



RESTRUCTURING FOR GROWTH

CHANGES in the balance of our business have prompted a thorough reorganisation of Tilhill's structure during 1990.

Increasing growth of the landscaping business demanded more thoroughgoing specialisation, in recognition of the different emphasis and requirements of that essentially construction-based operation.

The former Landscaping Division became a separate company, with its own head office at Chesham, Bucks; this became effective on January 1, as reported in *Tree Scribe* 27.

For the forestry business, a fundamental review of accounting systems updating requirements pointed to a new system greatly devolved to the branches. This will require fewer staff at the centre, in part because of the departure of landscaping and in part due to this devolution and the greater power of the new systems.

This, together with the need for best use of capital, prompted a decision to relocate our administrative centre and sell Greenhills House and surrounds.

Greenhills near Farnham has been Tilhill's headquarters for almost 40 years, so this decision was not taken lightly, nor was the decision to move the accounting function and overall operating headquarters to the company's offices at Sauchie-



● Tilhill Forestry's picturesque and historic headquarters at Old Sauchie near Stirling.

burn near Stirling. It was, however, apparent that this would have positive results, given the balance of the company's business net of landscaping and the changes in operational structures made necessary by the new operating climate for forestry and made possible by latest communications technology.

Tilhill's parent, Booker, has

encouraged, and is greatly supporting, the company during this period of change.

Pre-eminently, our forestry business requires the focus and direction that can be given by one director full-time in charge of promotion, marketing and development. Martin Wilkinson assumed this new role on November 1, as Business Development Director; he

is complemented by David Gittins, continuing in his specialised role as Investment Marketing Director.

The two operating divisions, Scottish and Southern, are amalgamating into one Forestry Operations Division, under A. F. Macpherson as Forestry Operations Director; he is supported by Andrew Binmore as Director, Southern Operations, with specific responsibility for branches located in the south.

The nursery, as ever, remains at Grange Road, Tilford, adjacent to Greenhills, and the Southern Central branch and Southern Operations HQ remain adjacent.

The former full-time operational area managers in north and south are now full-time branch managers, retaining several wider responsibilities.

C. P. Johnson, who has been a non-executive director of Tilhill since Booker purchased the company in 1984, is assuming the role of Executive Chairman; he is also chairman of Booker Farming and Tilhill Landscaping.

As a result of all these changes, overhead costs are already being substantially reduced, and communications within Tilhill and marketing of our services outside will be enhanced.

Not only will Tilhill's return on capital substantially improve; better communications and support from the centre to the branches will result in maintained and improved quality of service to our clients in the most cost-effective way possible.

Tribute must be paid to the loyalty and continuing effectiveness of the Accounts Department at Greenhills, who are staying in place completing the 1990 accounting year using the previous systems, despite, in most cases, facing redundancy at the end of the year.

The commitment and dedication of the outgoing Financial Director Robin Collet, and of all his team, is vital and noteworthy, and appreciated by all of their colleagues.

● New Finance Director — see page 7.

Landmark agreement

A UNIQUE partnership has been forged between Tilhill and the country's leading body of farmers and growers.

Agreement between the National Farmers' Union and Tilhill breaks new ground in offering a range of special services designed to help farmers maximise the potential of their land.

The NFU Tilhill Farm Woodland Service will guide farmers through the complexities of the three major grant schemes introduced by the Government over the past two years with the aim of encouraging farmers to plant more trees.

The NFU has a long history of looking after farmers' interests. Its strength stems from the size and spread of its 110,000 membership in England and Wales and an unrivalled record of lobbying activities on all matters relating to agriculture and horticulture.

From its early beginnings, it has offered its members a range of specialist professional advice and this new service, in collaboration with Tilhill, is an important addition.

The NFU's choice of Tilhill for this unique service reflects this company's own distinguished background in providing forestry services to farmers, estate owners and investors in forestry since our formation in 1948. Now part of Booker plc UK Agribusiness Division, Tilhill is the foremost company of its kind in Britain, providing a comprehensive woodland management service and running one of the largest private forest-tree nurseries in Europe.

Its tradition of quality of service, provided from a network of 18 locations throughout the UK staffed by more than 60 professional or technically trained foresters, ensures that NFU farmers and growers in all parts of the country will be able to benefit from the best possible advice.

It is estimated that 280,000 hectares of woodland exist on farms — at an average of four hectares per farm. Since the introduction of the Farm Woodland Scheme in 1988, the area of woodland planted under the scheme has been more than 4,500 hectares, at an average of 6.5 hectares per farm involved.

Well-managed woodland combines a range of benefits, not just in terms of a more attractive countryside, but also an improvement in the capital value of farms. It also opens up new business opportunities — timber production, sporting activities, landscape and wildlife, as well as providing shelter.

NFU members can choose from a menu of services offered by the Farm Woodland Service ranging from an initial appraisal for newcomers to the scheme right through to a continuing management service for established plantations, contract work and harvesting and marketing.

The new service will be kept under constant review by both Tilhill and the NFU but it's clear from the outset that the scheme has enormous potential both for the NFU in continuing to fight for its members' interests and for Tilhill by increasing the variety of its customer base and widening the range of its services.

IT takes only a few minutes in Andrew Binmore's company to realise that he is a man of strong convictions, both in his professional and in his personal life.

And it is equally clear that those convictions have brought him great and lasting fulfilment in every sphere of his life.

His appointment as southern operations director for Tilhill seems as good a time as any to pause and reflect on the paths which have led, at the age of 46, to a position of high responsibility in the restructured forestry side of the company's activities.

There was little in the young Andrew Binmore's immediate background, other than two uncles — one a gardener and another a

● *Val Pettit talks to Andrew Binmore: Tilhill's Director, Southern Operations, about the guiding principles of his career in forestry.*

nurseryman — to suggest a career in forestry.

Born in Paignton, Devon, when it was a popular family resort, he was the third in a family of five born to parents who were determined that their children should go on to better things.

Andrew remembers his elder brother being the first in their street to go to university.

He followed suit by opting to study forestry at Bangor influenced, perhaps, by the many happy childhood hours spent in the woods near his home, and gather-

ing firewood to eke out the family budget.

He got a 2/1 but, with the idealism of youth, was not yet ready to embark on full-time forestry as a career. Andrew had something else to get out of his system first and it wasn't — as is so often the case — the desire to see the world.

Andrew's priority at that juncture was a deeply personal one — the need to expand his knowledge of a subject which was to become a continuing, and sustaining, theme throughout his life. He spent two

years in Glasgow studying for a diploma in theology with the idea of going abroad afterwards, either as missionary or a forester.

It is undoubtedly forestry's gain that he chose the latter, and he spent a further year at the Forestry Institute in Oxford studying tropical forestry before setting off for Zambia with his wife, Janet, and a new baby to work for the Zambian Government under the auspices of the Overseas Development Administration.

He spent five-and-a-half years there, researching into

Name dropping!



● **BILL DORRINGTON**

THE soft West Country burr of Bill Dorrington's voice was heard by early-bird listeners to BBC Radio 4's The Farming Week programme in August talking about the NFU/Tilhill farm forestry initiative.

Bill, manager of Tilhill's south west branch, was invited on to the programme, which goes out every Saturday morning at 6.10 am and is listened to regularly by thousands of farmers all over the country, by producer and presenter Tim Finney.

The invitation came as the result of a chance encounter by Solway branch's Charlie Fulton with a Lancashire farmer who is a regular consultant to the programme on "grass roots" opinion.

He tipped off the producer that the newly-launched partnership had potential for a newsworthy item and, soon afterwards, Tilhill was approached to put forward a spokesman.

Bill Dorrington's relaxed, unflappable manner made him an easy choice and he travelled up from Somerset to record the interview in a farm woodland setting at Upton and Sunrising Estate near Banbury in Oxfordshire, within the 60-mile radius of the Pebble Mill studios in Birmingham requested by the BBC.

The interview succeeded in putting across many good points as well as drawing the attention of countless farmers to Tilhill's range of services. It lasted nearly 12 minutes — lengthy by radio broadcasting standards — and was recorded as Tim and Bill wandered casually through the woodlands discussing the progress of a scheme already carried out by Tilhill's Marches branch at CWS's Roden Farm and outlining the Government grants available for farm woodland schemes.

Although recorded "ad lib," very little was edited out before being broadcast. Sharp-eared listeners counted eight mentions of Tilhill's name.

Recording a radio interview without a script is most people's idea of an ordeal. Bill attributes his lack of nervousness to the fact that he occasionally speaks in public and has been involved in recording a talking newspaper for the blind in his spare time.

GROWING INVESTMENT



● *The first ESN scheme at Squirrel Hall, pictured in early spring.*

LAST SEASON, Yorkshire Forestry branch undertook a nine hectare farm woodland scheme on a farm managed by Booker Farming for ESN at Squirrel Hall near Malton.

The scheme involved some 22,000 0.6m tree shelters and used Larch and Beech in a matrix to produce a 52 per cent broadleaved crop, thus maximising on grant payments. This extra woodland cover will increase the amenity and sporting

value of the estate as well as providing timber revenues in years to come.

Despite the exceptionally dry summer — there has been a hosepipe ban since March — losses have been modest, especially considering the thin soils.

This season, the branch will be involved with the first phase of a 40 hectare FWS, again for ESN, but this time on a farm near Beverley, some 27 feet below sea level.

A MISSION

eucalypts which, he recalls, could grow to 110 feet in a mere eight years and, latterly, lecturing in forestry. The Binmores enjoyed life in Africa and quickly became valued members of the community through their work with local churches, Sunday schools, the Scripture Union and young people. They might still be there but for the death of Andrew's father which brought them back to the UK. Their return, remembers Andrew, was unforgettable. It was June 1, 1975 and as they touched down on English soil, it snowed!

Before leaving Zambia, Andrew had taken the precaution of writing to Tilhill about the prospects of a job. Although there were no vacancies at the time, the reply suggested that he might like to get in touch on his return to the UK. He did exactly that and was rewarded with an interview and a job offer as an assistant branch manager in Jedburgh.

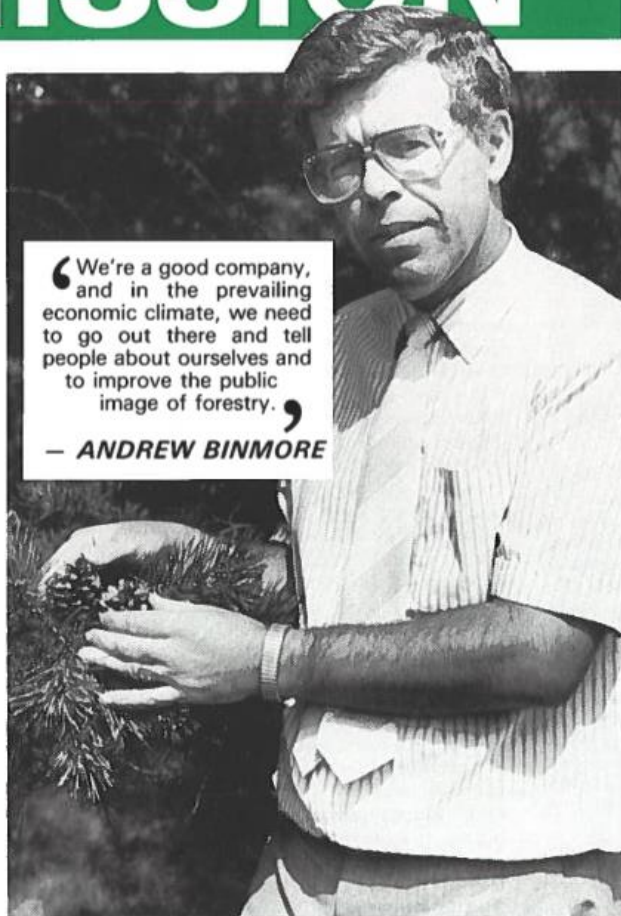
He was there precisely six weeks, hardly time to even think about putting down roots, when he was asked to transfer to Yorkshire branch to face the biggest challenge yet of his professional career. The branch, based in Thirsk, was virtually moribund and needed new life breathing into it. Andrew was considered to be the man for the job and, in eight action-packed years, he made his mark in Tilhill by transforming little more than a one-man band into a branch which increased its turnover tenfold during Andrew's tenure.

"It was hard work, with a great deal of pressure for the first two years," recalls Andrew, "but well worth it to see the branch's fortunes so dramatically reversed." Here, Andrew really did put down roots at last and it was with some regret that he and his family moved on again to pastures new with a transfer to Southern Division as eastern area manager based in Greenhills, with responsibility for four mixed forestry and landscaping branches and for the poplar clearance programme which converted the former Bryant and May plantations to agricultural use.

Involvement in eastern area's landscaping activities re-kindled an interest first acquired in Yorkshire and Andrew became part of a team effort between 1983 and 1987 in the push for new landscaping work which resulted in a big jump in turnover — a trend which continued after the formation of the Landscaping Division in 1988, with Andrew as its southern area manager. Turnover leapt from £1½ million

"We're a good company, and in the prevailing economic climate, we need to go out there and tell people about ourselves and to improve the public image of forestry."

— ANDREW BINMORE



annually to £2½ million — up by nearly a third.

The flotation of landscaping as a separate company concentrated Andrew's thoughts on his future. He could have moved with the new company but chose, instead, when an offer came out of the blue to succeed Peter Sloan, to return to his first love of forestry.

It is a move he is unlikely to regret in his enthusiasm for what he sees as exciting times ahead for forestry. As part of this, some of his long-held views on man-management are bound to come to the fore.

"Tilhill has always regarded its own people as its greatest resource," he said, "and I believe strongly that a happy and fulfilled staff is the only way of realising the full potential of individuals."

"There tends to be a feeling in Tilhill that branch managers should be capable of doing everything themselves and I'm afraid that that is a view to which I do not subscribe. I have always preferred to delegate, and I think there is scope for others to do the same, in everyone's best interests."

In many other respects, the company's philosophy has matched Andrew's. He was impressed from the outset by Tilhill's integrity and honesty in its dealings with clients. Having high personal standards hasn't always been easy in a position of authority. "I expect the same high standards of others, too," said Andrew, "and on the

odd occasion when I've had to make myself unpopular in order to achieve them, it has hurt."

Andrew's talents are seen by others as being broad-brush. He's a good man for seeking out and dealing with new clients, following through the company's policy of good communications and excellent service — and he's an excellent administrator. "Though I know, like everyone else," he said candidly, "I have my weak points, too."

The ability to take a broad view of events is well illustrated by his belief that now is the time to sharpen up the business side of the company's approach, to raise the company's profile and be a little less coy about its achievements.

"We're a good company," he said, "and in the prevailing economic climate, we need to go out there and tell people about ourselves and to improve the public image of forestry."

Andrew looks forward to a big boom in farm forestry as a way of changing entrenched public attitudes to forestry.

"There is tremendous scope in this area," says Andrew. "It is a perfect way of satisfying the conservation lobby at the same time as producing quality timber, commercial gain for the farmer, game conservation and amenity value — an increased asset all round."

Looking ahead even further, Andrew is excited by the potential for the return of poplar planting as a means of controlling agricultural output.

"Ironically," he says, "the conversion of the Bryant and May woodlands created a niche in the market which has proved difficult to satisfy — laboratory splints, brick veneers and pipe dividers for the construction industry to name but a few. The versatility of poplars in the intensity of the agricultural inter-cropping regimes means, I feel sure, a secure future for this very good industrial timber and provides farmers with the ability to move more easily with the supply and demand of agricultural crops."

No doubt the future also holds for Andrew more of the balancing acts which have characterised his life so far and on which he appears to thrive.

There is the traditional balancing act, common to all those involved in a service industry, of achieving commercialism with a human face, of quality working hand in hand with compassion.

And, for Andrew, there is also the constant balancing of personal priorities — faith and family life with professional commitments.

Nothing would give him greater satisfaction than for one to continue to influence the other.

TREE SCRIBE meets Marches manager David Taylor and hears why he thinks his branch is on the brink of expansion.

THINGS are changing in Tilhill's Marches Branch where new opportunities are waiting to be exploited. At least, that's the view of branch manager David Taylor who came to Tilhill 18 months ago following 15 years' experience in Sweden where forestry and timber-related operations are an integral part of the economy.

Most of David's forestry career to date has been in Sweden and, although direct comparison between the two countries' approaches to forestry is inappropriate, it would be surprising if David's experience there did not influence, to some extent, his attitude to the direction which Marches Branch is now taking in its plans for expansion.

He sees enormous potential, for example, in identifying and actively pursuing work in an area which, until now, has not been given high priority in a branch which has grown up on the basis of traditional estate management.

The branch's profile was already gradually changing towards a greater emphasis on contract management work in the lower-lying areas of Shropshire and the West Midlands and David now feels sure that an acceleration of this expansion process into more contract work, as well as a determined pursuit of further inroads into conifer plantation management, is the key to the branch's future success.

From the branch's head office in the small but busy Shropshire market town of Church Stretton, nestling under the gentle contours of the Long Mynd hills, the branch covers the whole of Wales (except the valleys of the south, which are the province of Tilhill's south-west branch), all Shropshire and parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands across to the M1.

The workload is, therefore, varied, ranging from large-scale conifer plantation management in mid and north Wales to much smaller-scale broad-leaved plantings in the lower-lying areas.

The three main upland managed estates total 1100 ha, the largest of which is the 640 ha Brycheiniog forest near Brecon, acquired by Tilhill seven years ago on behalf of a pension fund client. Work there in recent years has concentrated on clearing and replanting large areas of windblow caused by the severe storms of 1976, and the appearance of the estate is transformed since *Tree Scribe's* last visit there to look at how the branch was tackling the mammoth task of clearing up and restocking.

One of David Taylor's first jobs on joining the branch was to draw up Brycheiniog's second five-year plan which, now that the first plan is successfully completed, is based more on a thinnings programme and the maintenance of the newly-planted areas. "There is still sporadic windblow at Brycheiniog from time to time," said David, "but nothing like the scale my predecessors had to contend with."

The branch has built up a good relationship with a local army base which leases the shoot, which has been mutually beneficial. The army has contributed to some road repairs, and a flight pond created for game has a dual purpose as a fire-fighting pond for Tilhill.

Further north in Snowdonia, the 420 ha privately-owned Cym Mynach has been the scene of great activity over the past two years to improve access by upgrading existing tracks and building a complete new access road to facilitate easier extraction of timber.

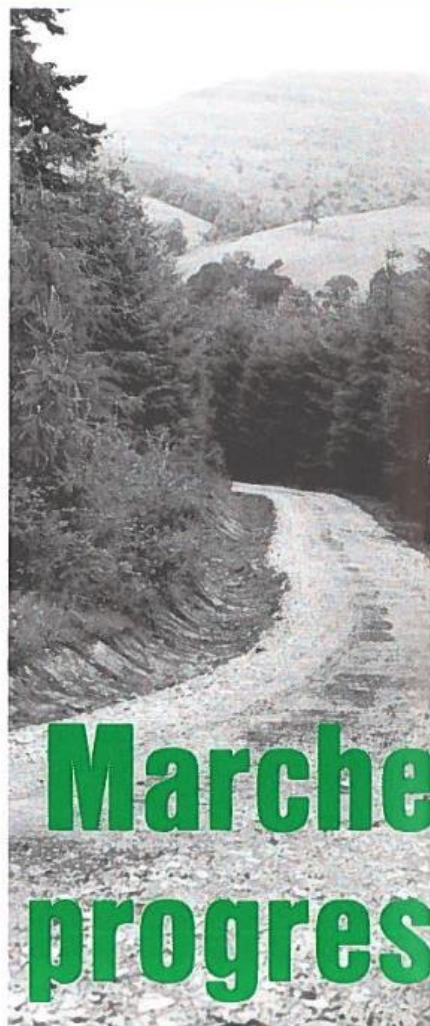
Cym Mynach lies within the boundary of Snowdonia national park. Management plans and forestry operations are carried out in liaison with the various interested bodies concerned with the many environmental and conservation issues in this highly-sensitive area. It is, for example, particularly rich in bird life. The RSPB has counted 72 separate species, including the rare red kite and hen harrier.

ALTHOUGH the branch's management complement is smaller than it has been in the past, it makes up in dynamism and experience what it lacks in numbers.

Both David Taylor and assistant branch manager Andrew Bronwin have wide and varied backgrounds in the type of expertise which will now be crucial in the branch's development. They work well together as a team, seeking out and finding new outlets for their talents and in total agreement that a more assertive approach to the harvesting and marketing side of the branch's activities will quickly pay off. Both men have put in a lot of time and effort to raise the company's profile in Wales, manning the company's stands at three major agricultural shows this summer and building on already close relationships with the Game Conservancy Council and the Country Landowners' Association.

Andrew, in particular, has been busy discovering new outlets for timber, and making sure that the branch achieves good returns for its clients by looking at ways of improving specifications and reducing overheads — not always an easy job in the face of stiff competition — but there are signs that their efforts are paying dividends. This year's turnover was, in August with a smaller staff, already almost ten per cent higher than in the whole of the previous year.

David draws great encouragement from these results which, aside from the obvious benefits to the company as a whole, are confirmation that the branch is moving in the right direction.



● New roading at Ty Commins in Powys.



● Branch secretary Eileen Adams.



● Branch manager David Taylor examines the insect traps . . . and

Although geographically one estate, Cym Mynach has two separate owners who live on the estate during the summer months and take an active interest in its management. Unexpectedly strong storms in the spring of this year caused some windblow in some less stable newly-thinned areas which are now being cleared and, in consultation with the owners, replanted with a high proportion of mixed broadleaved species.

The smallest upland estate is the 126 ha Ty Commins near Crickhowell in Powys, which came under Tilhill management only last year and, like Cym Mynach, is privately owned.

This is an estate which was badly in need of good management when Tilhill took it on, and David's priorities for Ty Commins were an immediate and careful thinnings programme and repair and rebuilding of roads which had fallen into disrepair.

Amenity value

"Here, too," said David, "the owners take a particular interest in the estate's amenity value and we are, therefore, including a high proportion of broadleaved trees in our re-planting programme,



/S.



● Assistant branch manager Andrew Bronwin, against a backdrop of shelter belt planting at Wootton Park in Shropshire.

CONTRACT work for which the branch tenders in competition, varies in size from modest requests for a few hundred trees to, for example, a recent £70,000 contract to establish shelter belts for JCB at Wootton Park in Staffordshire.

On the Rowton estate, between Shrewsbury and Welshpool, the branch acts in an advisory capacity carrying out forestry operations approved by the client. The 20 ha estate is managed by a firm of land agents and David feels that there is potential for becoming more involved with local land agents who often require specialist forestry input on their estates. An existing link with an agent to take on the specialist side of forestry management, often where woodlands have been allowed to become neglected, has led to further work on small estates in Cheshire and Staffordshire, developments which convince David that there is an untapped source of work in this field.

Another aspect David would like to explore is the building up of a wider permanent sub-contract labour force. "We have several good contractors, already, but I would like to see our network extended," he said.

with local naturalists who come to observe the colony from a nearby hide, tunnelled right underneath the road, causing it to collapse.

In consultation with the Nature Conservancy Council, the area was fenced off and equipped with one-way gates so that the badgers, once out, could not get back in again until concrete culverts had been installed under the damaged road and repairs carried out.

Now that the area of woodland is re-opened, it is hoped that the badgers will return to their even more desirable residences, complete with newly-strengthened passageways along their regular routes, and resume their normal habits.

Nearby, on the same estate not far from where the property abuts Forestry Commission land, Tilhill is co-operating with an experiment with the FC's entomology department in assessing the population of the *Dendroctonus* (bark beetle). The Forestry Commission's approach is to tackle the problem indirectly, releasing controlled numbers of the beetle's natural predator, *Rhizophagus*, installing traps baited with *Dendroctonus* droppings and then, based on the numbers of *Rhizophagus* caught, judging the size of the beetle population. About 20 traps have been on Tilhill-managed property for the past two years of the experiment.

Stately home

David also took *Tree Scribe* to visit Walcot Park near Bishop's Castle in Shropshire — one of five separate estates making up the 140 ha privately-owned Roveries Woodlands. Clive of India is reputed to have walked in these beautiful mixed woodlands, which formed the grounds of a stately home and which are now grown for commercial timber. David wanted to talk to one of his local contractors about progress in the final part of a thinnings programme of grand fir. Walcot Park being an active sporting estate, care is taken to liaise with the local shoot on timing of forestry operations.

In complete contrast, the MoD site at Nescliffe is a perfect example of a new contract client. Here, the branch has planted 17,000 mixed broadleaved trees to create an area suitable for military training exercises, and has a continuing involvement in maintenance of the young trees which will eventually form shelter belts.

● Who's who: page 6.



he one-way badger gate on the Ludford Park estate . . . looks at one of the estate's *Rhizophagus* and discusses thinnings with one of the branch's regular contractors.

which ties in well with our obligations to the Brecon Beacons National Park policy of requiring at least 30 per cent broadleaved trees in any restocked site."

Good, free-draining soil and high rainfall in Wales make for good growing conditions for conifers and there are many markets for timber throughout Wales and the Borders.

On the lighter soils of the branch's lowland areas, both conifers and newly-planted broadleaved species quickly become established, and annual growth rates are good, but only with carefully managed weed control.

Ludford Park near Ludlow, and already a clear favourite of David's, is 28 ha of mostly P68 conifer plantation, with some mixed broadleaves. Privately-owned, it has been under Tilhill management since the sixties — Kent area manager Roger Lewis remembers working there as a forester. The branch has an on-going programme of thinning and restocking and has recently been involved in an elaborate scheme to minimise disturbance to the local badger population.

The occupants of one particular sett, located next to an access track and popular, therefore,



● A farewell from colleagues in the grounds of Greenhills for John and Olive Simmons.



● Bob McDougall receives his farewell gift from Martin Wilkinson.



● Peter and May receive a farewell toast from friends in the dining room at Greenhills.

HAIL PEOPLE AND FAREWELL

TILHILL said farewell to three familiar faces in recent months — each one of them retiring with long and loyal company service.

● **PETER SLOAN** was wished a long, happy, healthy and satisfying retirement by his colleagues at a lunch-time party at Greenhills. He was presented with shears, garden voucher and an easy chair (from which to pursue his hobby of gardening).

Peter has had a profound influence on the development of Tilhill since he joined the company in 1965. His extensive planting in the Solway area gained him a reputation second to none in upland afforestation. His pragmatic and meticulous approach to forestry operations was shared with a wide range of Tilhill staff who benefitted immensely from such an experienced mentor.

Peter was promoted to general manager at Old Sauchie and then to Divisional Director, Southern Division, in 1986.

One of Peter and May's first jobs in retirement was to visit the USA and enjoy the autumn colours.

● **JOHN SIMMONS**, building maintenance foreman at Greenhills, retired in August after 38 years' service.

John started in 1952, just four years after the firm was founded by Archie Aitkins at Tilhill House. His title belies his immense contribution to the firm as, over the years, he has undertaken major buildings and conversion projects at Greenhills ranging from the construction of buildings, offices, workshops and cold stores, to the refurbishment of Greenhills House and conversion of buildings.

He has seen the nursery grow from nothing to 250 acres, producing up to 25 million plants a year. He has been involved in all aspects of the forest tree nursery work, including the laying and construction of the extensive nursery irrigation system, with four, six and eight-inch underground mains, static pump houses, two five-million gallon reservoirs, a well head system, and polythene greenhouses. This year, he has prepared and sown more than 25 million conifers and seven million broadleaves.

John and his wife Olive are moving to Devon where John plans to devote himself to renovating old buildings. He is sorely missed and everyone at Greenhills wishes him well.

● **BOB McDOUGALL**, accompanied by his wife Isobel, was seen safely into well-deserved retirement by a large turn-out in Dunblane. The date was well chosen, being Bob's 65th birthday, and a Friday, which allowed late dancing and a weekend for hangovers to be cured.

Bob joined Tilhill as office manager at Old Sauchie in 1971 and rapidly established himself as master of matters administrative, including esoteric items like VAT and how to complete contractors' self-billing invoices. He became well known to staff throughout Scottish division and, indeed, throughout the company. Staff soon learnt to rely on his considerable energy and ability.

The Dunblane gathering presented Bob with a cheque from Tilhill and, perhaps of greater personal value, a watch and bottle of malt as a gift from staff. Isobel received a bouquet — and Bob to herself from now on. *Tree Scribe* wishes them both health and happiness.

MARCHES BRANCH WHO'S WHO

DAVID TAYLOR'S first job in forestry was sweeping the floor of a sawmill in Central Sweden at the age of 20. Born and brought up in the south-east of England, he found himself unwilling to wait for two years for a place at Newton Rigg and went instead to Sweden, where he had family friends in the timber trade and where his qualifications in forestry have since been obtained.

He went through the Swedish system of formal qualifications interspersed with practical experience, and eventually gained a degree from the University of Forestry and Agriculture in Uppsala. His official qualification is that of "skögmästare" or "forest master".

He has since worked for a private harvesting company in Central Sweden and for SCA, one of Europe's largest forestry companies. His return to the UK was motivated partly by curiosity to experience forestry operations in his own country and to introduce his Swedish wife and their three children to the British way of life.

"Obviously," said David, "forestry is on a very much smaller scale here, but the many similarities have made it easy to settle in."

ANDREW BRONWIN joined Tilhill in May 1989 from ADAS where he worked as a surveyor, primarily as an advisor to farmers in woodland management.

He graduated from Reading in 1976 with a B.Sc. in rural estate management and has spent two further periods of study in Edinburgh, the first for a post-graduate qualification in Agriculture, and the second, two years later, for a master's degree in resource management, specialising in forestry. In between, he worked in Papua New Guinea in agricultural development work.

Already a Chartered Surveyor, Andrew successfully took the ICF examinations last year and is now a Chartered Forester, completing an unusual double of qualifications.

Living and working in Wales for the past five years has provided him with many useful contacts, particularly among the farming community.

BRANCH secretary Eileen Adams has worked in the present Tilhill offices for five years, but with Tilhill for only the past three. Previously, she was employed by the West Midland Timber Treatment Company, in which Tilhill were managing partners, and which had offices in the same building.

CONGRATULATIONS

TO David Collender of Anglia branch and his wife Regina on the birth of their first child, Kilian David Joseph, on September 29 . . .

. . . and to Tim Liddon of Yorkshire branch and his wife Morag on the birth of their daughter, Kirsty, on June 17.

BRANCHING OUT

NORTHERN branch has opened a "satellite" office in Inverurie, Aberdeenshire. The opening is in response to continued and increasing demands for Tilhill's services in the north-east, particularly tree planting, stimulated by the attractive grant schemes available to farmers.

The office means that forester John McGlade, who lives in Inverurie, now has a proper base to work from and his wife Lorna can keep their home for family, excluding Tilhill. However, the team effort continues with Lorna acting as part-time secretary to the new office.

TRANSFER MOVE

STEPHEN THORPE has returned to his native Yorkshire by transferring from Kent branch to Yorkshire Forestry. Stephen gained a BTEC National Diploma in Forestry at Newton Rigg College, worked on the North York Moors with the Forestry Commission and spent his sandwich year at Blenheim Estates.

Angela Douglas has resigned from the branch to further her career in forestry with the Central Scotland Countryside Trust.

& PLACES Taking over pursestrings



• David Hadden and Linda Haldenby.

To the fore: 1

SINCE the East Midlands office at 68 High Street, Grantham, was established earlier this year, the demand for the wide range of Tilhill's forestry services has kept Richard Sochacki extremely busy.

Orders for a considerable number of Farm Woodland Schemes have been received, ranging in size from 3.0 to 32.0 ha., and, in order to build on this early success, Simon Maidment has joined the branch as a forestry assistant.

Simon has previous experience in harvesting and marketing, which will enable him to provide support to Richard with the increasing volume of harvesting and marketing services the office is providing to owners and agents throughout the East Midlands.

Richard is also experiencing a considerable demand to provide advice on the establishment of new woodlands on golf courses, and to advise on the management of existing woodlands.

Richard can be contacted at the Grantham Office on (0476) 71022 or on his mobile telephone (0831) 157413.

To the fore: 2

AT Kenwick Hall Estate, near Louth in Lincolnshire, a 27-hole golf course and log cabin development has secured planning permission, with the special assistance of Yorkshire branch.

Detailed design and layout and replacement trees and shrubs, with species selection proposals, were required by the local district council to ensure maintenance of the visual amenity and enhancement of the wildlife habitat. Ponds and marshy areas are being created to encourage wildlife and the log cabin area is being carefully screened and landscaped.

In close co-operation with golf course architects, Tilhill is clearing areas and planting tens of thousands of new trees to form the complex design of this exciting recreational project.

DAVID HADDEN has been appointed, and will shortly become the re-structured company's new Financial Director.

Since joining Tilhill in June, he has been dividing his time between Greenhills and Old Sauchie where his main responsibility has been the setting up of a new computer system and building up a new finance team — a task he likes to starting a whole new department from scratch.

David hails originally from Dundee. He graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Edinburgh University in 1976 and qualified as a chartered accountant three years later while working with Deloitte Haskins & Sells in Edinburgh where he worked for five years in the audit section before moving to industry. He has since gained a wide range of experience in management, working in fields as diverse as electronics and building.

David is married with three young daughters, who take up most of his spare time. He is however a keen follower of Dundee United and enjoys squash, hill walking and running when time permits. While at Greenhills, he became a familiar figure running around Tilford, and has taken part in a number of half marathons.

LINDA HALDENBY joined David in September and has also spent much of her time since commuting between Greenhills and Old Sauchie preparing for the new Finance Department.

She comes from Bellshill in Lanarkshire and graduated in 1984 with a BA in accountancy from Glasgow College of Technology and becoming a chartered accountant in 1988 while working with Ernst & Whinney's business services department in Glasgow.

Linda is newly married and enjoys caravanning and instructing able-bodied and disabled skiers. She also plays flugel horn in the Bellshill Salvation Army Band.

Integration in operation

CAREFUL planning and a broad vision are the foundations of success for the multi-enterprise Ormsary estate, venue for the last meeting of branch managers of Scottish Division.

Across 6500 ha of rugged Kintyre, farming, sporting, forestry, fish farming and tourist activities have been integrated by an enthusiastic team of experienced professional managers led by Sir William Lithgow.

Employment is provided for more than 50 staff, working from excellent facilities, with most housed locally on the estate.

Based in some of the holiday accommodation, the group toured the hill land to discuss forestry operations and to hear from the head gamekeeper how well deer control and sporting letting can be carried out in well-designed plantings. In the afternoon, the group was guided round the very technical fish farm operation, where anglers in the party looked in awe at the massive brood-stock fish.

This was the last meeting for Scottish



• Tim Liddon (right) and partner Iain Mackenzie, looking fresh at the start of the Karrimor event.

Peak fitness

TIM LIDDON, Yorkshire Forestry branch manager, has completed the Rock and Run Mountain Marathon, one of the toughest of the UK's mountain marathons and well-known as an extreme test of mountain survival and navigation.

The competition took place over two days, and competitors had to be entirely self-sufficient for that period, carrying all their own equipment with them for the whole event. This year's event was based on Kinlochleven and run on Ben Nevis, the Grey Corries and the Mamores.

Tim and his partner, Mike Peters, finished 26th in their class, having covered some 43 kilometers and climbed 11,500 feet, including four Munros, in 10 hours and three minutes.

Tim also competed in the Karrimor International Mountain Marathon which, this year, was based at Kinloch Rannoch. Some 1700 teams competed in the event, which is the largest of its kind.



managers from a separate division, and it coincided with the retirement of Bob McDougall, for whom a presentation was made at dinner in the main lodge.

Above: Headkeeper Brian Petrie (centre) describes deer control policy to the group, who are gathered on one of the new estate and forestry access roads.

Nursery



variety show . . .



● Nurseries Division's field sales manager Adrian Morgan (left) talks to a visitor at the APF show about transplants and undercuts.



● "½ u ½" Prunus avium and Fraxinus Excelsior growing in Tilhill's nurseries.

THINGS are changing in Nurseries Division, while exports continue to be healthy — some 50 per cent of all plants produced now go abroad.

Hardwood production has increased sevenfold since 1988 and people are now recognising the excellent quality of the nursery's one-year plants, known as ½ u ½s which are ideal for tube planting and for normal forest ground.

A wide range of hardwoods is being produced from species such as *Lonicera nitida* to *Platanus acerifolia*. Currently, some fifty different species are being grown, apart from those being produced in the new container section.

To meet the needs of the market, a new computer system has been installed to achieve a rapid response to enquiries. The sales office has been converted to open plan to increase useable space and to enable the staff to work more efficiently.

There is a new policy of diversifying into different products. A container unit has been started which has produced some 50,000 plants this season in the facilities built originally for the propagation of genetically improved Sitka spruce. Among these, there is good quality *Ilex aquifolium*, *Prunus laurocerasus* and all the other speciality items listed in the nursery's current catalogue.

New chemicals are being used on the nursery to combat an infestation of triazine resistant groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*). Information on the chemical came from a herbicide trial carried out in the nursery in conjunction with the Forestry Commission's Research Division.

Lining-out is still being carried out by hand as it is the most efficient method on very light soils. It is also the only method available for lining-out an eight-row bed — the maximum number of rows capable of being handled by machine is six.

In order to boost sales, the nursery has been promoting its stocks very actively. This has included re-vamping the catalogue which now has a very attractive cover, additional advertising and, more recently, a "Trees for a Greener Europe" car sticker.

Nursery staff have been active exhibitors at shows to

promote company products, attending the Association of Professional Foresters' machinery demonstration at Stoke on Trent and other farm demonstrations in conjunction with Forestry Operations Division. They also attend the Woking Show.

For the two-day APF event, held at Swynnerton Park, a Swedish-style log cabin trailer was hired for use as a stand and display area. It was Tilhill's first-ever appearance at this event and it proved to be very

successful, attracting many visits from existing customers both from home and abroad as well as a large number of enquiries from potential customers.

The stand was very well organised, with an undercutting machine and precision drill alongside a wide range of nursery stock available for inspection. Both tops and roots could be seen because the plants were kept fresh in a plunge bath of Broadleaf P4 Root dip.

The nursery is now on the current Department of Transport list of recommended nurseries. "This has resulted in an increased amount of tendering business for roadside planting," said Nurseries director Robin Sym.

Plant sales in general are fairly buoyant and there is an air of confidence, both for the nursery's large-scale production items and areas where there has been diversification.

Poacher turned gamekeeper

IT came as a considerable surprise for Arnold Beaton to be asked in early summer to join the Forestry Commission on secondment from Tilhill and to take on responsibility for the running of the Poplar Research Programme at Alice Holt.

For the last three years Arnold has tried to promote the use of poplars for new planting on farmland, particularly within the context of WGS and FWS Schemes. Regrettably, neither of these schemes gave any specific encouragement to the planting of poplars, and it has required persistence in the face of bureaucracy to achieve recognition of the special features of poplar cultivation within the Woodland Grant Scheme. To some extent therefore Arnold's secondment to the Forestry Commission is one of poacher turned gamekeeper.

From June 1, Arnold's working time has been allocated to give three-and-a-half days (70 per cent) to the Forestry Commission and one-and-a-half to Tilhill. It has taken a little time to make the necessary adjustments, but things are now working quite smoothly.



His duties with Tilhill are now primarily directed at promoting Tilhill's business with a major recognition of the potential for poplars in Britain. Greenhills was the first commercial nursery to receive all the UNAL Belgium cultivars of poplar in 1988 and the sale of the six that have been approved by the Forestry Commission began last winter. Promotion of the planting of these new hybrids is an important aspect of Arnold's work with Tilhill and interest in the planting of poplars is steadily

increasing in Britain. For the Forestry Commission, however, a rather different approach is required. There are important questions to be answered in regard to the new cultivars which have been released in Britain, and these require a comprehensive, practical and objective research programme without the commercial thrust which Tilhill requires. During the last four months, it has been necessary to redevelop a research philosophy during the course of assessment of existing poplar clonal trials and the search for new sites for planting this winter.

The intention is to plant a series of 11 or 12 trials across the whole of the country from Aberdeen down to Somerset so as to test the performance of the new hybrids in a wide range of potentially suitable sites. Fortunately, Alice Holt embraces a very high level of technical expertise, all of which is available to assist Arnold in his modest programme of research.

The opportunity to influence opinion in favour of poplar cultivation is not lost on Arnold and his enthusiasm remains as high as ever.