



FOREST IMPACT: Times five and rising

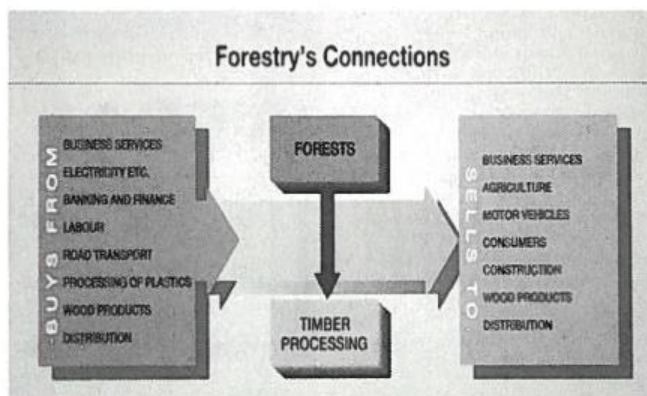
- The value of output of UK forests was £384 million.
- The total impact of forests and dependent activities on UK output was £1954 million.
- The number of full-time equivalent jobs in UK forests was 11,800.
- The total impact of forests and dependent activities on UK employment was 55,500.
- Forestry - related impact was felt in all major UK sectors.
- The distribution of UK forestry's impact on all sectors of the economy was England 74.0%, Scotland 16.7%, Wales 6.3% and Northern Ireland 3.0%.
- Scotland's, Wales' and Northern Ireland's shares of forestry impact were greater than their 'average' shares of aggregate UK activity.

IN 1984 the impact of that part of the UK forest industry which is dependent on UK forests was over five times the value of the forest-gate output. The number of full-time equivalent jobs created in industry by UK forests is 55,500, and household incomes generated exceed £550 million.

These are the arresting facts established by a long-awaited and much-needed report from the Fraser of Allander Institute of Strathclyde University, commissioned by the Forestry Industry Committee of Great Britain (FICGB), of which Tilhill is a founder member. The report was financed by the Scottish Forestry Trust, FICGB itself, and the Forestry Commission.

Previous studies of forestry, such as the 1972 Treasury Cost-Benefit study and 1986 National Audit Office report on the FC, considered only the forest-gate value of forest produce.

Commentators and politicians fell too easily into the trap of thinking that they adequately appraised the industry. The wealth creation of forestry has hitherto been seriously underestimated.



Those involved in forestry knew and said this, but, prior to this study no-one could substantiate by how much.

The internal rate of return achieved by the investor in a forest, which is what previous reports have tended to concentrate on, is simply the forest investor's financial return. The fivefold "downstream" benefits enjoyed by others and the community as a whole are what national policyholders should give due weight to when framing policy.

Now they know what the numbers are. Adding the environmental benefits of forests — perhaps most notably in converting carbon dioxide into cellulose and releasing oxygen — and the loading of forestry's impact to rural areas and upland Britain, the case for forestry expansion is overwhelming.

Because the national input output tables are only published

quinquennially, the latest, 1984, tables had to be used. Since that year, a massive £750 million has been invested in the timber processing sector, including two new pulp mills, and major expansion of particleboard and sawmilling capacity. It is clear that, were the study repeated now, the multiplying factor would be further enhanced.

Although forest industry output proportionately to all output is greatest in Scotland and Wales, it is notable that 74 per cent of all forest industry impact is in England. This reflects the location of processing industries, markets and population. However, it is evident that the industry contributes strongly throughout the United Kingdom.

Tilhill welcomes the publication of this new report. Clearly the, now quantified, importance of the forest industry must now be accorded proper recognition by policy makers.



Mechanics of success

A POWERFUL Osa Harvester hard at work on Hayfield Estate in Argyll, where mechanical harvesting techniques are making a major contribution to healthy production figures — the machine is capable of felling and processing around 70 tonnes of timber a day. See our Argyll branch profile on the centre pages.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

AFTER nursing a dream to visit Nepal for many years, circumstances permitted Mark to join me for the trip in November 1989, writes Bill.

We decided to travel independent of any organised tour and established a few simple parameters. Our plan was to spend the initial two days in Kathmandu, hire porters and equipment locally, spend about ten days trekking around Annapurna leaving a day or two to allow for delays. We also decided to stay below 11,000 feet to avoid altitude problems.

As we emerged from the airport building in Kathmandu, we met an amazing amalgam of "ancient and modern." Scruffy urchins vied with taxi drivers for custom, the decibel rating of the clamour surely exceeding any Western limit.

Our journey by taxi to the hotel revealed the cultural gulf which exists between East and West as, indeed, between the local "haves" and "have-nots." Farming carried out on small family plots hardly reached subsistence level and we marked the utter poverty of people inhabiting meagre shelters by the roadside.

The following day we spent confirming the arrangements for the trek and wandering around Kathmandu. Something new assailed the senses at every turn. In the market, we found fortune-tellers using parrots to select the forecast; flocks of ducks and guinea-fowl were paraded for sale; a medicine-man was strutting his stuff and, disconcertingly, a man was chanting over a prostrate female on the pavement.

Having purchased several small items from one of the specialist trekking shops, we were ready for our departure on the early morning bus to Pokhara. What a horrendous journey awaited us! We climbed out of the valley on reasonable roads to enter the most spectacular countryside. Precipitous hillsides were terraced completely, workers were everywhere cultivating, harvesting or sowing. Ribbon development had followed the roadline with hovels set only a yard or two away from the edge of the highway. Everything was coated in the dust raised by passing vehicles.

The road surface varied from tarmac to eroded corrugated ridges. There were numerous delays caused by breakdowns or stops for refreshment. Most of the passengers appeared to accept the conditions philosophically and there was a certain amount of levity (we spent quite a considerable amount of time bounced off the seats).

The traditional Nepalese greeting is "Namaste," said with both palms pressed together, as in praying. The driver's door had a painting of two hands in this position and I am sure that numerous prayers were said during that journey.

Our team consisted of a Sirdar (guide), cook and four porters.

Morning tea at 6.30 am was followed by breakfast served up with breathtaking views of the mountains over the lake. As the light improved and the mist burned off, we could see fishermen and washerwomen already at work. Camp was struck fairly quickly and we set off on the first stage.



● Timber bridge over a raging torrent.



● Bill writes up his daily journal after a hard day's slog.

NEPAL AT LAST

● Bill Dorrington, South West branch manager at Frome, realised a long-term ambition when he and son Mark trekked around the Annapurna region of Nepal.

We followed the dry Yangdi Kola valley for about six hours in temperatures of between 70° and 80° until we reached a desolate settlement at Suikhet.

The countryside was truly Biblical but was full of contrasts. Women were cutting and carrying gigantic loads of corn; buffalo were being used for ploughing; mule trains passed in both directions and, incongruously, irregular clouds of dust heralded the passing of ex-Chinese Army jeeps dangerously overlaid with trekkers who had elected to drive to or from Suikhet rather than walk.

After a short rest at Suikhet we started on the climb of about 4000 ft. to Dhampus. This was the moment of truth!

Obviously, my training had hardly been adequate. Perhaps the forced march along the airless valley had sapped more energy than I had realised. For whatever reason, this climb was punishing.

About halfway, we entered a plateau which was virtually a mirror-image of the scene in the valley. The beauty of the area was truly breathtaking and evoked thoughts of Shangri-la.

Our target for the next day was Landrung, this involving crossing a pass at Potana. Thank God for rhododendron! One's view changes with discomfort. At home much effort is expended in trying to destroy rhododendron but here I was grateful for the shade offered by these forests.

On the trail of Landrung we found severe deforestation and little regrowth. Apparently, the Government had been quite successful in persuading rural communities to change their habits and use kerosene for cooking instead of firewood. After about three years' education, the deforestation was reducing and the attendant erosion was less severe. The Indians then decided to prohibit the export of kerosene so the over-cutting of firewood resumed.

The severe erosion encountered on this stage of our trek, demonstrated the urgent need for



● Our small companion joins us on her way to school.

a controlled cutting / planting policy.

Our evening camp was set near to the village of Landrung giving magnificent views of Annapurna and Fishtail.

Next day, we had to descend about 1000 ft. to the river and then climb to about 6800 ft. to reach Ghandrung, where a half-day rest was scheduled.

Our camp was set outside the village on a small terrace planted to maize. Later in the day, we were passed by a twenty-one strong group of Germans accompanied by about forty porters. This was trekking Rolls-Royce style!

Porters carried chairs, tables, toilets, kerosene lights and dining marquees as well as the personal tents. Their daily target was about three times greater than our own. It was obvious that performance was the creed but I felt that they did not gain as much from the trip as we did by stopping and observing at will.

The setting for dinner was fabulous — a cool evening with the magnificent backdrop of Annapurna for decor!

The evening clouded over and we lost sight of the peaks temporarily. During the night, the skies cleared and the views of Annapurna by moonlight were truly breathtaking.

Making our, by now, accustomed early start, Mark and I followed the

trail to Birethanti. We were overtaken after about two hours by our crew singing and whistling, obviously in great spirits.

The narrow path meant travelling in single file and, after a while, I noticed a little pixie had taken up station between Mark and myself, obviously on her way to school. She walked with us for the next hour or so until we reached the school. The trusting nature of such small children (we discovered she was five years old) and the long distances they travel alone puts our western "civilisation" in a very poor light.

We passed through uncultivated areas carrying a fairly dense shrub layer — Berberis, Viburnum and Catalpa together with other, seemingly familiar but unidentified species.

Our camp at Birethanti was set some little way out in a paddy field on the edge of the mighty river Modi. The choice of site was interesting. The mix of buffalo dung and silt produces quite a memorable aroma and our camp shoes were outside passengers on the rucksacks for the next day or two!

The land bordering the river carried quite large plantations of Alder. Growth rates were very impressive and the form was excellent. This timber was obviously used extensively for building and agricultural purposes and, being coppiced, was self-perpetuating.

These beautiful stands of well-tended poles were in stark contrast to the disturbing gouges elsewhere on the flanks of the valley following the previous year's monsoon and emphasised, again, the urgent need for re-afforestation.

Another steep climb faced us on the next day on the road to Chandrakot.

We quickly climbed through the woodland on the lower slopes and caught up with a mule-train. We were forced to adopt the slow regular pace of the train and finally realised that this was the secret of trekking. We climbed steadily for several hours without rest and arrived at the summit in good order.

It was amusing to see this mule train, a transport system nearly as old as time itself, controlled by two drivers wearing anoraks sporting Honda and Yamaha logos.

Camp was set on an elevated plateau some way outside the village. This felt like the top of the world. The plateau was about the size of a tennis court giving magnificent views of Fishtail Mountain.

The Chinese are building a road through this part of the region.

Continued on page 8

Out of Africa — to the hills of home

THE person sitting behind a large and well-organised desk at Old Sauchie was, Vaughan Hammond assured Tree Scribe, still not entirely used to spending more time indoors than out. But being office-bound for longer periods was accepted as an essential part of assuming greater responsibilities.

Like many of his kind, Vaughan Hammond was attracted into forestry as a career through a love of the outdoors dating back to boyhood. Born in Devon and settling in Scotland at the age of nine when his father's work with the Admiralty took the family to Rosyth in Fife, Vaughan has long considered himself a Scot and, apart from a brief spell of itchy feet immediately after graduation, has shown no inclination to leave his adopted country.

He graduated from Edinburgh University in 1969 with a degree in ecological science with honours forestry. Newly married and believing firmly in getting travelling out of his system while still free of family commitments, he set off with his teacher wife, Margaret, for three years in Africa working for the Zambian Government. While Margaret taught at the local convent, Vaughan was in his element, camping in the bush for long periods in charge of the Forest Survey Unit and getting to grips with topics now very much in the public's awareness.

"Foresters have been conscious of the need for proper management of the world's forest resources," said Vaughan, "and back in 1969/70, I continued the programmes of national surveys into firewood demand, the rate of clearance of natural woodland and carrying out soil and vegetation surveys with a view to growing plantation timber to supply the rapidly expanding population."

It was in Zambia that the seeds of Vaughan's future career with Tilhill were sown. He already knew of the company by reputation and had it at the back of his mind as a possible opening on his return to the UK, but a chance meeting with a friend of former company managing director David Brierton hastened him along that path. The friend wrote home to Tilhill with a glowing recommendation and Vaughan's subsequent letter of enquiry led quickly to a successful interview.

But first there was another project to be completed by the adventurous Hammonds. They planned a return trip home overland in a battered old VW beetle with a three-month-old baby in the back. Spurning the more dangerous northern



PROFILE

Tree Scribe meets Vaughan Hammond, a man who puts back into forestry as much as he takes out.

route, they chose instead an itinerary that took them through various countries through to South Africa and then overland through Europe before settling down to life in the busiest Scottish Division branch, in Carlisle where Vaughan had been appointed assistant branch manager working under Peter Sloan.

Just over a year in Solway gave Vaughan a taste for life in forestry management and he was delighted, in December 1973, to be promoted very rapidly to being manager of his own branch in Argyll.

Geographically, Argyll branch was twice its present size, taking in the area now covered by Cowal and Bute. Vaughan enthusiastically embarked on an expansion programme, obtaining so much new afforestation work in the Cowal area that it eventually justified separation in 1979, to become Cowal and Bute branch.

With his territory halved, Vaughan then looked east for expansion potential and concentrated on acquiring new land for major pension fund clients in the Dalmally and Lochaweside area where good access and shelter made conditions for planting especially favourable.

In his remaining five years in Argyll branch, Vaughan's steady expansion policy more than recouped the turnover losses resulting from the split. For one of those years, Argyll had the biggest turnover in the whole of Scottish Division and was never out of the top two or three. When he moved on in 1985 to well-deserved promotion as northern area manager, he left behind him an excellent legacy for the future.

At the age of 42 and responsible for several of Scottish Division's nine forestry branches, Vaughan still gains enormous

satisfaction from seeing the branch where he cut his teeth continuing to do so well and adding further large private ownerships to its woodland management portfolio.

Vaughan's "patch" takes in his old stamping grounds in Argyll, and Central branch — a sizeable chunk of Scotland and the part, scenically, which appeals most to his long-standing love affair with the mountains which continue, in his spare time, to meet a deep need for getting away from it all.

He has achieved a life-long ambition to climb all the Scottish Munros and is now working his way through them for a second time joined, on occasions, by the youngest of his three children, thirteen-year-old Ross, who shares his father's affinity for the hills.

When weather conditions or other commitments preclude forays into the mountains, either on foot or astride a bicycle, Vaughan gets rid of excess energy either in the garden of his Dunblane home, fishing or

on the badminton court or snooker table, where he is reputed to be a formidable opponent.

An equally formidable intellect, combined with an incisive mind, makes him a well respected figure both in Tilhill and forestry circles generally. Branch managers who go into meetings with Vaughan without having their arguments properly marshalled beforehand are unlikely to forget the experience.

Vaughan's enthusiasm and dedication to his chosen field extends into a willingness to put time and effort into the profession's governing bodies.

He is a member of TGUK's Scottish Advisory Board and Northern Region committee, a member of the RSFS silvicultural group and serves on the local area committee of the Perth and Angus region of the RSFS. He has also served as that organisation's Western Region chairman and a member of the main council, and for four years was on the Council of the ICF. Amazingly, he also finds time to be on the executive committee of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland.

Involvement in the politics of forestry from people at the sharp end of the business is of vital importance, maintains Vaughan. He goes even further by insisting that it is the duty of companies like Tilhill to make sure that the industry is properly and widely represented — and doesn't mind giving up his own time to achieve that end.

It's his way of reciprocating the sheer enjoyment forestry has given him and the satisfaction of participating in the kind of good land use which is going to prove such an asset to the country.



● Site cultivation on the western seaboard.



● Assistant branch manager John Little inspects

TREE SCRIBE was lucky enough to visit Argyll branch on the first day of spring. The still snow-covered peaks emerged from a blanket of black cloud, daffodils and rhododendrons bloomed in warm sunshine and skylarks and curlews welcomed the first day for several months without the gale-force winds which had swept western Scotland for much of the winter.

In the Lochawe Basin chosen by branch manager Fergus Tickell as an area typifying the branch's varied workload, some of the branch labour squads were well into their working day, taking full advantage of the ideal conditions. London-born but Argyll-bred, Fergus claims his branch as Tilhill's most scenic — and he's probably right. The branch abounds in superlatives. Mountains, moors, lochs and seascapes extend north to Fort William, east to Crianlarich and Lochlomondside, west to Loch Fyne and Kintyre and out to the islands of Mull, Jura and Islay, making it one of Tilhill's biggest in geographical terms.

Its mild, wet climate gives it Britain's tallest tree, a grand fir at over 200 feet at Cairndow at the head of Loch Fyne, and reputedly the fattest Sitka spruce, over 23 feet in diameter at Ardnamoish estate near Taynuilt. Both, co-incidentally, are on estates which Tilhill has been closely and actively involved with for 25 years.

Argyll is also one of Scottish Division's most consistently profitable branches. Last year, it marketed nearly half the timber standing sold by Scottish Division. Turnover has been the second highest in the division for the past two years.

The branch was, at one time, even bigger than it is now. From its headquarters in Oban, a popular sailing and holiday centre and departure point for ferries to the inner isles, it administered until 1979 an area which subsequently became the separate branch of Cowal and Bute.

The then branch manager Vaughan Hammond presided over a massive expansion programme which concentrated on the easily accessible areas towards the eastern end of the branch's territory towards Dalmally and it was here, skirting round the southern flanks of 3695-foot high Ben Cruachan to look at areas of recent clearfell on the Hayfield estate, that Fergus outlined to Tree Scribe the contribution mechanical harvesting is making to his production figures.

"Last year," he said, "we sold 23,000 tonnes of timber from this branch, the great majority of it mechanically harvested."

In Argyll branch, the traditional sight of a man and chainsaw is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. The branch's management profile and an upsurge in clearfell requirements has made the use of mechanical harvesting the obvious choice. "We were fortunate in having conditions which make it particularly appropriate," said Fergus, "ease of access, relatively good ground conditions and a

HIGHLAND

ARGYLL branch is successfully using mechanical harvesting techniques to improve clients' returns. Tree Scribe takes a closer look at how the branch operates and hears about the sheer variety of forestry in this part of Scotland.

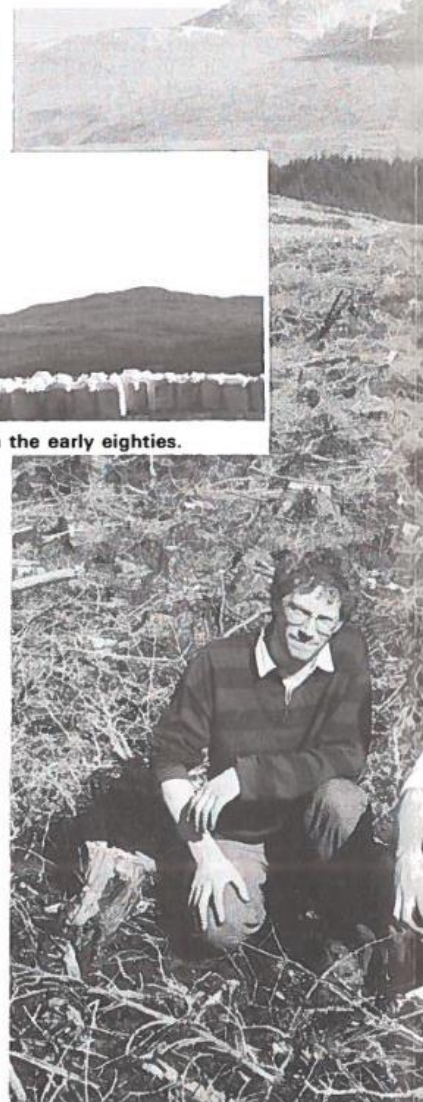


● Aerial fertilising on a property afforested in the early eighties.

contractor on hand with the right equipment." Argyll's management profile is, indeed a varied and interesting one, as Fergus explained. It's one of the oldest branches in Scottish Division, set up in 1963 to handle traditional estate work and with an eye to a future planting boom in the area. Most of the original clients are still with Tilhill, either in Argyll or Cowal and Bute, among them many private clients who own traditional mixed land-use estates. Today, Argyll is a traditional forestry branch in its make-up, with a number of ex-Forestry Commission plantations brought into Tilhill care by pension fund clients, a large area of new afforestation work in the eighties and an increasing trend towards estate work where woodland management is integrated with other considerations such as fishing, farming and leisure.

Typical of this is Ormsary near Lochgilphead, a 6500-hectare estate of which only ten per cent is given over to commercial forestry. Tilhill looks after the predominantly mixed conifer woodlands within an integrated estate management system which also includes stalking, fish farming and holiday letting as well as traditional farming pursuits.

The branch's woodland management responsibilities range from a 30-hectare area of shelter belt managed at Tayvallich near Lochgilphead for a private client to the largest block, 1465 hectares of commercial conifer plantations for an institutional client at Cladich, near Dalmally, this last a mixture of former Forestry Commission plantation and land planted by the branch over the last eight years. Commitment to industrial landscape work is confined to a small amount of routine



● Branch manager Fergus Tickell (right) and check for pine weevil activity on Hayfield estate backdrop to this new



buds on a young spruce tree.



● Assistant branch manager Susan MacLachlan loads up a trailer at the start of a day's work.

HARVEST



Assistant branch manager Alan Hampson at Ben Cruachan makes a magnificent y-restocked site.

planting and maintenance work.

Fergus continued with the new planting expansion policy where his predecessor left off in 1987. At Fanans, near Taynuilt, Fergus pointed out a 570-hectare tract of land currently grazed by sheep which has been bought by Tilhill and is available for planting. The block encompasses part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and 100 hectares would be set aside for stocking with broadleaved woodland, says Fergus. "Evidence of availability of land suitable for new planting means that this type of work will continue to be a feature of the branch's portfolio for some time to come," said Fergus.

As a keen and very knowledgeable amateur historian with a passionate interest in the landscape, Fergus is a great believer in multi-use forestry. "We can achieve all kinds of objectives, as well as the growing of timber for commercial purposes, by the judicious use of forestry," he maintains.

By way of illustration, in the space of a few short miles, Fergus took Tree Scribe to two highly contrasting properties. Hayfield estate is 345 hectares of traditional plantation in three blocks near Taynuilt. One was planted by the client in 1983 and two neighbouring areas were bought from the Forestry Commission a year later. In one of these blocks, clearfelling by mechanical harvesting began two years ago with restocking carried out in 1989. The felling of a second area has just been completed. In contrast, and almost adjacent, set in 75 hectares of mature and peaceful mixed woodland, Ardanaisieig Hotel is one of Argyll's most renowned eating places. The building itself is a stunning example of Scottish baronial-style architecture completed in 1834 and surrounded by a celebrated woodland garden. The owners are currently in the process of transforming the woodlands into amenity walks for guests to complement commercial forestry objectives. As part of this plan, Tilhill has recently planted new glades of ornamental species such as cherry, walnut and cut leaf beech. The branch's variety of work is a source of great satisfaction to Fergus and his staff of three assistants. Some properties are, quite literally, just down the road from the office; others require a 5 am rise for the two-and-a-half-hour boat journey to Islay, where felling and restocking is taking place for Islay Estates, and a second ferry trip on to Jura where two other small woodland areas are under Tilhill management.

It's clear that being on home ground adds a further dimension to Fergus's own job satisfaction. His heart and soul, as well as his considerable expertise in forest management, are paying both personal and professional dividends.



● Branch secretary Catriona McGuire.

● Branch manager **FERGUS TICKELL** moved to Argyll branch in 1987 after spending five-and-a-half years at Central. He joined Tilhill in 1981 straight from Edinburgh University where he graduated with an honours BSc in Ecological Science. Moving to Oban was something of a homecoming as Fergus was brought up in Morvern in north Argyll. In his spare time, he enjoys tennis, squash and reading and has an interest in land use history.

● Assistant branch manager **JOHN LITTLE** moved to Argyll branch in 1986 after a year at Central branch. An honours BSc graduate in Ecological Science from Edinburgh University, he spent a year working for the Forestry Commission Forest Survey Branch prior to joining Tilhill. John is currently busy preparing for his forthcoming marriage to Oban-based radiographer Jackie Coutts. In the rest of his spare time, he enjoys photography and a variety of indoor and outdoor sports.

● **ALAN HAMPSON** joined Argyll branch in 1988, having graduated from Aberdeen University with an honours BSc in forestry. Alan is responsible for a significant proportion of the mechanical harvesting being undertaken by the branch, together with subsequent restocking work. Away from work, Alan enjoys bee-keeping and reading.

● **SUSAN MacLACHLAN** joined the branch in 1986 after graduating with an honours BSc in forestry from University College of North Wales, Bangor. Her hobbies include skiing and gardening, the latter put to good use at work as she is responsible for landscaping carried out by the branch.

● **CATRIONA McGUIRE** is the branch secretary and is the longest-serving member of staff, having joined the branch in 1983. A native of South Uist, Catriona is probably the only fluent Gaelic speaker employed by Tilhill.

PEOPLE AND PLACES . . .



Picture courtesy of Farnham Herald.

Congratulations . . .

. . . to John Wilding of Southern Division Central branch, Julian Ohlsen of Southwest branch and Douglas Boyd of Scottish Division Cowal and Bute branch on gaining their NDF qualification and promotion to assistant branch manager . . .

. . . to Clive Seward of Southeast branch, Andrew Bronwyn of Marches branch, Alan Parr of Fife and Angus branch and Graham Chalk and Alan Christison, both of Borders branch. All five have passed the ICF Part II examination, becoming full members of ICF and Chartered Foresters . . .

. . . and to Alan Christison and his wife Linda on the birth of their second child, a daughter named Laura, on February 5.

New satellite

THE East Midlands satellite of Anglia branch came into being on February 24 when Richard Sochaki rejoined us as a deputy branch manager after a sojourn with Woodland Trust.

Richard is 33 years old, and has been in Tilhill employ for nine years culminating in his being Marches branch manager before joining Woodland Trust in March 1989. He graduated from Oxford University with a BA(Hons) in 1978.

The East Midlands satellite has been set up to serve existing and potential clients in Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire and we expect to take occupation of offices at 68/69 High Street, Grantham, in the course of the next few weeks.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

Fixing it for Jim

JIM CRAIG was Southern Division head office manager until he took early retirement due to ill health towards the end of September last year.

Because he was, at that juncture, still a sick man struggling painfully to recover from a stroke, a farewell party for this popular and respected man was not held until February 23 when Southern Division branches and head office, nurseries and accounts departments staff collectively presented him with a gift of his own choice — a variable speed drill and sander attachment.



• Peter Sloan (left) presents Jim with his farewell gift.

ELIS WYNNE joined Kent branch late last year and was subsequently transferred to Southeast branch at Crowborough in March. Elis graduated from Bangor in July 1989 with a BSc in Agroforestry. His hobbies include shooting, football, fast cars and loud music.

Stephen Thorpe has transferred from Southeast to join Kent following Noel Kennedy's departure to return to his native Ireland.

IT IS good to see Di Scott back at her typewriter in accounts department following her operation, from which she has made a good and speedy recovery.

Congratulations are due to Ian Bryant on the birth of his fifth child. A generation away, Tony Savin delights in the arrival of a second grandson.

The department is sorry to have lost Ian McDonald, chief accountant for the past eleven years. Apart from his work for Tilhill, Ian wears the hat of a part-time farmer and his tales of lambing at three in the morning, rounding up stray cattle from the neighbouring hospital, and sheepdog trialling will be greatly missed. He has the good wishes of us all in his new job in Bedfordshire.

WE REGRET to report the death of Keith Parratt who worked for Tilhill since 1956 until ill health forced his retirement earlier this year. Initially, Keith worked for the forestry department helping to plant many of the woods around Tilford, and in 1980 he transferred to Nurseries where he was mainly involved with hardwood production.

Everyone who was fortunate enough to have known Keith was touched by his continual cheerfulness, integrity and total reliability. He was one of life's gentlemen. He died peacefully at home on March 25 and our thoughts and condolences go to Joan and to all the family.

Director's flying start to retirement

RETIRING Nurseries Director John White was given a rousing send-off by colleagues with a party at Greenhills and another at a local hostelry where he was presented with a handsome monocular telescope which John will doubtless find invaluable in his pursuit of bird-watching.

The ornithological theme was continued in his gift from the staff of a delightful model of nesting great crested grebes.

John took on the job of running Tilhill's nurseries 15 years ago after an already successful career in the Forestry Commission.

His first experience of nursery work was with Anglia branch in Culford and, once he'd accepted the challenge of revamping the company's nurseries at Greenhills, he quickly rose to become one of the most widely respected nurserymen in the business.

• Above: John and Frieda enjoy a farewell toast from wellwishers on the lawn at Greenhills.

HARVESTING & MARKETING

Regional role

ANDY POWELL (left) has joined Tilhill as Harvesting and Marketing regional manager for the new NW England Region.

Prior to taking up this new position with Tilhill, he was a partner in a harvesting and haulage company which worked exclusively for Tilhill. He has a keen interest in specialised timber harvesting machinery and fishing, and is married with two daughters.





● Scottish Division director Martin Wilkinson (right) and Mike Johnson deputy director of British Coal Open-Cast Executive, share a spot of planting work.

COAL FACELIFT

THE Yorkshire and Solway branches of Tilhill's Scottish Division have been awarded a five-year contract by British Coal's Open-Cast Executive. The contract involves planting 550 acres of woodlands and shelterbelts, plus 60 miles of hedging on reclaimed open-cast sites in Durham, Northumberland and Cumbria. This planting will be maintained for five years so that the land and established trees may be returned to the owners or sold. The capital works programme is worth in excess of £300,000 over the first three years, and involves planting in the region of 1.5 million plants.

The contract began in County Durham with a ceremonial planting of 20 English Oak at the largest site, Tanners Hall, as part of National Tree Week. The ceremony was attended by Mike Johnson, Deputy Director of British Coal's Open-Cast Executive, Martin Wilkinson, Tilhill's Scottish Division Director, ADAS and MAFF representatives, councillors and local schoolchildren.

British Coal intends that the site will eventually be restored to better than its original condition with some 220 acres of trees, ponds for wildlife and open rides fringed with broadleaves to make attractive walks.

Monarchs of the glens!

THE Cairngorm Mountains in Inverness-shire are enclosed in one of Britain's largest National Nature Reserves. Such natural wonders as the ancient Scots Pine forest of Rothiemurchus, the shy Ptarmigan, Red Deer, Capercaillie, Golden Eagles and Pine Martens are to be discovered.

On two weekends in the months of September and October last year, however, another phenomenon was to be seen — a Tilhill mountain bike party wending its way through forest paths and sweating up glens and mountainsides in the pursuit of relaxation.

At the invitation of Solway branch manager, Charlie Fulton, whose brother John operates "Wildcat Mountain Bike Tours" from his base in Stirling, some 14 Tilhill staff and friends got together to have a go at what is an increasingly popular sport in the countryside.

Some of the first to volunteer were Managing Director Sandy Macpherson, Scottish Director Martin Wilkinson and Landscaping Director Graham Russell. Others involved included forestry assistants Chris Johnson and Bryson Middleton (junior) who at that time had been on the Tilhill staff just one month.

On the first of the two weekends, the party stayed at Loch Morlich Youth Hostel which, for some, meant renewing memberships which had lapsed some 25 years earlier.

Happily, however, after all those years, the familiar smell of communal dining rooms, packet soups and wet boots still dominates the atmosphere whilst the ritual continues of sweeping out the dormitories or cleaning the toilets, as instructed by the warden after breakfast each day.

Our first outing took us on a 30-mile circular route through the hill paths to the north of Loch Morlich through Abernethy Forest to Nethy



● In Glenfeshie.

Bridge in Strathspey where a welcome hostelry provided liquid fuel and soft seating for a while before completing the circuit via a further mountain pass through Queen's Forest.

The second day involved a shorter, though more arduous, climb into Glen Einich where the reward was a panoramic view

over Rothiemurchus Forest.

The second weekend involved essentially the same staff as the first only on this occasion, as "seat-hardened" veterans, a more ambitious route was proposed.

After spending Friday night in Aviemore Youth Hostel, the party cycled 40 miles through Glenfeshie and along the side of the River Dee to Braemar, where a guest house selected for its numerous baths and showers, large meals and tumble-driers provided accommodation on the Saturday night.

The intention on the second day was to return to Aviemore via the classic Lairig Ghru route through the heart of the Cairngorms. Sunday morning, however, brought poor weather with low cloud and rain, and it was decided to take a lower elevation through slightly longer routes through Glen Derry and across the Fords of Avon into Glenmore.

Whilst enthusiasm was low before setting out in the rain that morning, everyone was glad not to be in Graham Russell's shoes. Graham, the only casualty of the weekend, was faced with a long dreary day in Braemar before being picked up in the evening, having badly twisted his knee when dismounting (falling off) his bike the previous day.

Unplanned dismountings are part and parcel of mountain biking and everyone had their share of spills that day when descending a particularly steep and rocky path to Nethy Bothy. After another 40-mile trip, however, we all arrived safely back at Aviemore where the last two miles saw everyone involved in a spirited and ruthless race to reach our vehicles and dry clothes first.

Both weekends were a great success, and the enthusiasm for further such events has resulted in a programme of four more trips having been arranged for later this year.



● Alistair Anton in Glenfeshie.



● The Party heads for Nethy Bridge.

Continued from page 2

Shortly, it will be possible to travel from Pokhara to Birethanti in about two hours — a trip which took us three days!

We passed through National Park woodlands carrying Pines and what I understood to be Sal (Shorea robusta). This hardwood is apparently useful for implements and building where strength and durability are required.

The habit was somewhat similar to Cherry but the form was not always very good. The plantations had been abused by stock and, presumably, illegal cutting, and fences were dilapidated in parts.

Our final evening in camp on the

edge of Lake Phewa, was pleasant. The cook surpassed himself, even producing a chocolate cake decorated with icing!

We spent a lazy morning collecting our thoughts and enjoying the activities of eagles and kingfishers over the lake.

When we planned the trip, we decided to treat ourselves to a touch of luxury on our return from trekking. We had booked a night at Fishtail Lodge, a Colonial style hotel only accessible by raft.

On our trip across to the Lodge, we talked to two Australian women

who told us of an accident which had occurred on the day we had taken the bus to Pokhara. Apparently, one of the other buses on the same road had crashed into the river killing 41 people. The only survivors had been the "second class" passengers clinging to the roof rack. This reinforced my decision to fly back to Kathmandu.

The pleasure of cleaning teeth, shaving and washing in separate water was immense. For the past ten days we had carried-out all these operations in one eight-inch bowl.

It was amusing to see some of the

residents who were obviously "doing" the Himalayas the easy way. They left by car after breakfast, returned for lunch and claimed to have "trekked through the hills."

The flight to Kathmandu took thirty five minutes compared with the nine and a half hours by road! The view from the air emphasised the tenacity and industry of the native Nepalese. Seeming thousands of terraces clung to apparently impossible slopes throughout the whole region.

We wandered through the backstreets and outskirts of Kathmandu to get a flavour of the community. We were mainly in extremely poor areas where sheer existence was hard won yet there was never a sense of threat. For considerable periods, we were the only Europeans around yet we were treated with courtesy by everyone.

It was sad to see the incipient decay in many of the historic buildings but we learned that there is a plan to restore much of the fabric. I was unsure about the implementation of this scheme as there generally seemed to be so many plans to improve the lot of the Nepalese without any real evidence of success.

Memories keep flooding back, even now...

- The courteous and friendly nature of Nepalese people irrespective of their status;
- The truly beautiful and elegant young women placidly carrying out menial tasks or acting as beasts of burden;
- The monumental loads toted by porters (men and women) over surely some of the world's most difficult terrain;
- The cacophony that is Kathmandu where the "haves" and "have nots" appear to exist harmoniously side by side;
- The incongruities present in so many forms — mule train drivers wearing motor-cycle jackets, plastic containers in used beside traditional brass and copper pots;
- The fearsome road to Pokhara and the demon drivers who spend their working lives on this route;
- The tranquillity of the hills where the twentieth century has not made too big an impact as yet.

POPLAR MOVE!

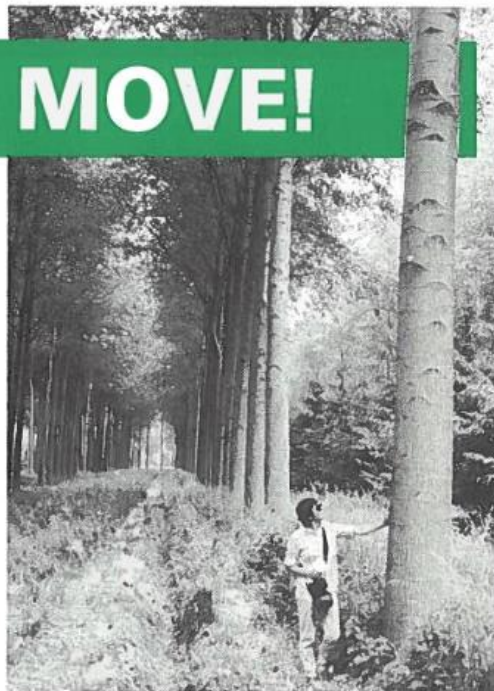
THOSE wishing to grow poplars had very little encouragement from government during the last few years. The Woodland Grant Scheme made no concessions for poplar growers; in fact, for the first time, grants were paid on the basis of numbers of trees planted per hectare and this has severely reduced the planting grants paid to widely spaced poplars. Moreover, although the Woodland Grant Scheme rules gave no statement to this effect, growers who might wish to cultivate arable crops between the trees or to graze stock were ruled ineligible for planting grants.

Tilhill took both these matters up with the Forestry Commission shortly after publication of the WGS rules and, at long last, reason prevails and new light replaces the bureaucratic gloom which had hitherto surrounded poplar growing.

The Forestry Commission have written to say they now believe it would be right to grant-aid under WGS the planting of wide-spaced poplar even when arable inter-row cropping or grazing is intended, provided they are satisfied that the agricultural regime will not be detrimental to the growth or health of the trees and will not run counter to any environmental considerations.

The opportunity now presented to develop agro-forestry systems using poplars is exciting. On good poplar sites the new hybrids released last year will, in a relatively short time, make significant contribution to home-grown timber supplies.

We now need some farmers willing and able to demonstrate the practicalities of agro-forestry using poplars. Those interested should contact Arnold Beaton at Tilhill's Southern headquarters at Greenhills, Tilford.



● Carolyn Potter of Forestry Commission Research Station at Alice Holt, gives the scale for a "Beaupre" during a trip to Belgium last year. These trees, aged 17-18 years, are growing on sand irrigated from the River Meuse and one might expect these conditions to give the fastest growth from poplars. However, there are sites in England which would have similar potential. There is no doubt that the new balsam hybrids of poplar are the fastest growing broadleaved trees in Northern Europe and produce mature timber in half the time of Sitka spruce.

Masterminding Tree Aid

TREE SCRIBE 25 reported on the Tilhill-supported woodland project at Misektab in the Sudan. Disastrous floods in 1988 had set back development, but the community's enthusiasm appeared to be overcoming the problems. Happily, optimism was well-founded. The nursery is now flourishing, full of young Mesquite, Eucalyptus and Leucaena.

It was reported in February that the original shelterbelt is now several metres high in places and is stopping the drifting of large quantities of sand. A new extension was about to be planted, and a four hectare site next to the nursery is being surveyed for use as a woodlot for fuel and poles.

The Overseas Director of SOS (Sahel) reports, "The people are very enthusiastic about the success of their forestry venture and want to increase the scope of these activities. Vegetables are being grown on canal banks and between young trees to make full use of the water resources."

To help those in the drought-stricken hot lands of Sudan, Tilhill's Argyll branch manager, Fergus Tickell

took his place in the hot seat of the "Mastermind" chair. His session in the black chair was broadcast on February 18.

A keen and knowledgeable historian, Fergus has also long had an interest in Irish authors. He took as his specialist subject the life of Brian O'Nolan, a humorous writer based in Dublin who also wrote using two pseudonyms.

Fergus used the opportunity of his courageous appearance to generate Tree Aid sponsorship based on points scored. With a very creditable tally of 24 points, Fergus has raised just under £900 to support Tilhill's Tree Aid project at Misektab. Matching of these contributions by the Overseas Development Agency doubles the sum raised.

Readers who wish to add to the total should send donations to Tree Aid, Mayfield, The Street, Farmborough, Bath, Avon BA3 1AL. Please mention Tilhill to identify the project. Alternatively, any donations sent to Tilhill would be sent on.

● Produced by Val Pettit for Tilhill, Greenhills, Tilford, Farnham, Surrey, and printed by the Dunfermline Press, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline.

Landscaping Breakaway

THE Landscaping Division became a fully fledged company on January 1 and has recently established its own head office at Chesham, Bucks. The company, under Managing Director Bert Leslie, will seek to develop and grow in areas of the country offering market opportunities in landscaping.

In spite of its new status, Tilhill Landscaping will still maintain close links with its sister forestry company as common interests and opportunities will develop and, for some time, premises will continue to be shared.