

Tree Scribe

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Rocks of Ages

A 4000-YEAR-OLD Bronze Age burial site has been found on land being prepared for planting by Tilhill's Argyll branch.

The discovery was made by assistant branch manager John Little while he was supervising ploughing work at Kintraw Farm at the head of Loch Craignish. The plough dislodged a grass-covered slab of rock, exposing a grave consisting of four further slabs sunk into the ground.

The find wasn't entirely unexpected. Increased awareness of archaeological considerations requires forestry managers to take account of the historical importance of sites where prehistoric monuments may be present, and this part of mid-Argyll is known to be extremely rich in archaeological remains.

Branch manager Fergus Tickell, himself a keen amateur historian, had already liaised with Strathclyde Region's archaeologist, Dr Carol Swanson and Forestry Commission district manager Peter Quelch, who also takes a considerable interest in archaeology. A report of the find could, therefore, be made without delay to the right quarters and an excavation quickly organised.

"In the early days of tree planting," says Fergus, "prehistoric monuments were protected with little more than a cleared surrounding, often without access from public or forest roads. Sites

of more recent vintage, like old crofts, shielings and farmsteads, were often planted over in the course of afforestation. Forest managers must now incorporate heritage sites into the overall af-

forestation design."

Sites may sometimes be discovered during the preparation of Woodland Grant Scheme applications but, more often, during ploughing of hill ground which



● Excavation team leader Hugh McBrian at the burial mound and cist.

"As land managers, foresters are dealing with a landscape profoundly affected by the hand of man and should be aware of the signs which indicate man's activity over many centuries. We should ensure protection of such signs as we strive to leave our own mark on this ever-changing land."

— FERGUS TICKELL

may have lain undisturbed for many centuries.

In the case of Kintraw, where Tilhill was appointed to afforest 200 acres, there is already an impressive standing stone and cairn, known locally as the Danish king's grave, just outwith the area to be planted, and further inspection of the Ordnance Survey map showed that the area included a hill fort on the summit of Dun na Ban-Oige. A subsequent site survey revealed a number of shielings and an enclosure, none of which were marked on the map, and their presence was incorporated into the forest design. Ploughing revealed further sites of interest, mainly shielings and associated lazy-beds.

A partial excavation of the site is now in progress and a variety of artefacts, ranging from charred bone fragments to jet beads or even bronze implements, may be found.

The experience at Kintraw has highlighted the way in which, with careful management of afforestation schemes and an awareness of the potential existence of historic sites, forestry can make a positive contribution to archaeology. The level of intensive survey and supervision required to devise and fulfil an acceptable WGS application provides an excellent opportunity to discover sites which were previously unknown.

"As land managers," says Fergus, "foresters are dealing with a landscape profoundly affected by the hand of man and should be aware of the signs which indicate man's activity over many centuries. We should ensure protection of such signs as we strive to leave our own mark on this ever-changing land."

There's no business like show business!



THIS YEAR, the Scottish Division Roadshow Display boards and promotional material were in use at twelve locations from Keith in the North to Lincoln in the South. Designed for easy transport and putting together on site at agricultural shows, two sets of information boards, twelve in each set, have been used to put over to visitors the benefits of forestry and the range of services provided by Tilhill. The effectiveness of the information displays is apparent from the considerable interest generated, resulting in a nationwide radio report recorded for the Radio Scotland farming programme from our stand at Turriff. Branch office staff have manned the stands at

the various shows, and have been very resourceful in adding the colourful extras needed to give their show tent the professional touch. Lots of trees in containers and tree shelters, operator models with spraying equipment and even pens of contented pheasants have been employed to great effect. At the Haddington Show, judges kindly awarded a Highly Commended certificate to the staff of Lothians Branch. Stored away for the winter at the moment, the Roadshows will be under way again in 1990.

● Above: Alan Parr of Fife and Angus branch manning the road show tent at the Perth Agricultural Show.

JOHAN WHITE began his working life as a forestry worker earning threepence and sixpence a tree for felling, trimming out and then carrying out the timber on his shoulders — and with only a 4 1/2 lb axe and a reaper file for tools.

Today, he is director of what is widely considered to be one of the best forest nurseries in Western Europe, with a personal reputation for sheer enthusiasm and the kind of instinctive decision-making necessary to keep Tilhill's nurseries ahead of the field.

The comparison between John's beginnings and his present awesome responsibilities is worth reflecting on because nothing could have been further from John's mind than nursery work when he embarked on a career in forestry. Nurseries, he claims, chose him

Nurseryman

Tree Scribe meets the man who turned Tilhill's nurseries into a success story and who now, as retirement approaches, looks back on an unexpected and challenging career.

— not the other way round.
John had been 23 years with the Forestry Commission when fate took a hand and steered him in the direction of Tilhill. He

joined the FC in 1948, straight from a spell in the Palestine Police. He'd always done farm work and an elder brother at forestry school was sufficient incentive for young John to follow suit, working at first in the forests in and around his native Lincolnshire and then in Yorkshire when his parents retired there. Eighteen months at Lynford Hall in Suffolk to study for a forester's certificate took him back to East Anglia and he stayed in the area, earning gradual promotion, until FC policy in 1971 to amalgamate small areas into larger

Mission to Bahamas

OPERATION Raleigh is a series of expeditions, now in its fifth year, taking young people from all parts of the world with a view to developing their self-confidence and leadership abilities, through scientific research community tasks and adventure projects, in remote areas and in environments alien to them.

I was granted three months leave of absence from my position as forestry assistant with Borders branch to take part in an Operation Raleigh expedition to the commonwealth of the Bahamas as project co-ordinator on the island of Andros, the largest and one of the least developed islands of the Bahamas.

The expedition comprised over 140 venturers and staff on 20 projects on seven different islands. My job involved setting up and running a base camp for the duration of the expedition and providing logistical support to the four scientists and six groups of venturers who spent time on Andros, including planning and co-ordinating the adventure projects — trekking, canoeing and survival.

The topography and vegetation of Andros proved challenging; much of the island consists of dense forests of Caribbean pine and areas of thick scrub where a machete is an essential tool, all growing out of the pit-holed storm beach limestone where a misplaced footing can lead to serious injury. Indeed, after a fall, one of the scientists required 15 stitches and evacuation.

The remainder of the island consists of mangroves and seasonal marshes where movement was best made by inflatables and canoes. These areas, which were striking for their flatness (two feet spot heights were not uncommon on maps), were characterised mainly by mud, mangroves and mosquitoes.

One of the projects involved a vegetation survey of Mangrove Cay, by way of randomly located transects, to research the dynamics of the progression from mangrove to pine forest to broadleaved forest.

The Caribbean pine is a light-demanding species which requires periodic fires to clean out the broadleaved under-storey to allow itself to regenerate. It is extremely well adapted to fire and, although severely charred, adult pines are seldom killed by flames. Juvenile pines are less fortunate, but re-seeding rapidly takes place around the base of the adult survivors.

The fire resistance of the pine is due to volatile resins in the bark which explode when heated and put out any small fires which might start on the bark and spread to the underlying living tissues of the tree.

● *Alastair Anton of Solway branch describes his experiences in the Bahamas with Operation Raleigh Expedition 16D/17B.*



Alastair Anton at work in the jungle.

Fire is a problem for the Government Forest Service, and other members of Operation Raleigh were building a number of fire watch towers on the island of Abaco under the supervision of Shireen Chambers, formerly with Tilhill at Argyll branch and now with the Bahaman Fire Service.

The other main scientific project involved a mangrove survey, measuring rates of sedimentation within the mangrove communities in relation to land formation and response to speculated rises in global sea level. This included groups of venturers measuring tide levels, rates of flow and mapping intertidal inland lagoons with collection of core samples for future analysis.

Other projects were carried out for the Government Fire Service in remote areas of pineforest which they hoped to

exploit, to survey the wildlife, its population, location and extent of habitat so that areas could be set aside for conservation.

The main purpose of the survey was to locate populations of rock iguanas, large reptiles which grow up to five feet in length. The species is under threat of extinction, a victim of its hungry human neighbours. It is now protected by law and the local inhabitants proved as keen to know of our results as the Forest Service.

During one of these surveys, one group suffered a number of casualties on the limestone rock. Being out of communication with the base camp due to faulty radio equipment, four of the group struck out for the prearranged pick-up point to alert the base camp. They were eventually located four days later, exhausted after their journey which involved moving by night to conserve water, swimming across shark-filled creeks and licking dew from vegetation in the morning — one trip which I'm sure will not be forgotten.

Groups were also sent out into remote areas using ex-army, two-man inflatables and canoes, which had to be manhandled overland through mangrove and pine shrub, to reach inland lake systems where they found flocks of flamingos whose colonies were thought to have disappeared from Andros. One group achieved a trans-Andros canoe trip, covering approximately 110km in nine days, along creeks, inland lakes and overland, using expert navigation through difficult terrain.

Apart from the limestone rock and abundant shark life, other hazards included "poison wood," a tree belonging to the same family as poison ivy, which grew everywhere. The tree contains a sticky sap which contains the chemical urushiol, which causes a characteristic skin rash, and, in the case of lung inhalation, lung damage.

Urushiol is insoluble in water and soap and was therefore difficult to remove as it combines on contact with the proteins in the skin and becomes chemically integrated with the living tissue. Much time was spent identifying this tree and then avoiding it. It was remarkable how quickly the venturers picked up plant identification!

I found Operation Raleigh a challenging and rewarding experience, providing an ideal opportunity to take part in an expedition to a remote area of the world with all the necessary equipment and resources to undertake worthwhile and challenging projects. I would like to thank Tilhill for granting leave to take part and for its generous sponsorship towards my fund-raising.

extraordinary

units led to voluntary redundancies. Not consciously aware of the need for a change but perhaps because he'd already had some harvesting and marketing dealings with Tilhill, John found himself attracted to an advert for a manager's job for a newly-established branch at Culford, near Bury St. Edmunds.

With the job went an 18-acre nursery and John's fate, although he didn't know it at the time, was sealed. Surprisingly few foresters have much interest in the first few years of a tree's life. John's own latent interest and sporadic involvement with nursery work during his FC years, combined with his successful running of the Culford nursery, made him unusual in forestry circles and, when Tilhill was looking for a likely successor to Henry Jackson at Greenhills, John was the obvious choice.

Adventurous

He has a different way of putting it. "Anyone with a modicum of interest in nursery work was lumbered," he said with a wry smile. With relatively little Tilhill experience under his belt and still coming to terms with the much harsher realities of life outside the relatively protected environment of the civil service, John was flattered to be offered the job, but doubtful of his ability to handle it. Others obviously didn't share his reservations and, by embarking soon after his appointment on an adventurous and innovative expansion programme, John very quickly vindicated the board's choice of its new nurseries director.

John's 14-year tenure has been characterised by an instinctive feel for what is right, occasionally alarming his fellow board members by apparently eleventh-hour recommendations, but invariably being borne out by succeeding events.

John was the first in the UK, for example, to try storing young transplants with a method previously used only for soft fruit and vegetables. His reasoning? "If humicoid techniques would work for strawberries and raspberries, young Sitka spruces should be a piece of cake," he said. And he was right. In addition, John developed a chilled transportation system which had the effect of extending the planting season in Scotland until as late as July — an advantage over nurseries without coldstore facilities.

Transplants

The introduction of a humicoid store was just one part of a much larger expansion programme which effectively involved scrapping much of what he inherited and starting all over again. John wanted to do away with what was least productive and concentrate on what Tilhill did best — growing seedlings and transplants.

As well as the coldstore, a new reservoir was built and the nursery expanded from its original 150 acres by a further 90. Permanent staff were taken on to replace a system of contract labour, and a method devised of year-round nursery planting.

During this first major expansion of 1981, John also extended the ground sterilisation programme to produce the maximum size of tree in the shortest possible time, producing in two years, or even one, what rival nurseries needed three to match.

Four years later, there followed another expansion on a similar scale, this time involving two more humicoid stores. Both expansions put Tilhill in a strong position



"I have no illusions that leaving Tilhill will not be a great wrench. I have lived nursery work for the past 14 years and have had wonderful backing from fellow directors and staff. I'm sure it will take time to eliminate ½ u ½ and 1u1, and the like, from my mind, but at least I won't have to wake up in a sweat worrying where all the trees, allocated at stock-taking, are hiding!"

— JOHN WHITE.

both for the supply of its own clients' afforestation projects and to meet the needs of others, including the Forestry Commission, whose own supplies at the time were short.

John, however, is typically modest about his own role in Tilhill's position at the forefront of nursery technology. "We were lucky," he maintains. "Our expansion policy coincided with a planting boom; the Greenhills site, with its excellent climate and sandy soil, is probably unique in the UK and, most important of all, I had the full backing of the board in everything I did."

Contrary to the suspicions of some of his board colleagues who found John's modus operandi positively breath-taking on occasions, he claims not to enjoy taking calculated risks. "But," he adds, "I always get a thrill when a risk pays off. Who doesn't?"

One idea for which John can claim the entire credit is his well-pointing scheme, introduced at his own insistence to improve the water supply to the nursery's essential irrigation system.

After two years' of test-boring and installation, the system became operational this spring. With 1989 the hottest, driest

summer for years, the timing could not have been better!

Previously, permission had been refused to take more water in summer from the nearby River Wey and, anxious to secure the supply, John had gone ahead and commissioned a water engineer to look into the problem. The result is the only forest nursery well-pointing system in the UK which, in its first year, succeeded in taking up 19 million gallons of good quality, constant-temperature water from the ground — six million gallons more than the annual intake from the river, which is now used only as back-up.

Nothing in forestry ever stands still and with times changing yet again owing to the dramatic change in planting incentives, Tilhill is still ahead of the trend. Thanks to the unique qualities of its nursery and its modern techniques of soil sterilisation, undercutting and wrenching, Tilhill grows seedlings second to none among its competitors either in this country or on the Continent, and can produce in one year, instead of the more usual two or three, excellent plantable hardwoods.

Consequently, Tilhill is well placed to capitalise on contract growing for Continental clients like Klaus Ludemann of Hamburg, a long-standing customer of Tilhill and one of the first to realise the tremendous price advantage of this type of tree.

"This is the third year that we have worked in conjunction with Klaus Ludemann for the Scandinavian market," said John. "Over a two-year period, we have grown five million birch and 500,000 hybrid larch, and more birch seed is now being grown in Tilhill's nurseries than in the whole of the rest of the UK put together."

Techniques

Once again, far-sighted policies have paid off handsomely. Undercutting and wrenching are techniques first developed in New Zealand and the Pacific north-west. By watching developments carefully and adapting them to home ground, Tilhill has reaped rewards where others have barely begun.

This work is not confined to Scandinavian clients. Tilhill has recently secured another contract from Klaus Ludemann to grow beech from 2000 kilograms of his beech seed, to produce planting stock for 1991. In addition, Tilhill's nursery is currently growing a million Sitka spruce for the Forestry Commission, Picea mariana seed from Ontario for Swedish forests, and 400,000 one-year-old oaks for the Danish Land Service to use as windbreaks and shelter belts — contracts which next year will add £¼ million to the company's contract sales figures.

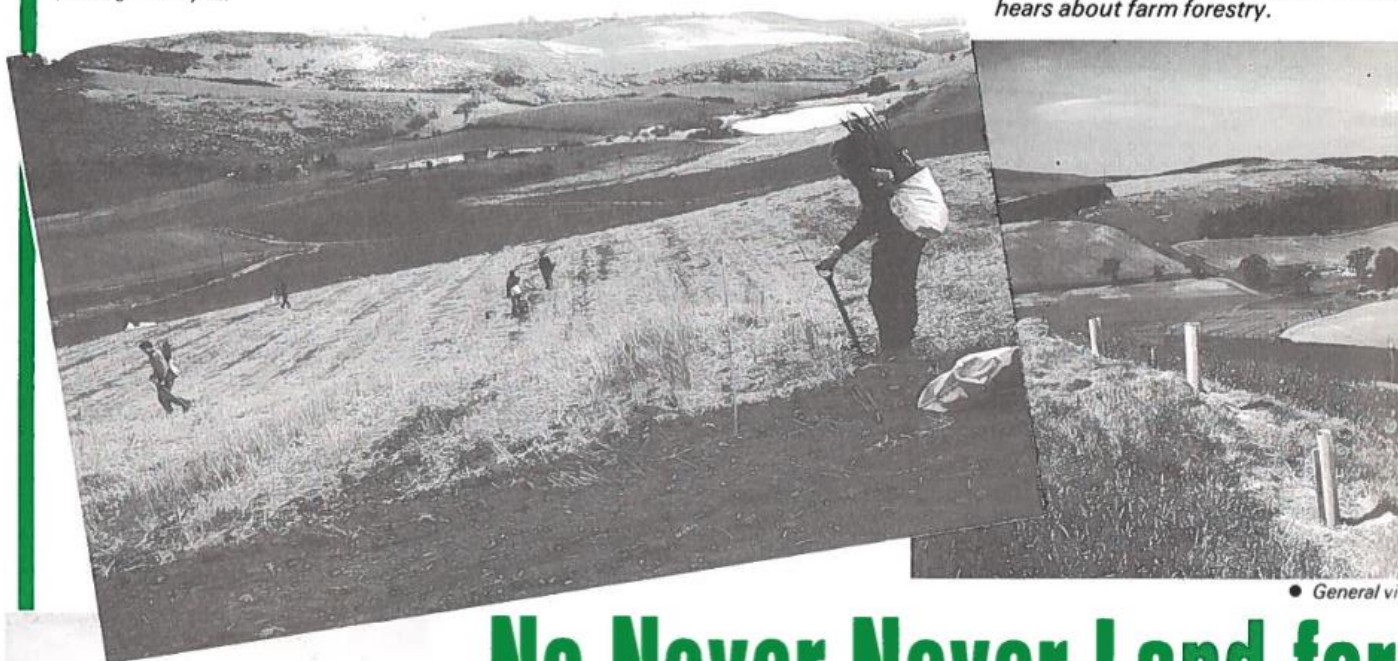
This development is, of course, against a background of growing a continuing supply of seedlings for the company's own use both in afforestation projects and to meet the demands of its burgeoning landscape activities. The growing emphasis on contract growing means, however, that two thirds of the nursery's business now comes from outside sources.

It's fitting that John White should be leaving the company at a time of continuing innovation. He came in with an obvious challenge to meet, tackled it with boundless energy and a style all his own, and now leaves a thriving business for his successor to take over.

An immensely likeable and charming man, his courteous manner and the sheer zest with which he meets his responsibilities will be missed by everyone both inside and outside Tilhill.

Retirement, when he is 62 in March, involves no specific plans — just more precious time to relax with his wife Frieda and grown-up family, and to take to the highways and byways a little more often in his faithful campervan to indulge in his two main interests of birdwatching and planespotting.

● Bruce MacLeod and his squad planting at Berryhill.

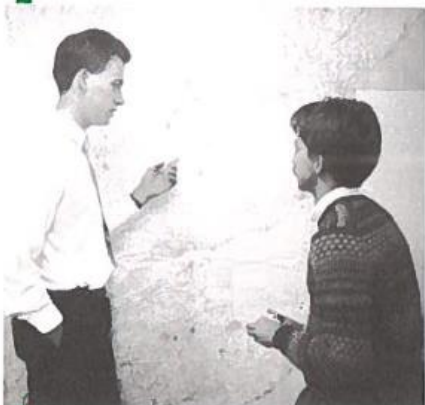


● General view

No Never Never Land for



● Colin examines a young cherry at West Memus which has more than trebled its height during the first growing season.

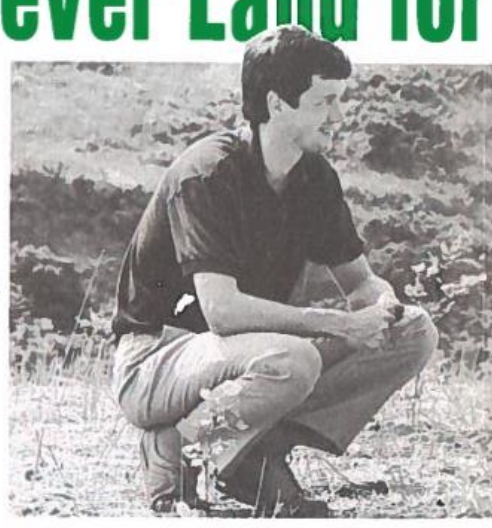


● Forestry assistants Gerard Charles (left) and Alan Parr organise their work programmes to fit in with the branch's many different locations.

THE Angus glens are one of the best-kept secrets of the British countryside. The grandeur of the Eastern Cairngorms and the softer, rolling farmland which forms their foothills are hardly touched by modern tourism, and the broad coastal strip between the heather-clad hills and the North Sea enjoys one of the best climates in the UK. Low rainfall and plenty of sunshine combine to make the area Europe's prime producer of soft fruit, supplying top quality berries to the big jam-making factories in nearby Dundee. The climate and the same free-draining, mineral-rich soil also make Angus, adjoining parts of Fife and Perthshire to the south and west, and Kincardineshire to the north, a prosperous agricultural region which is why, when deciding to open a new Tilhill branch which would be able to develop the full potential of farm forestry, Angus was chosen as a base.

The Fife & Angus branch was formed in 1988 from Central branch's territory, covering Fife east of the M90, Tayside east of the river Tay, and the whole of Angus and Kincardineshire as far north as Stonehaven. The move left Tom McLellan with a more compact patch to manage from Old Sauchie and new branch manager Colin MacBrayne with a new area in which to take advantage of the growing trend for farm forestry.

Birthplace of Peter Pan's creator J. M. Barrie, Kirriemuir is a typical Angus market town, austere in its architecture, but surrounded by picturesque arable farmland. Handling many small, intensive woodland management contracts as well as two or three traditional afforestation projects means a lot of driving for Colin and his staff, but an efficient road network, where traffic jams are unknown, enables even the furthest point of the area to be reached within an hour's drive of the branch's offices on the outskirts of town — a claim not many Tilhill branches can make. From Central branch, Colin "inherited" three existing estates and 130 ha of bare land ready for afforestation. Within three months of opening, two further properties totalling 220 hectares were acquired for afforestation and this gave the new branch a tremendous start. However, the downturn in large-scale planting



● Branch manager Colin MacBrayne in discussion with

after the 1988 Budget meant that in the second year almost all the branch's business had to be generated from farm forestry.

The building up of the farm-forestry side of the business has mainly been concentrated in the fertile farmlands of Angus and NE Fife where the Farm Woodland Scheme is attracting most interest.

Surprisingly little of the branch's new business has been secured by cold-calling or "seek-out" tactics, reports Colin. "Instead," he says, "we are building up a reputation by word of mouth, alerting people to our existence by random mail shots or by selective advertising in the farming press, where seldom a week goes by without an article on the advantages of diversifying into forestry."

Colin's background in farming makes him the right man to talk the same language as his clients. He was brought up on an arable farm in East Lothian before graduating from Aberdeen with a first-class honours degree in forestry and farm forestry was the subject of a post-graduate degree in New Zealand, where the techniques of agroforestry were largely pioneered. Based on his experience both at home and in New Zealand, he has published several papers on the subject. Half of Colin's area lies in less fertile hill

n's newest branch in Kirriemuir and

● Instant spinney with a newly-constructed pond in the foreground.



view of Berryhill.

Colin and his team . . .



farmer John Nicol. (Picture courtesy of Ron Stephen).

country, and enquiries are tending to come mainly from the more climatically-favoured lowland properties where farms are usually owner-occupied and where owners are more able to take advantage of potential and diversification.

Typical of these is Berryhill Farm in Fife where Tilhill was called in by farmer John Nicol to advise on the planting of 18 ha of woodland as part of a plan to develop his farm for tourism. "Long-term investment potential is not always a priority," says Colin, "and more often, amenity, nature conservation and sporting figure largely in the farmer's plans. However, where a significant area is being planted in one block, as at Berryhill, there is a genuine prospect of growing high-quality timber and so the eventual plan is inevitably a compromise between several objectives."

Relatively few planting schemes are more than 10 hectares, however, and often comprise a number of small blocks not always ideally suited to production of high-quality timber. These areas are usually the less productive parts of a field or awkward corners where it is difficult to work large farm machinery. Such small blocks are often designed primarily for shooting and Colin's branch is developing considerable expertise in the establishment of

"instant spinneys" which compromise game crops drilled between rows of trees planted in tree shelters.

At West Memus near Forfar, for example, Tilhill has planted seven hectares of instant spinneys for farmer David Laird. As well as providing cover for pheasants, the plantings will add considerably to the landscape in what is a relatively treeless part of Angus.

Similarly, at Flawcraig, between Perth and Dundee, Tilhill has planted five hectares of instant spinneys to improve cover at an already renowned shooting estate which attracts a clientele from all over Europe. Owner Peter Leslie has planted many trees himself in the past — with mixed results — and was happy to hand over this latest project to the professionals. Despite a severe drought immediately after planting, a take of well over 95 per cent was achieved.

Few farmers have had the time to get to know about trees and Colin is enjoying the educational role of converting them to the idea of forestry, especially in the more northern reaches of his area where a bleaker, more treeless landscape could be greatly enhanced by thoughtful and imaginative planting.

"I know we are winning," he said, "when a previously sceptical farmer subsequently becomes a real enthusiast for trees and begins to view forestry as a genuine component of his farm business."

Planting on properties where the owners live on the premises calls for its usual high standard of workmanship from the branch's labour squad, and Colin attributes much of the success of his branch to Bruce McLeod and his team who have done Tilhill's work in this part of the country for many years.

"We have to get it right first time," says Colin. With the branch now firmly established, Colin is confident that the challenge of building up a new type of client, virtually from scratch, is being successfully met and that the expansion of his staff has been justified by the volume of new business.

"We now have a small, but highly mobile and versatile team ready to respond to what I feel sure is an exciting future," he said.

"Owner-occupiers demand a high level of professionalism and, to maintain our lead in this area, we must ensure that they receive it, however great the demands on our time and energies."



● Branch secretary Lynda Harris.

BRANCH MANAGER Colin MacBrayne graduated from Aberdeen in 1978 and studied for his M.Sc. partly in Canterbury, New Zealand and partly back in Aberdeen, where he was also involved in a Department of Energy research programme looking into the potential of forest biomass as an alternative fuel.

He joined Tilhill in 1982 and worked as an assistant branch manager in Central branch for five years, latterly looking after properties which are now within the Fife & Angus branch area.

FORESTRY assistant Alan Parr comes from Cumbria and is a graduate of Aberdeen. He worked with the National Trust before joining Central branch in 1986 and transferred to the new branch as part of a planned expansion programme to develop the branch's, growing involvement in farm forestry.

Alan's hobbies are painting and walking and he has recently bought a quaint old cottage in Forfar which once belonged to the author J. M. Barrie.

FORESTRY assistant Gerard Charles joined the branch this year straight after graduating with honours in forestry and soil science from Bangor. He comes from Lancashire and enjoys walking and birdwatching in his spare time.

BRANCH secretary Lynda Harris joined Tilhill in 1988 after working previously as a medical secretary and in education. She has two children, aged nine and six, and lives a convenient five-minute walk from the office.

Scottish division

CHRIS JOHNSON has joined Solway branch as a forestry assistant. An honours graduate in Forestry from Aberdeen, Chris spent three pre-university years in the electronics industry before changing tack and moving into farm work and, eventually, forestry. He is a keen motor sport enthusiast who also enjoys fishing, shooting and badminton.



Chris Johnson

BRYSON MIDDLETON has joined the same branch as forestry assistant after graduating from Aberdeen with an honours degree in forestry. During the course, he spent ten months with the Forestry Commission at Buchan Forest District as an assistant forest surveyor. Bryson has an active interest in a number of sports, particularly squash and rugby. His father and namesake is Scottish Division's Southern Area Manager based at Jedburgh.



Bryson Middleton

The branch also welcomes **ALISON CASTLE**, who joined in April. Alison whose roots lie in Yorkshire, has worked all over England and, most recently, in Wales. A very experienced secretary, Alison has also been involved in calf-rearing and poultry farming.

Congratulations to ...

Adele Whitecross of Solway forestry branch on her marriage to Graham Jardine on July 29 ...

... Dai Lewis of South East forestry branch on his marriage to Jenni Clarke on September 30 ...

... James Thomson of Anglia Landscaping branch on his marriage to Nikki Daniel on September 2 ...

... and Fergus Tickell of Argyll branch and his wife, Anne, on the birth of their second child, Amy, on April 20 ...

CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS...

Southern Central has secured a substantial value of new orders to keep the branch busy for the next few months. Largest is a £131,000 contract from Costain for work at Farnborough Aerospace and Business Park. Work starts in the autumn. Other contracts include two for Conder Projects at Larges Lane and at Bartley Wood, worth £94,000 in total, a £48,000 contract for Mowlem Management at Staines and £30,000 from Balfour Beatty at Southampton. Reinstatement work at the RHS showground following the Chelsea Show has added a further £12,000 to the order book.

Scottish Central, meanwhile, has collected orders from Granada for a new service station at Musselburgh for £35,000; from the SDA / Falkirk District Council for footpath and fencing work at Denny (£43,000) and, from Biwater Shellabear, a £22,000 contract to seed

ash lagoons at the Cockenzie Power Station.

Northern branch has won a £33,000 contract for landscaping a Hanover Housing Association site at Fort William and a £6000 contract for a new Beefeater Restaurant in Inverness.

South East branch order book has improved by some £140,000 thanks to several new contracts including two from Tay Homes worth £3,000, one from Taylor Woodrow Homes, valued at £41,000, and a £23,000 contract from Johnson Construction at Ashford plus contracts from Wandsworth Health Authority (£12,000), Peter Birse for MFI, Brighton (£11,000), Horsham Business Park (£15,000) and Pioneer Aggregates at Lydd (£5,000).

PEOPLE

Landscaping division

ANGLIA BRANCH

● **JOHN HUNTINGTON** joined Anglia Landscaping branch as contracts supervisor in May. South African by birth, John and his wife, Annie, also born in South Africa but raised in Britain, and their two children returned to Britain in March from South Africa where John was employed as resident horticulturist for Garden and Home Magazine's school of gardening.



John Huntington

SOUTHEAST BRANCH

● **PATRICK McGRATH** has joined Southeast branch as a contracts supervisor. He has an HND in landscape and horticultural technology which he gained at Askham Bryan in York. Before joining Tilhill in June, Patrick had been running his own private landscape contracting business for five years.

ADRIAN COOPER has joined the branch as a contracts supervisor. He has an MA (Hons) degree in geography from Edinburgh University. Before joining Tilhill, he worked as a self-employed landscape gardener in London and his interests include classic cars and speed cycling.

GRAHAM SCOTT has been promoted within the branch to site contracts manager.

WILTS AND WEST BRANCH

ROLAND MAYER-JONES joined Wilts and West branch in June as a contracts supervisor after completing a horticultural degree at Bath University. Roland will be based at the BP Wyth Farm site.

IAN COCHRANE joined the branch also as contracts supervisor, bringing with him 11 years' experience of running his own landscape business.

Landscaping division

Yorkshire's tally include a £66,000 contract for landscaping a new Sainsbury store at Whitley Bay and £7,000 for a Tesco development at Bridlington. Two contracts were received from Cleveland County Council, worth £23,000 plus a £37,000 contract from South Tyneside MBC at Hebburn Riverside for maintenance work; £36,000 from the CGCB for work at Thorpe Marsh power station at Doncaster; £85,000 from Morrisons for work at Phase 3 of their Wakefield Depot where the branch undertook Phases 1 and 2, and £57,000 from Rotherham BC for a reclamation scheme at Templeborough. A grounds maintenance contract from the Commission for New Towns at

CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS...

& PLACES

Southern division



Stephen Thorpe

SOUTHEAST BRANCH

STEPHEN THORPE joined Southeast forestry branch in August as a forester following graduation from Newton Rigg in June. Previously, he worked for two years with the Forestry Commission in North York Moors Forest District and, in his sandwich year, at Blenheim Castle in Oxfordshire. Stephen is a keen student of calligraphy and ballroom dancing.

ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

Greenhills Accounts Department was sorry to say goodbye to **EVA DOGGRELL** (nee Keidel) but delighted that it is for the best of reasons, the birth of her baby. We have been pleased to be part of her life in this country, to marvel at her mastery of our language, and delight in her engagement and subsequent marriage to Nigel. Her leaving gift, a splendid group of bonsai elms, should be an appropriate reminder of friends at Tilhill.

In the Bought/Sales Ledger office we are glad to welcome **MAUREEN McCABE**, who spends much of her spare time fund-raising and chauffeuring for her son's football team. She is a gardener, too.

There are several new faces in the Computer Department. **CATHY HAWORTH**, operations supervisor, enjoys camping and horse-riding. **JO HUDSON**, data entry clerk, is another rider, and is also involved in motor cycle training. **DOUG MACDONNEL**, computer operator, lists sports and fishing among his hobbies.

MIRANDA LETHBRIDGE has joined to assist in the running of the fixed asset program. Her hobbies include badminton and servicing her Mini.

All these newcomers have joined up to become the major force in the Accounts Department attack on the Farnham companies' darts league competition. Known as the Tilhill Trotters, they have played valiantly but, despite best endeavours, finished firmly in last place! They promise to do better next season.

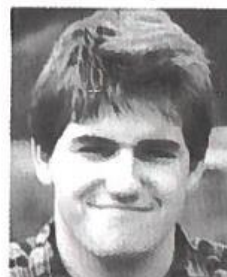
Belated announcements are necessary to introduce **JEAN GORRINGE** on the switchboard and **PAM MARTINY** in the post room. They have a variety of interests. Jean loves travelling, particularly to the States, while Pam has a deep interest in Ancient History. **DI SCOTT**, typist, has been with us some while too and, like so many at Greenhills, is a keen gardener.



Charles Blackwood



Neil Wallsgrove



Iain Ballantyne



Adrian Morgan

Nurseries division

NURSERIES Division has been busy recruiting extra staff.

In starting work as production manager in October, **CHARLES BLACKWOOD** is returning to his southern roots. He began his career with the Forestry Commission at Bramshill in 1960 and has worked from Warwickshire to Morayshire, via the Lake District, in numerous forests, the research branch and, latterly, at Delamere nursery in Cheshire, producing conifers and hardwoods — precision sown and transplanted — container stock, and an expanding programme of around a million improved Sitka spruce by vegetative propagation.

He is married with two sons in their final years of their education. He does a lot of DIY around the house, is fascinated by military architecture, and reads science fiction and World War II literature.

NEIL WALLSGROVE has joined the Nurseries as trainee assistant production manager. After completing a National Diploma in commercial horticulture, he went on to study at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew and is currently studying for the Master of Horticulture finals.

ADRIAN MORGAN joined the Division in early July as field sales manager. A native of Devon, he studied Agricultural Botany at UCNW in Bangor. After graduating in 1979, he worked for ten years in the agricultural seed industry for the CWS in Derby and Manchester and, more recently, for Tilhill's sister company, Booker Seeds, where he was a product manager specialising in marketing and key account sales. Adrian is married with one son.

IAIN BALLANTYNE joined the Division in July as nursery assistant. Iain hails from Aberdeen and gained a diploma in forestry at Inverness.

CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS...

Washington, contracts from GMI Construction for a new Business Park in Leeds, from McCarthy & Stone for a housing development at Northallerton, J. & J. Fee and Stocksbridge Engineering Steels all add a further £68,000 to complete the recent success.

Wilts and West is landscaping an extension to our sister company Middlebrook Mushrooms' production facility at Avon and the branch is also undertaking various other contracts for Dorset CC at Broadstone Link Road (£36,000), for Hampshire County Council at the A34 at Tidbury £16,000, and the Chippenham Relief Road (£44,000). The branch also secured a £65,000 contract at Langstone Park in Newport, £24,000 from Carnyge Bicknell at Swindon and £70,000 for the DHSS at Swindon and £14,000 at Cornbrash Park, Chippenham.

Anglia branch has mirrored

Yorkshire's success with a £133,000 contract for landscaping a new Sainsbury store through Wates Construction and an £8,000 contract for Tesco at Hadleigh. The branch has also received £111,000 worth of work at Colchester Business Park, £23,000 at Cambridge Science Park, £37,000 at Cambridge Business Park, £66,000 for Beazer Construction at Ware, and two contracts worth £80,000 for Countryside Properties at Chelmsford and Huntingdon, a £12,000 contract for the Forestry Commission for planting on the A12 Northampton ByPass and £36,000 at South Ockenden for Chafford Hundred Ltd.

Marches branch has won, and executed, a £62,000 contract for Telford Development Corporation at Hall Park Way, and has won a £7,000 contract from Kronospan for landscaping at their Chirk factory.

Southern division

Central branch reports contracts from the Lockwood Donkey Sanctuary at Wormley in Surrey, value £27,800, Defence Land Agent at Camberley (£13,255), from Balfour Beatty for work along the electricity transmission line between Basingstoke and Andover (£12,000) and at Camberley Heath Golf Club (£11,000).

Kent branch has been awarded two contracts from the MOD worth a total of £23,665 for work at Dove and Chattenden.

Scottish division

Lothians branch has been awarded a £17,000 contract for seeding and maintenance work at Blue Circle Cement Works in Dunbar.

CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS... CONTRACTS...



GROWING STRONG

DESPITE this summer's drought, Greenhills' latest "baby," the commemorative tree planted by former Chairman and company founder Archie Aitkins on the occasion of Tilhill's 40th anniversary is doing well. It has grown at least 30cm (see photograph).

Older readers who may well remember the tree planted 15 years earlier to commemorate Tilhill's 25th anniversary may be interested to know that it, too, is thriving.

Safety first



● Peter Fitch (centre) receives the "Booker" prize from Sir Michael Caine, chairman of Booker plc, watched by Landscaping Division director Graham Russell.

ELGIN Landscaping branch has won this year's agribusiness category in the Booker Risk Management competition.

It was the first time the branch had entered the competition which is open to all trading units in the group and has the aim of encouraging awareness among managers and staff of the important subjects of fire safety, security and health and safety at work.

With very little notice, managers of Booker establishments up and down the country were descended upon by "inspectors" with questionnaires covering a wide range of good safe housekeeping aspects for which they, as managers, are responsible but which, it must be said, is a point not always fully appreciated.

Elgin's manager Peter Fitch, however, presented an office and store in shipshape and Bristol fashion and, in addition, an awareness of and attitude to health and safety which would be difficult to beat — as, indeed, one would expect from someone who was responsible for drafting Tilhill's health and safety policy.

Peter has been rewarded not only for knowing the theory but putting it into practice, and has set the standard for others to attain in future competitions.



Can you beat it!

SOMEONE, somewhere, thinks Tilhill fire signs are collector's items.

Peter Fitch, manager of the Elgin landscaping branch, spotted this sign nestling among other odds and ends in a shop selling badges and memorabilia in London's Greenwich Village.

Fancy it on your sitting room wall, anyone?

NO FLIES ON ANGLIA!



● The Sands sprayer in action.

WHEN a severe infestation of aphid became apparent on a plantation of Christmas trees back in the warm spring of this year, Tilhill Forestry's staff in Anglia branch were presented with a problem. How to get an application of aphicide on to 14,000 young trees in a hurry, without using vast teams of men with knapsack sprayers?

A little bit of gentle lateral thinking suggested that an agricultural, wide-boom sprayer with high-clearance wheels might be the answer, and contractor Robert Salmon from Dereham came to the rescue.

A Sands 24m self-propelled sprayer was available and with 1m clearance under the axles and 2.2m clearance under the booms, it seemed to be the machine for the job.

"We were almost embarrassed to bring this

machine, which is capable of spraying hundreds of acres per day, to our five-acre field of Christmas trees," said Tilhill's David Collender, who looks after the wood in question. "On the day, operator Nigel Smith did a first-class job in a tricky situation. We put on Aphox — it was still available then — at 850gms/ha in 700 litres of water per hectare. Nigel managed to get into all the corners and he only squashed six trees, which we thought was wonderful. We were really surprised at the flexibility of the machine and impressed with Nigel Smith's skill as an operator."

The spraying was a complete success. David Collender estimates from sampling that 300kg weight of aphid were killed on 2ha. of Christmas trees. The trees were saved from potential total loss, and Robert Salmon's contracting business has another satisfied customer.