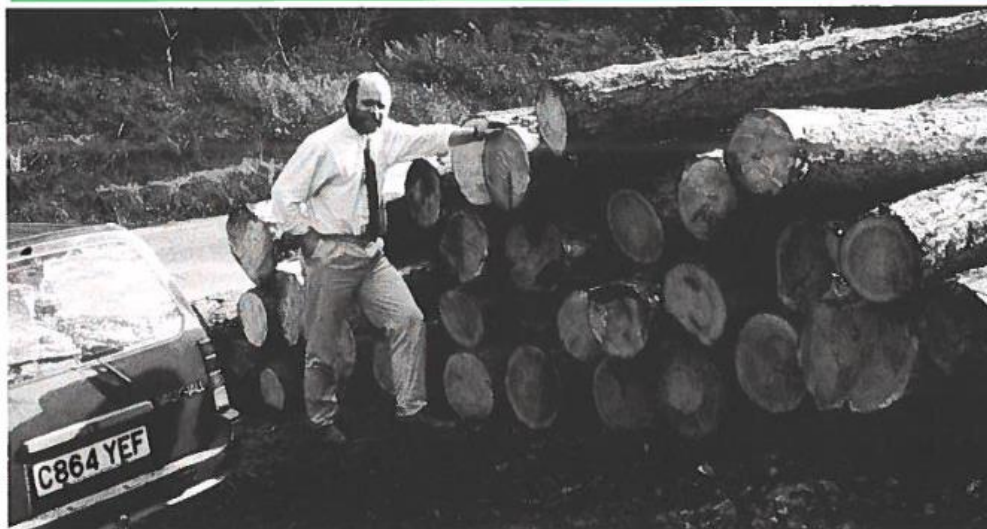
Due to the limited number of outlets within the affected areas, all branches are marketing the bulk of the produce to sawmills and processing industries in the north

and west of England, and Wales. The increased production costs of working the windblown timber, and increased costs of haulage, have led to a reduction in the returns to the owners, but resourceful marketing by Tilhill staff has achieved notable returns to the owners where this was possible.

At the other end of the scale, some small blocks of 20-year-old conifers with difficult access are unlikely to produce net returns, but Tilhill staff have nevertheless been able to reduce the cost of clearing these sites by recovering at least part of the timber.

In Kent, Dick Hoare's most difficult problem has been dealing with windblown overmature beech on estates situated on the scarp slopes of the North Downs. With an estimated 600,000M³ of beech down on private estates in the affected counties (85 per cent of all the windblown beech is on private estates), the marketing of the poorer mining quality timber has presented major problems, but current arrangements are producing a net return as well as restoring the sites.

SE Branch Manager Ray Hawes' next priority is to deal with the oak, and fortunately the market for this species is still strong. As the trees were still in leaf at the time of the storm, many fine planking butts were shattered due to the bending and twisting effect of the wind on the crowns, and this damage occurred even when the trees were completely windthrown. After allowing for the loss due to shake and shatter, achieved returns for the better grades are currently still at pre-storm prices.



Sproxton

BUOYANT timber prices prior to the October windblow have resulted in several successful sales of timber by Scottish Division branches. A notable example is the standing sale of 5931m³ of high quality mature timber by Yorkshire branch.

The crop, planted in 1900, is predominantly European Larch (total vol. 4593m³, av. tree size 1.59m³) with a significant proportion of hardwoods mostly Ash and Sycamore and Beech (total vol. 1105m³, av. tree size 1.00m³) and other mixed conifer including Scots and Corsican Pine, plus a few Spruce and Douglas Fir (total vol. 467m³, av. tree size 1.05m³).

in the wake of last October's devastating storm

the pieces . . .



● Tilhill move in to clear up with contractor Peter Cornish's Skogserik processor at Crowborough Warren.

At Anglia Forestry, John Cantrill and his staff are well through the windblow clearance on accessible sites and are offering their services to other estates in the area, although due to the extraordinarily wet ground conditions on heavy clay soils, harvesting will not be able to commence on some estates until ground conditions improve in May/June.

At Central, Fred Crozier's experienced team of Fred Dolby, Neil Austin, John Wilding and Steve Taylor are progressing extremely well, and confidently expect to clear their conifer by at least late summer, provided the markets remain firm, although the hardwoods will take longer.

They too have managed to restrict the drop in net return to the owner to around 15-20 per cent, and in some instances have managed to return over £4.00/tonne on some

pulp categories, due to highly efficient harvesting and Tilhill's Shotton order.

Fred's main concern currently is to match production output with market demand and as usual he is keeping an experienced and keen eye open for new market opportunities.

It is anticipated that a possibly major marketing problem which is developing for hardwood pulpwood, and for conifer species which are unacceptable for Shotton pulp mill, may be resolved with assistance from Tilhill's Harvesting and Marketing Division who are in the process of negotiating terms with a major Scottish processing company.

The scale of the devastation in many southern and south eastern woodlands is formidable, and our sympathies go out to all the owners who were affected. Few escaped unscathed and many saw much loved woodlands totally destroyed in a few hours.

Those involved at the heart of it won't forget how difficult it was to come to terms with the scale of the damage during the first few weeks, and the successful harvesting and marketing operations underway reflect the very considerable effort expended by all Tilhill staff involved during the last five months.

The next step will be to start to plan the restoration and replanting of the cleared areas in conjunction with the owners. While there has been no response from Government to FWAC's proposals for financial aid, at least the continuation of Schedule "D" relief until 5/4/93 for existing occupiers or, where preferred, the new grant scheme will give some support to the hard-pressed owners faced with considerable unplanned additional expenditure arising from the storm.



● The yew before felling.

standing sale

It covers some 15.4ha. on a small estate just south of the North Yorkshire Moors.

A fertile and sheltered site has contributed to the size of several outstanding trees; for example, one Douglas Fir reached a size of 6.0m³.

The timber has been bought by Jeffrey Walker & Co. Ltd. of Workop for approaching £30/m³ and the majority is destined for the North England coalfield.

Clearfelling has commenced and the picture on the left shows the branch manager, Tim Liddon, admiring logs stacked ready for despatch.

SOUTH EAST FORESTRY branch recently sold 976 Hoppus Feet (35 cu. metres) of veneer and planking quality yew timber at Dean and Bush Farm Woodlands near Rochester for £9000 or £9.22 per H.Ft. (£257 per cu.m.) standing.

The 90 150-year-old trees comprising the parcel were sold by competitive tender and the successful merchant was Mr Peter Cornish of Brenchley in Kent. A similar sale in 1987 realised £9.20 per H.Ft. or £255/Cu.M.

It is understood that this timber will be

exported in the round to France and will be utilised in the manufacture of Louis XV reproduction furniture. For veneer, the butt must have a minimum girth of 8 inch QG (26cm. diameter) and a minimum length of 7 feet (2.1 metres), with no big knots or flutes.

The spiral grain evident in the photograph is not a defect as it adds ripple to the veneer.

Following felling, the area will be replanted with a mixture of 50 per cent beech, 20 per cent cherry, 10 per cent oak and 20 per cent yew.

IT'S AMAZING!



- Above: Tree planting in the maze area.
- Left: The miniature version of the Wallace Monument takes shape in the play area.

ON Thursday April 28 the gates to the Glasgow Garden Festival were opened to the public for the first time. It is estimated that over the next six months, more than four million people will visit what promises to be one of the most spectacular events of 1988.

Over recent months, squads from Tilhill Landscaping's Scottish branch have been piecing together what will undoubtedly be one of the most original and exciting gardens in the Festival — the Stirling Maze.

Conceived and designed by Stirling

District Council's Development Directorate, this garden occupies a site no larger than 1400m² and yet it comprises an intricate maze of paths and hedges leading to a magnificent central feature, and one of the largest and most complex single structure play areas ever produced by play equipment specialists Town Art.

Although this contract was awarded to Tilhill Landscaping on the basis of a successfully competitive tender, from that point onwards it was agreed that Tilhill Landscaping and Stirling District Council would work closely together in an informal

partnership to ensure the success of the project.

The initial setting out of the maze was crucial to ensure the snug fit of the "Mono" ornamental paving blocks between the dressed timber retaining walls of the planters. A bed of gravel and then topsoil had to be hand-barrowed through the maze to fill the planters.

Some 2000 rootballed cypress trees, each 6-7 ft high, form the hedge itself. These are supported by an internal wire fence. A flexible irrigation system was installed to ensure that the hedge looks its best throughout the summer.

There are several display areas scattered throughout the maze including an EMU — no, not the bird but an Electronic Marketing Unit from Stirling District Council.

The central feature is an intricate structure roofed with Thermoclear plastic cladding. This houses further displays and a video unit.

The play area was designed to reflect Stirling's historic castle and the famous Wallace Monument. The play equipment was prefabricated by Town Art and arrived in hundreds of pieces which had to be sorted out and fitted together — a difficult task in the very restricted working area.

The "Wallace Monument" is some 7m in height and has an internal stair leading to a spiral slide. This particular structure arrived ready built on an artic and had to be raised into position by crane. The area beneath the play equipment is covered with a foot of forest bark to provide a soft landing for the expected hordes of children.

This is one of the most complicated contracts undertaken by Scottish Central Branch. All the work, with the exception of the central feature, was carried out by Tilhill's own labour and a permanent subcontractor in the case of the play equipment. The contract was supervised by Contracts Manager, Martin McKenna.

Tilhill supports Tree Aid

TREE AID, a registered charity, was founded in the wake of "Band Aid" by a number of concerned foresters and others connected with the UK wood industry, many with considerable experience overseas.

Among the well known forestry names who are patrons is Bob Gray until recently President of the Institute of Chartered Foresters and before that Director of Tilhill's Southern Division.

The famine in Africa that has caught the eyes and ears of the world over the past two years is not just a temporary phenomenon caused by drought, it is the end result of a breakdown of the natural environment which derives from over-cutting trees for fodder, fuel and land clearance.

The protection trees normally provide from soil erosion by wind and water in this delicately balanced system has vanished. Tree Aid seeks to restore that balance.

Tree Aid has identified the Sudano-Sahelian zone of Africa as top priority for aid. It will act through organisations already on the ground,

READERS of this may be interested in responding and may wish to know that the address of Tree Aid is Ridgeway House, 6 The Ridgeway, Long Ashton, Bristol, BS18 9EU. Please mention Tilhill as Tree Aid would like to identify such interest with the project. Alternatively, any donations sent to Tilhill would be sent on.

If they so wish, members of staff are able to support this work through the Give As You Earn Scheme, or Payroll Giving as it is also known.

initially with SOS Sahel International and perhaps later with Oxfam and Tear Fund.

It recognises that the involvement of the villagers is needed and aims to work with them. At sites close to the villages it seeks to establish tree nurseries, digging wells and providing irrigation, planting and tending the new tree crops. The villagers are anxious to play their part in saving their land from ruination and their villages from desolation.

Tree Aid hopes and believes that the UK forestry industry will be interested in its work and asks for support. Tilhill has given a donation of £2,500.

This will be used for a woodlot project in a village called Misiktab which is on the East bank of the Nile some five miles north of the small town of Shendi in the Nile Province of Sudan. The villagers desperately need a woodlot to provide for their fuel and house building needs.

It is estimated that this will cost the equivalent of £1150 per hectare over four years including digging the well, land preparation, fencing, raising the trees, providing a pump and paying the guards to keep the sheep and goats out.

The villagers happily give their labour free for the nursery work and planting and tending the trees, so the money goes on transport, materials, equipment and supervision. The work is due to start in June.

The normal woodlot for a village of this size is about six hectares, which therefore means an estimated total cost of £6,900. Every £1 raised by public subscription is backed by a similar amount from the Overseas Development Agency and thus Tilhill's £2,500 doubles to £5,000 and provides nearly three quarters of the cost over the next four years.

Val Pettit meets an old Tilhill stalwart, landscape sub-contractor Tom Telfer, at his home in Old Sauchie

THE first time I met Tom Telfer, he was driving home a fence post for all he was worth with a 16 pound stob mell.

Interrupted by a request from *Tree Scribe* to have his photograph taken for an article about the contract he was working on, Tom wiped his sweating brow with a muscular brown forearm, gave a broad grin and courteously agreed to pose for the camera.

That cheerful demeanour and readiness to oblige I now know to be part of a character which has endeared Tom to all who know him. Add to those qualities a hard-working resourcefulness and, at almost 63, a physical strength that would shame many a man half his age and it's easy to see how Tom has earned the respect, as well as the affection, of colleagues during his long association with Tilhill.

Tom and his younger brother Willie were, to coin a forestry metaphor, part of the root system of Tilhill. Involved since the company's very earliest days in Scotland, when former managing director David Brierton persuaded The Telfers to work as permanent sub-contractors during the heady days of expansion back in the early 60's, their futures became inextricably woven into the company's fortunes.

As T & W Telfer, the Telfers have worked for Tilhill for nearly 22 years. They live on the premises at Tilhill's Scottish Division headquarters at Old Sauchie and work for no-one else.

"We're old retainers," said Tom, choosing a word seldom used nowadays to describe his relationship with Tilhill.

Last year, however, Tom decided it was time for a change; to free himself from the day-to-day restrictions of running a squad of men and to allow him the freedom to choose his own working hours, he now works independently and, ironically, his new status has kept him as busy as ever.

Contribution

Although the Telfers were hired originally as forest contract workers, Tom's most notable efforts have been in landscaping, travelling the length and breadth of Central Scotland and occasionally to the north of Scotland, handling the multitude of tasks associated with landscape contracts — site preparation, fencing, seeding, tree and shrub planting and maintenance — and, over the years, making a significant contribution to the successful development of Tilhill's Scottish landscaping activities which had their origins within a 50-60 mile radius of Stirling.

A short but stocky man, Tom's stamina for hard work is legendary. Never afraid of long hours and often working alone, Tom willingly presents himself on site before dawn and works until dusk if that's what it takes to get the job finished on time.

"Such dedication combined with an ease of manner which enables him to get on well with clients and site agents has helped Tilhill to build up its good reputation in landscaping circles," said Landscaping Division director Graham Russell.



At ease with hard work ...

Almost as legendary is the Telfer's hospitality. Their family parties are renowned and their generous open door frequently extended to the succession of young Tilhill recruits who used to live in the nearby Garden Cottage until it became offices for Scottish Division's Central Forestry branch.

Responsibilities

Among them was Graham Russell, then 23 who would regularly walk the few yards to Tom and Cathy's house of an evening for a drink, a bite to eat and a chat — and ultimately to court and marry their only daughter Janette who was then working as a secretary in the Scottish Division offices.

"He's a great father-in-law," said Graham who took up his appointment as head of Tilhill's landscaping operations in January this year. "He helps to keep me in touch with reality when my new responsibilities tend to keep me tied to a desk dealing with the small print of tender documents and the like."

And occasionally at weekends, father-in-law and son-in-law get back to basics by going out and chopping firewood together.

Tom must be one of the few fathers to have blackened his daughter's bridegroom's eye just a few days before the wedding — accidentally, of course.

"We were working together on a contract when he belted me on the head with a mechanical digger," said Graham. "We still have a good laugh about it, although it was painful at the time!"

In the days before he took up forestry work, Tom was often away from home for long periods as a long distance lorry driver and missed much of his daughter's childhood.

Now the devoted grandfather of three lively youngsters, he has the time and energy to spare to spend with them. But, with only a year or two to go to the state retirement pension, will he ease up on the work he loves when the time comes?

"Judging by how busy I've been since I went out on my own, I very much doubt it," said Tom, with yet another of his broad grins.

Strictly for the birds

THE habitat of a rare migrant bird in Suffolk is assured, thanks to successful negotiations with the Nature Conservancy Council, the Forestry Commission, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and local authorities.

A hundred acres of poplar plantations on an estate at Lakenheath in Suffolk is to be set aside as a permanent poplar plantation for the benefit of the golden oriole.

The area of woodlands, favoured by the major part of the known number of bird pairs visiting the UK, forms part of some 1100 acres of poplar plantations which have been under Tilhill management since 1980.

Planted originally for the production of matchwood, the great majority grows on very fertile fen peat of a type now deemed more suitable for intensive arable agriculture and indeed the estate was bought with the eventual intention of harvesting the poplars in their entirety and removing the stumps from the ground in order to return the bulk of the reclaimed land for the production of root crops.

Rare butterfly in fight for survival — back page.

However, when it became apparent that the plantations had become an important golden oriole habitat and nesting site, steps were taken to preserve a small part of the area.

The programme of felling and clearance started in earnest in 1980 and, while beset by problems of marketing such a specialised commodity as Poplar timbers, proceeded continuously until the present day.

An area of the estate to be set aside for the golden oriole was identified and a programme of felling and replanting over a period of some 17 years on an agreed rotation was established, thus allowing the maintenance of a suitable range of ages of poplars to provide both nesting sites and feeding areas for the birds.

The first of some six areas to be felled for replanting was cleared during 1984 and the area replanted in early 1985. The second area for replanting was felled last summer and preparation work for its replanting is currently in hand.

The clearance of land for agriculture continues and large areas of the estate are now producing quality crops of potatoes, carrots, parsnips, etc., of which there are no mountains at present . . .



TILHILL manages extensive areas of upland forests established in the late 1960s and early 70s by many forward-looking private individuals.

Four years ago, the earlier Tilhill plantings reached the stage when vitally important decisions needed to be taken to secure the transition from the thicket stage to stands capable of producing high-quality sawlogs.

All foresters know that thinning is required in order to produce the best stems and the best sawlogs but in upland forestry there are almost as many approaches to thinnings as there are foresters considering how to tackle this crucial stage.

The first decision to be taken is to thin or not to thin. If we don't, we may be taking the "soft" option of not thinning on potentially thinnable sites. Greater volume production at final clearfell may be achieved but there are no earlier net cash revenues, and the rotation may not necessarily be longer than if the plantation has been thinned.

Drainage is essential to stability and many areas planted in the 1950s and early 1960s are visibly suffering from a no-thin policy which, because of the extreme difficulty of access within an unthinned stand, too easily becomes no-maintenance as well as no-thin.

If we do decide to thin, there are a number of options and Tilhill immediately discounted the negative options of early respacing and chemical thinning — both of which are high net-cost operations and seen as a real burden on the performance of the forest as an investment. The users of small roundwood do not like these options either.

Where are their supplies to come from if the trees are simply cut down, or killed, usually before (but sometimes when) they have reached saleable size? Line thinning, while positive in the sense of producing much-needed timber and income, was also discounted as doing little to improve stand quality.

In Tilhill's view and with no recent examples of upland early-thinning by others to consider, thinning had to be undertaken by either a

systematic (chevron) pattern or ideally, a selective pattern. Solway branch manager Colin Forsyth and harvesting and marketing regional manager Adam Ritchie were the first Tilhill men to be faced with making this "simple" philosophy work and operations started in 1983 on a Dumfriesshire estate planted by Tilhill in 1967.

Inspection racks, essential for assessing the middle of unbrushed Sitka compartments, indicated excellent growth rates and a top height of 10-11m, equivalent to GYC 22.

Accepting that the cutting of the essential extraction racks creates the greatest disturbance to the canopy, Tilhill decided to commence thinning these stands at what was two years ahead of the

time predicted by the Forestry Commission's management tables. This thinning coined the description "first early thinnings" and is now written into all Tilhill's management plans.

The plus-points of first early thinnings are numerous but the major advantages are:—

- Early healing of the inevitable disruption of the canopy caused by the extraction racks. This must increase crop stability compared to thinning at the "normal" time.
- With big increases in areas coming into the productive ages from the plantings of the early 1970s, any slippage in programmes is less damaging with a start two years early.
- Significant return to clients much earlier than anticipated

- Timber supplies to meet the demands of the massive investment made by small roundwood users during the past three to four years and which demands are being increased by further investment.

- Selective thinning pattern will optimise future production of high-value sawlogs.

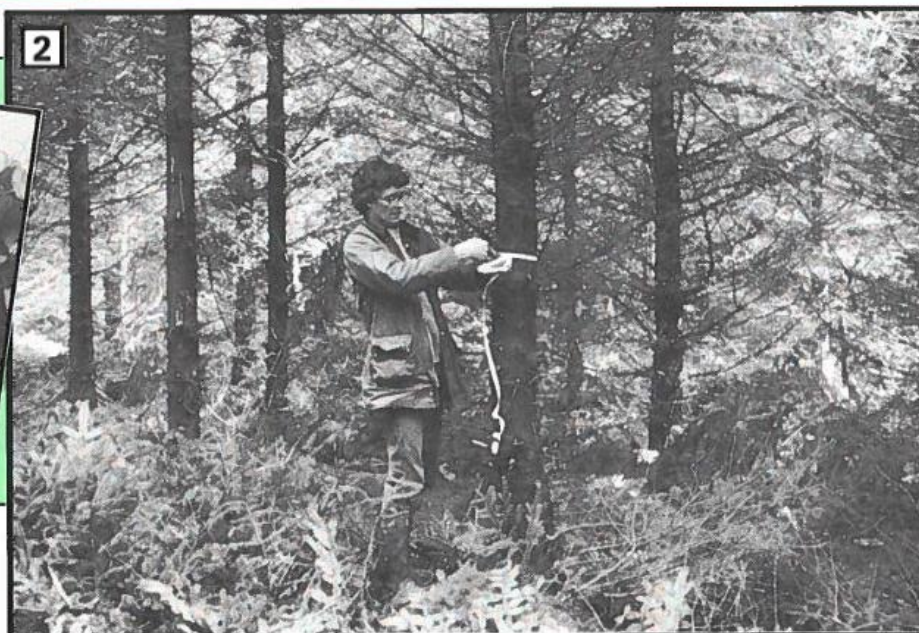
Early start has provided a valuable and welcome boost to employment of harvesting squads and hauliers. The Solway branch programme currently employs some 15 men on harvesting and haulage and these are early days. The production from the branch clients alone is forecast to rise from 7000 tonnes in 1987 to 15,000 tonnes in 1988 and 20,000 in each of the three years 1989-1991.



Early thinnings su



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1 . . . Solway forestry assistant Phil Morgan (left) discusses the break out of thinnings produced from Skirden Hall with Ian Askew and Jeff Wilson

2 . . . Phil Morgan measures the diameter of the crop after an early thinning at age 16.

urge at Solway branch

The employment figure is in addition to the 37 men employed on general timberwork by the harvesting and marketing region also based at Solway.

Tilhill's production from first early thinnings at Solway Branch stands at over 13,000 tonnes to date. The timber has mainly been converted to pulpwood and despatched to UPM Shotton and Thames Board but small sawlog material can be profitably obtained from the thinnings. Significant quantities of short millwood to 13 cm top diameter are currently being despatched to sawmillers in south Scotland and north England.

Reassurance

Recent investments by many sawmillers are a further and crucial

underpinning of the markets for Scotland's timber. Regular supplies from a positive thinning programme, rather than intermittent floods of timber from fellings of stands treated on a no-thin basis, must be of real reassurance to such committed investors in the processing side of the industry.

Askew in action

Whilst much of the first early thinnings activity is centred in south Scotland, a 114 ha estate in Lancashire in the Forest of Bowland is proving that there are other areas of excellent tree growth within the Solway branch area. Skirden Hall, planted in 1972, is growing so well that the first 10 ha are now being selectively thinned only 16 years

after planting, producing a welcome early return to the client.

Back in 1972 a local forestry contractor Jeff Wilson and his partner Ian Askew were employed by Tilhill to undertake ploughing and planting contracts in Yorkshire and Lancashire. They were responsible for the development work at Skirden and several other Tilhill managed areas in the vicinity. Over the years they have watched the trees develop to the vigorous plantation that exists today.

Seven years ago they decided to lease an old barn and plot of land from the owner of Skirden Hall to start up a small sawmill. Three years later they bought the land and have gone from strength to strength ever since. The mill now employs seven

people including Ian's two sons and Jeff's son. Output is 35m³ per week of sawn timber and the orders keep rolling in.

Ian, however, still finds time each day for his hobby — shepherding his flock of sheep on 80 acres bought several years ago. Who said forestry and sheep were in conflict?

When the first thinnings programme was being considered by Tilhill, Ian and Jeff were understandably keen to be involved in the work and a satisfactory price was negotiated by Tilhill on behalf of the owner.

The quality of work is of a high standard which came as no surprise to branch manager Colin Forsyth as he knew Ian and Jeff take an enormous amount of pride in their involvement from "day one" at Skirden.

There are now opportunities over the next two to three years of sustained working for a small team on these early first thinnings at Skirden Hall and with Ian and Jeff's sawmill sitting on the edge of the forest, haulage of the timber will not be a problem. Ian has two timber lorries running full time, mostly on Forestry Commission work, but also for three other Tilhill offices in England.

Now that the early thinning system has been established, a range of employment is becoming available (especially locally-based) and the requirement will go on increasing.

It takes many more men to harvest timber than it does to plant it and this is very good news in areas where unemployment is high and alternatives are few and often reducing, rather than increasing, the local level of employment.

3 . . . Solway branch manager Colin Forsyth views the crop after an early first thinning

4 . . . Ian Askew's timber lorry in action.



Southern Division

David Collender has joined Anglia Forestry branch as forestry assistant. David is from Co. Limerick in Eire and has been working in a German nursery since graduating from University College, Dublin, last year.

Peter Baxter has joined Marches Landscape branch as supervisor. He has a Diploma in Horticulture from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and also a Diploma in Amenity Horticulture with honours from the Threave School of Gardening, Castle Douglas. He is a keen explorer, having been to the Sahara on a botanical expedition and China on a bicycle!

Rob McDougall has transferred to Central Forestry branch as a forester.

Following the promotion of Roger Lewis to Eastern Area Manager, **Ray Hawes**, who has been an assistant at the branch since October 1976, succeeded him as branch manager in January. Ray is a Bangor graduate of 1976.

Two new forestry assistants have also taken up positions with the branch. **Clive Steward**, a graduate of Aberdeen University in 1985, joined in September following a two-year VSO tour to Gambia where he was involved with the management of a 1200 Ha. plantation of *Gmelina arborea*. **Noel Kennedy**, a graduate of the University College, Dublin, in 1986, joined in March following forestry consultancy work in Eire.

Jill Howard-Duff has joined Greenhills accounts department as secretary to Robin Collet. She had previously worked for computer consultants in Camberley, and consequently has had little trouble familiarising herself with the department's new word processor. Her many interests include gardening, theatre and art.

Margaret Cullen, for over 15 years the voice of Greenhills, retired at Christmas. She and her husband have emigrated to Australia, where their daughter and family live. We are delighted that she is keeping us informed of their life there and the trials of accustoming themselves to all that sunshine, in her long, chatty letters.

Christine Woodgate takes her place at the switchboard, to "box and cox" with Di Terry. They don't just share the post room — they both have a great interest vital in this part of Surrey — horseculture!

David Mitchell owns the third voice that may be heard. He is our mature office junior, keeping himself occupied following his earlier career in engineering.

Georgie Leake and **Jenny Franklin** threw a farewell party on March 31. Jenny is leaving to have a baby but may well help out at the typewriter from time in busy periods. We wish her well and will be awaiting her good news in early June. Georgie retires after 11 years in charge of the wages/salaries section. She and her husband belong to the Hayling Island Sailing Club and are looking forward to spending more time in their boat off the South Coast.

Josie Willett has for some months been gradually taking over



David Collender.

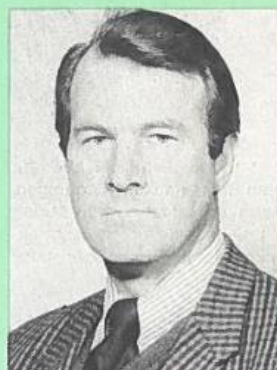


Graham Scott.

People

On the board

NURSERIES Division production manager **Robin Sym** has joined the Tilhill board. Robin joined Tilhill in 1983 after gaining wide experience with the Forestry Commission in Wark, York and Wykenham Forests. He gained his Foresters Certificate at the Dean Forestry Training School in 1969.



Food for thought

A VERY successful dinner dance for Tilhill's southern staff was held in the Seven Hills Hotel, Cobham, on April 25.

After dinner had been served, Chairman **Ed Robinson** addressed the assembly and warmly praised Tilhill people for their efforts in 1987 culminating in an outstandingly successful company performance.

He went on to allude to the challenges of the future and the need to respond positively to the changing scene.

Southern Division Director **Peter Sloan** then proposed the toast to the guests and **Ronnie Williams**, Chief Executive of TGUK, replied on behalf of the guests in a witty and polished response.

- Right: **Ronnie Williams**, chief executive of TGUK, at the Southern dance.
- Below: **Peter Sloan** welcomes guests.



from **Georgie** and we welcome **Heather Meechan**, who will help both Josie and our cashier, **Maureen Bull**, with a variety of clerical duties. Heather has a delightful Scottish accent so don't think you've called the wrong part of the country. She enjoys active pursuits in her spare time, particularly swimming and badminton.

Landscaping Division

Graham Scott has joined South East Landscaping branch as landscaping assistant. He graduated in geology from St Andrews University in 1984 and spent a year travelling round the world followed by six

months on oil rigs in the North Sea and the Syrian desert. Before starting with Tilhill, he completed a year at the Welsh College of Horticulture to gain an ANCH in landscape construction.

and places

Scottish Division

Iain Sutherland has re-joined Tilhill as forester in Central branch after a spell in the oil industry. He originally joined Argyll branch in 1983 after completing his OND at Newton Rigg and was encouraged to return to his first chosen career after three years' of the onshore-offshore lifestyle. His main interests are ski-ing and golf.

Michael Hodgson has joined Tilhill's Central branch at Stirling as a forestry assistant. Since graduating from Aberdeen University in 1984 with a BSc Honours in Forestry, he has spent a year as a self-employed wood-cutter/tractor operator in Aberdeenshire, eighteen months as a forester with Dundee District Council and six months as a sawyer with Cordiners in Aberdeen. His interests and activities include hillwalking, ski-ing, fishing and boxing.

Paul Sizeland joined Fife and Angus branch in February. A 1980 forestry graduate of Aberdeen, Paul spent four years working for VSO in Nepal where he was primarily involved in nursery work. Before joining Tilhill, he had a partnership in a forestry contracting firm in Deeside. His hobbies include hillwalking and photography.

Morna Douglas was appointed as secretary for the new branch. Her interests are aerobics and music.

Melanie Richardson has joined Lothians branch as a part-time typist/clerkess.

Nigel Taylor has joined Yorkshire Landscape branch as a supervisor. He has an HND in Landscape and Horticultural Technology from Askham Bryan College and a Diploma in Management Studies from Birmingham Polytechnic. Before joining Tilhill, Nigel worked for two years with Walsall Borough Council as a horticultural assistant and training officer. He has an active interest in a number of sports such as golf, badminton and squash.

Tony Keating has joined Solway Forestry branch as a forestry assistant. A graduate of Bangor University, Tony spent the last 12 years as district forest officer with the Lesotho Woodlot Project.

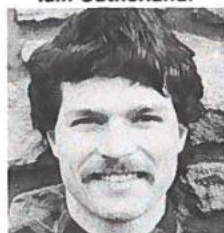
There have been three appointments to Scottish Division's clerical staff at Old Sauchie. **Gail McMillan** joined as typist/clerkess. Her hobbies are karate (red belt) and keep fit. **Joanne Harrower** and **Sarah Macpherson** joined as junior typists/clerkesses. Out of working hours, Joanne enjoys keep fit and reading and Sarah enjoys dressmaking and design and ski-ing.



Iain Sutherland.



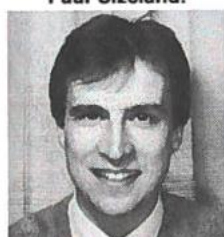
Michael Hodgson.



Paul Sizeland.



Morna Douglas.



Nigel Taylor.



Tony Keating.

Congratulations to . . .

. . . **Chris Marrow** of Marches branch, **Peter Middleton** of South East branch and **Gordon Stewart** of Cowal and Bute branch on passing the Institute of Chartered Foresters Part 11 examination. All three are now Chartered Foresters.

. . . forestry assistant **Susan Graham** on her marriage to **John MacLachlan** in October.

. . . **Bob Stainton** of Landscape Division's Scottish Central branch on his engagement to **Mhairi Thomson**.

. . . **David Hetherington** of Landscape Division's Scottish Central branch and his wife **Gwynne** on the birth of their first child **Dora** on January 22.

. . . **Adrian Griffiths** of Marches branch and his wife **Pat** on the birth of their second daughter, **Anna Camilla**, in March.

. . . and **Phil Hewitson** of South East Landscape branch and his wife **Rosemary** on the birth of their first child, **Louise Anne** on December 30.

For services rendered



EARLY December last year saw the happy occasion of the presentation of awards for 25 years' service to **John Lambert**, Manager of Northern Forestry branch. John, with his wife **Chris**, stayed overnight in Stirling and they were joined for a celebration dinner by staff from Head Office.

An engraved quach formed the official item on a list of several presents which included a large framed photograph taken of John amongst the Sleepieshill woodlands, beside Loch Oire, in the mid 1960s.

Martin Wilkinson (right) is pictured here presenting the Long Service quach from Tilhill.

CONTRACTS

CONTRACTS totalling over £166,000 have been awarded recently to ANGLIA FORESTRY branch. Two contracts, each of £32,000, have been implemented for the **PSA** for planting at Stanford Training Area and for thinning and reinstatement work at RAF Mildenhall. Other contracts include planting and maintenance for **British Industrial Sand** at King's Lynn (£41,000), planting and maintenance alongside the A10 Buntingford by-pass for the **Forestry Commission** (£39,000) and planting of game spinneys near Bungay for **Mr R. C. Youngs** (£17,000).

Southern Division

MARCHES FORESTRY branch has won a contract worth £68,000 from **J. C. Bamford** for shelter belt planting and maintenance at Wootton Lodge Park, Uttoxeter, Staffs. A £19,000 contract came from the **Amey Roadstone Corporation** for restoration work on a new local authority nature park in Walsall, West Midlands.

SOUTH EAST FORESTRY branch has won contracts from

Kent County Council with a combined value of £101,000 for roadside planting and maintenance, and a £12,000 contract for planting game cover and maintenance at **Mere-worth Castle** estate.

SOUTH WEST branch has won a £31,000 contract from **Wessex Water** for planting shelter belts and screening at Chitterne, a contract worth £19,000 for shelter and new woods for sporting purposes at **Moon's Hill Quarry** and a contract also worth £19,000 for landscaping on the **North Devon Link**. Other work being handled by the branch in various parts of its area totals £45,000.

Flying

WILTS AND WEST branch in the Landscaping Division has been awarded the largest ever landscaping contract to be won by Tilhill, worth over £1 million.

The client, **BP Petroleum Development Limited**, is expanding its Wytch Farm oil field in South Dorset. The oil field is within an area of outstanding natural beauty which contains a number of SSSIs.

This makes the quality of the landscaping of vital importance and will provide a great challenge to the branch. The contract brings the total value of contracts won in the first three months of 1988 to well over £2.5 million.

SOUTHERN CENTRAL has secured further maintenance contracts with **RHM** at Windsor, and the **AA** at Basingstoke to continue its long-standing association with both these valued clients. The branch has further expanded its design and build business with a £20,000 plus contract for **Trust House Forte** at the prestigious Excelsior Hotel at London's Heathrow Airport.

SCOTTISH CENTRAL has picked up a £15,000 design and build contract for **Balfour Beatty** at Stirling Royal Infirmary where it is currently involved in the topsoiling and grass seeding at this new development. The branch is continuing to develop the maintenance side of the business with the award of two five-year maintenance contracts for the **PSA** valued at £700,000 plus. These contracts represent a significant boost to the branch and are an important development in the Division's expansion plans in this area.

NORTHERN branch continues the success in maintenance contracts with the award of a £50,000 contract for grass and shrub maintenance for the **SSHA** in Inverness. Other work on the books includes an unusual commission to design and build a Victorian garden at **Glenborrodale Castle** on the West coast as part of a £1 million redevelopment package for this exclusive hotel. The branch is also laying out herb gardens and supplying and planting a wide variety of unusual tree and shrub species at the direction of architects **Stephen & Maxwell**.

SOUTH EAST branch has continued its successful involvement at Surrey Docks in the heart of London Docklands with two significant contracts. The first, for landscaping the new Daily Mail building, is worth £215,000 and is a sub-contract to **John Laing Construction**, and the second contract, worth some £89,000, is direct to **LDDC** and involves considerable amounts of excavation and soiling as well as grass seeding and planting works. Further works for various London boroughs totalled £98,000 and **Hampshire County Council** awarded a contract for £14,000.

New branch formed from Central split

TO develop our service and management for the northeasterly portion of Central Scotland and to take advantage of the potential for farm-forestry, Tilhill's Central Forestry branch was split on January 1, 1988 and the new Fife and Angus branch was formed, based at Kirriemuir in Angus.

The split is about equal geographically, with the new branch covering Fife east of the M90 motorway, Tayside east of the river Tay, and whole of Angus, and Kincardineshire as far north as Stonehaven.

However, the split is not equal in terms of prior activity with fewer managed estates coming under the new branch.

The new branch area is considered to have great expansion potential particularly in farm forestry, and we believe a locally-based highly-motivated team will be best placed to provide this service and develop local business.

The Branch Manager of the new Fife and Angus branch is **Colin MacBrayne** (31) who was Assistant Branch Manager of Central Branch at Stirling for five years. Colin graduated from Aberdeen in 1978 with a 1st Class Honours Degree and then went on to study for an MSc at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand.

Being a farmer's son, his forestry interests have not surprisingly leaned towards farm-forestry and this was the subject of his MSc studies. Based on his experience at home and in New Zealand and Australia, Colin published several articles on farm-forestry and has sparked interest among farmers in integrated land use.

Colin sees considerable potential in promoting Tilhill as the specialist farm forestry company in the area, particularly in the fertile farmlands of Angus where the new Farm Woodlands Scheme is likely to prove most attractive.

It is likely, therefore, that the work of the branch will include a considerable amount of intensive, small-scale, woodlands management as well as larger-scale afforestation schemes.

Forestry Assistant **Paul Sizeland** (29) graduated from Aberdeen in 1980 and after a short spell working as a forestry contractor, he and his wife Anne moved to Nepal for a period of four years, employed by **VSO**.

On his return to the UK, Paul became a partner in a tree surgery and contracting firm in Deeside so he is no stranger to small-scale forestry work.

Branch Secretary **Morna Douglas** (20) hails from Glamis and has also worked in New Zealand where she has several relatives. She is relishing the prospect of running the administration of a new office which is set to expand over the next few years.



● From left, **Paul Sizeland**, **Morna Douglas** and new branch manager **Colin MacBrayne**.

Award for Arnold

THE James Cup, which is awarded annually by the **Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland** to the writer of the judged most meritorious article in the **Quarterly Journal of Forestry** has, for the year 1987, been awarded to **Southern Division Area Manager Arnold Beaton** for his article titled "Poplars and Agroforestry," which appeared in the October issue of the journal.

Arnold Beaton is one of the foremost poplar silviculturists in the United Kingdom with very extensive detailed knowledge of poplars gained from long experience with **Bryant & May (Forestry) Ltd**. We offer Arnold our warmest congratulations.