



Tree Scribe

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A member of Booker Countryside

THE GROUNDWORK IS DONE — NOW FOR THE GROWTH

WHILE looking ahead with optimism – as all foresters, nurserymen and countrymen must – I feel that a measured review of our recent achievements is very much in order for those who have contributed significantly to the present standing of the company.

The merging of two competitors, each with their own distinctive styles, the re-location of head office functions and the installation of a new management structure together with new client reporting and business systems presented our company with the biggest challenges in its collective history.

A year later, we can gain considerable confidence from our progress, all of which resulted from the acceptance of change by staff in every part of the company, and their co-operation in the way forward. The understanding shown by our clients reflected our genuine concern for their anxieties as well as the certainty of our success in raising both the level and cost efficiency of the services offered to them.

All we have achieved on the ground has not been at the expense of the expectations of our shareholders, and this reflects with great credit the contribution all

THE CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW



TEF Chairman Peter Johnson

employees have made. The profit achieved by the company in 1991 provides a sound base for the future and has presaged the excellent start to 1992.

The gloom of the recession and UK industry-wide uncertainty about forestry's future have not provided the easiest backdrop for advancing our causes. Yet the company, in conjunction with Booker Countryside, has been pressing the case with commendable enthusiasm and some little success. A growing realisation that the promotion of new planting needs further refinement, that

woodland ownership could be more widely extended and that a domestic softwood industry should be highly valued has been interrupted by the populist considerations of the General Election campaign. That the gloom has not been all-pervading is illustrated by the success of the jointly-promoted "2002" Fund and the fine export performance of our nurseries to countries where the value of home-produced timber is more generally appreciated.

We will continue to emphasise the competitiveness of our tree growing and processing industries, whose profitability finances contributions to landscape, wildlife diversity and recreation. This is a message that must be repeated at every possible opportunity if the misguided and often, in global terms, selfish opinions of blinkered critics are not to carry the day with their unsound and unscientific, but raucous, posturing. I believe that there is a growing awareness that it was not the fiscal inducement mechanism that caused such environmental mental anguish prior to 1988; rather it was caused by the absence of adequate regulation. The need for the latter in our crowded isle is now better appreciated, well

Continued over page

Briefly

CCHEVIOT District has come into being following the TF/EF merger to provide a local service looking after woodlands through Northumberland and the south-eastern Scottish Borders.

Roger Smith is manager with, as his forester, Richard Peberdy, who comes to TEF from his own contracting business in Anglesey. The team is completed by Sandra Johnston, who has joined TEF from secretarial positions in Norfolk and Benbecula.

ONE of Inverness District's managed estates, the Moray District Council-owned Millbuies Forest, has won the Hunter Blair trophy.

The trophy is first prize in an annual competition to promote wildlife conservation, recreation and good landscape while still producing timber.

EAST Midlands has had an encouraging season in the New National Forest Area. Two planting contracts have been carried out, one for Leicestershire County Council, planting four hectares of mixed woodland on a reclaimed colliery site and the other for the Woodland Trust, planting ten hectares of native broadleaved trees at their recently-acquired land at Willesley, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

TREES FOR THE COMMUNITY

AFURTHER example of ATEF's commitment to community forestry came with the recent donation of a hectare of woodland within Wiltshire's Great Western Community Forest.

Lord Barber, Chairman of Booker Countryside, planted the final tree, an oak, in a ceremony on April 29. The site adjoins junction 16 of the M4 motorway and is prominent from the interchange.



BRANCHING OUT: Lord Barber [left] plants the oak tree in Wiltshire with the help of landowner John Markey.

FOCUS ON THE WOMEN BEHIND THE SCENES



Happy at their work. From left, Caroline Scott, Sheena McNally and Helen Cully.

THE SUPER SECRETARIES

BEHIND every good man, there's a good woman...

It may be a cliché and it may originally have referred to the wives of successful men, but it applies equally in the relationship between company directors and their secretaries – without whom, most would freely admit, they would be lost.

TEF's senior management secretaries at Old Sauchie are no exception. The two longest – serving, Helen Cully and Sheena McNally have, between them, nearly 20 years' experience in forestry and landscaping – knowledge

which matters a great deal in the smooth running of day-to-day operations behind the scenes.

Helen Cully has spent 12 years with the company in landscaping and is now secretary to Len Yull and the marketing team.

Sheena McNally joined Tilhill from school as a teenager and is secretary to David Hadden, Sandy Macpherson and Martin Wilkinson. Sheena was very much to the fore in the introduction of word processing in Tilhill and, post-merger,

remains the focal point for "in-house" advice.

Caroline Scott is the newcomer of the trio. A former WREN who subsequently became personal secretary in London to a top Nigerian procurement executive, she joined TEF last October as managing director Bob Shaw's secretary.

Common to all three is an appreciation of just how hard their bosses work. They also enjoy the informal working atmosphere which puts them on first-name terms with those they work for and fosters an excellent team spirit.

HEADING RIGHT DOWN

EVERY business needs to have a clear sense of direction. Every employee needs to be fully alive to the vital importance of the work being done and of its success, however routine it may seem to be.

Increasingly, our clients and customers are more informed and often, as a result, more demanding. This creates a healthy atmosphere. Although it may mean harder work and although harder work often means longer hours, longer

Bob Shaw explaining TEF Management Statement

hours can lead to experience.

The company Statement responds to issues not merely of intent but

OUR FOUR M

● IT IS our aim constantly to improve our position as the leading forestry management and tree nurseries company in the UK.

● THIS will be achieved by professional management of client properties at a competitive cost, by providing a comprehensive, high standard of service to all customers and by close quality control of our nurseries' products.

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THE CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

evolved and widely accepted. Substantial encouragement for commercial forestry will certainly follow. The new Parliament enables a considerable wiping of slates representing entrenched positions.

So, from this review, what of the future? The verdict on our 1992 performance will be given by our clients. Of course, it rests largely in our own hands to build on a foundation of innovation, expertise and customer service.

Our mission statement and forestry policies point the way forward.

The soundness of our backing and structure will ensure that TEF leads its competition providing that, together, we continually strive to improve our reputation for excellence and competence in forest management and nursery production – and have the confidence to say so.

TEF Chairman Peter Johnson.



WE'D PUT OUR

COMPANY sweatshirts, originally produced for the Hawick ladies' hockey team (see picture) when they approached TEF last year for sponsorship, have

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ment by staff at all levels to the standards of excellence we have set ourselves.

Business is a power game. We are not afraid of a trial of strength with our competitors. Our aim is to do better than the other guy - to win the high ground of success and to hold on to it.

I would like all of us to have a compelling urge to make a difference to TEF - to strive to get things done so as to create the rewards that inevitably will follow. Here's to success!

MAIN GOALS

- A POLICY of selective recruitment and a commitment to appropriate training and education will ensure our high standards of service, promptly executed.
- WE BELIEVE that our customers will derive greatest benefit from these policies, that our appeal in the marketplace will grow and that the appropriate rewards will result to shareholders and staff.



R SHIRTS ON IT!

taken a trick with employees, too. Nearly 100 have been sold so far to staff throughout the company. For further details, ring Jedburgh office.

CHRONICLE

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

TOM McLellan has transferred from Inverness to be manager of Oban District following the departure of Fergus Tickell. Tom spent nearly two years in Inverness following an 11-year period in charge of Stirling District.

ANGLIA District's new forester John Fulcher brought with him considerable experience in industrial contracting when he joined the company. A 1979 Bangor graduate, John worked in competition with TEF before taking up his appointment last November.

RECENT changes in Inverness District have involved a shift of location from Dochgarroch to new offices in Clachnaharry Road, and a new manager, John McClade, who has been promoted from Aberdeen District to take over from Tom McLellan. Also in the re-structuring, the Elgin office at Loch Oire has become a sub-office of Inverness.

TEF's Hawick office has now closed and operations are centred on Jedburgh, with a sub-office continuing at Gifford. The former Lammermuir District has been incorporated into Borders and Lothians district.

CONGRATS...

HIGHLAND Region investment manager Simon Hart and his wife Virginia on the birth of their second son, Felix, on February 5...

...credit controller Donald Stewart and his wife Nina on the birth of their first child, Lauren, on March 13...

...forestry assistant Duncan Stone, latterly of the Borders and now in Aberdeen District and his wife Maggie on the birth of their son Grant...

...Inverness District secretary Helen Lawson on her marriage to Christopher on the Isle of Jura on April 20...

...forester David Leslie of Borders and Lothians District and based at Gifford, on passing his NDF...

...and to Chris Tate, forester at Frome in South West District, on passing part 2 of the ICF examinations.

RETIREMENTS



NEARLY 24 years' company service in south and south-west Scotland came to an end with the retirement recently of Billy McWhirter, who was part of the direct labour squad at Eskdalemuir and Castle Douglas. Colleagues and friends gathered for a retirement dinner and 65th birthday celebration in Lockerbie when Dumfries and Galloway district manager Charlie Fulton (right) presented Billy (centre) with gifts on behalf of TEF. Also

pictured is forester Dod Little.

Dave Woolfenden retired as district manager of the former Lammermuir District in February after 16 years as part of the forestry management team. His contribution to the Scottish Borders and, in particular, the Eskdalemuir complex, was considerable.

He was part of the team which won the Business and Industry Environmental Award and two Laurent Perrier awards for the company.

STAFF at the Carmarthen office of TEF recently said goodbye to Kay Hughes who decided to retire ahead of husband Mike's early retirement later this year. Kay, who had worked for the company for more than seven years, had recently been secretary to Regional Director Ian Ledgard.

LONG SERVICE



BORDERS Region has celebrated two long service awards in recent months. Moffat accounts clerkess Jessie Newlands is pictured here receiving her award from David Woolfenden, then Lammermuir district manager, who has since retired (see separate story). In Dumfries and Galloway, direct labour foreman Billy Featherstone also received a long service award.

OBITUARY

SADLY Surrey/Hants District senior forester Jerry Brighton (49) died in March. An appreciation of Jerry's service will appear in the next edition of Tree Scribe.

HOW DOES OUR GARDEN GROW?

REAPING THE BENEFITS AS NURSERIES JOIN FORCES

TEF's three nurseries are now nearing the end of their first sales season as partners rather than competitors – and the benefits are showing. Co-operation between the nurseries has been close, constructive and friendly and has helped to consolidate the Division's markets in the UK, Ireland and Europe. A particular benefit has been increased flexibility in production planning – taking advantage of the ability to plan a species portfolio for a single business, making best use of the different locations, climates and other attributes of each nursery.

Little Mill, Forfar, has been able to consolidate its focus on the volume production of conifers. Greenhills, Farnham, has been able to increase its emphasis towards broadleaf production. Together with Tillycorthie, Aberdeen, the nurseries have enjoyed the benefit of exchange of information and views on markets and on operational practices and techniques.

So what sort of season have the nurseries had? Some 35 million one, two and three-year-old plants will have been dispatched during the 1991/92 season – nearly 20 million from Greenhills (including several million seedlings) and more than 14 million from Little Mill. The split between conifers

and broadleaves – very roughly two-thirds and one-third overall – is interesting, but it is the proportion of export sales which is significant – more than 20 million plants this season, of which around 15 million have gone to Ireland. Export volumes from Greenhills and Little Mill have been almost identical, the principal distinction being Greenhills' birch contract with Sweden, and other broadleaf sales (principally beech) to Germany, Belgium, Denmark and France.

It would be quite wrong to

allow the volume statistics relating to TEF's two large nurseries to smother the valuable contribution being made by the 40-acre Tillycorthie nursery near Aberdeen.

Derek McDonald and his team have had a successful season selling a wide range of broadleaved species. They had a notable success with a complex £100,000 plus order from Central Scotland Countryside Trust, a rapidly-expanding customer in an increasingly important sector of the business.

Little Mill's established team,

under the experienced management of Jim Millar, and with John Watkinson taking on the sales role, has demonstrated once more its commitment to the highest standards of plant quality and service to customers, spurred on by the continuing growth in demand from Ireland.

Little Mill has recently established a link with Sweden with a contract to grow a million Norway Spruce for a private company.

Substantial changes have taken place at Greenhills, with an increasing emphasis on the production of broadleaves, encouraged by the renewed Swedish birch contract for 1992/93 as well as the EEC grant-inspired demand from Ireland.

The pressures on production costs have been tackled by changing operational practices towards additional mechanisation and the bulk lifting of a substantial volume of plants for inside grading.

This nursery, now managed by Jamie Dewhurst following the sad and untimely retirement of Robin Sym, has also cut back significantly on the number of species in production, concentrating on the forestry sector.

Adrian Morgan, the Division's Marketing Manager, is concentrating on the further development of contract business and volume sales.

He will be looking in particular towards further new business in export markets where the name of Tilhill is becoming increasingly well known.



Alison McLeod and Isabel Gordon carry out the annual stocktake on one-year-old Common Alder seedlings at Tillycorthie. These plants will be sold as two-year-old undercuts (I-U-I) in the 1992/93 season when they should be 40-60cm tall.

WHO HAS RIGHT OF ACCESS?

The decision of the Government and the Forestry Commission to sell their woodlands with compulsory public access rights attached is presenting something of a challenge to forestry management. As these random notes from a recent assessment visit by a TEF investment manager clearly illustrate, extensive public access is nothing new.

IT IS a typical day, involving a visit to a not-too-typical property. The security of the company car is paramount in my mind, for this is "pit-yakker" country, known to some as the old coalfields of Durham. The plan has an arrow on it, indicating an entrance bay for the car. First problem – the area is full of old asbestos sheets. Lock up, hide the 'phone, cover the back seat and down with the aerials.

Looks okay. Nice timber. "Chop, chop." Someone else obviously thinks so, too. But he has an axe, and I've only got a friendly Labrador. It's only firewood...

Lot of paper about. Geordies obviously read the mags, then dump them – local re-cycling. Yes, volumes look okay. Back in the car and try another entrance – blocked by cars. Only pigeon fanciers tending their lofts, who move without question – but not without looks. No wildlife about. Best

beech I've seen in years; no squirrel damage.

Oh, oh – here comes the answer. Nice silenced air rifle; noisier dog, so pass the time of day – friendly fellow.

Trees look good, track is adequate. But whose property is it? The FC obviously didn't invent unlimited public access after all – the Geordies did. And, to prove it, there's Andy Capp, complete with whippet.

I definitely like the crop, but can we sell this volume of pine? The area is wind firm, has good soils and is well drained. A shame the drains are doubling as a car spares depot.

Getting dark now – not a place to be alone. The dog looks nervous, too. Where's the car? Panic! Phew, still here. Lock the doors and off.

What do I tell the clients it's worth? Now neither of us knows the answer!