



Tree Scribe

May, 1994

No. 35

The House Journal of Tilhill
Economic Forestry Limited.
A member of Booker
Countryside.

“Booker's agribusiness interests are a unique and strong feature of our group. Management is able and professional, and the companies are leaders in their fields (sorry about the pun...).

In recent years, Tilhill Economic Forestry's operations have been somewhat restricted by reduced investment, particularly in new forest planting following the fiscal changes introduced by the Treasury in 1988. However, this lowdown was not entirely negative, because it stimulated TEF to re-focus its activities, to reduce costs, and to plan for the future. Confidence in that future was demonstrated in late 1992 with the purchase of Ballymurn nursery in Ireland.

Today we wait anxiously for the final outcome of the government's forest industry review. TEF played its part in the consultation process, with two fundamental aims: to see re-jigged and improved planting incentives, and to see an imaginative strategy for the long-term future of state-owned forests that includes a central role for the private sector (albeit within a framework of appropriate regulation).

TEF is well-placed to participate in the development of forest management in the UK. With a national network of 21 branches and four tree nurseries, it has the necessary resources; with its tested management it has the appropriate skills; and with its excellent reputation for sensitive handling of wildlife conservation and environmental issues, it has the right track record.

By Charles Bowen,
Chief Executive of Booker plc



In the coming few years, the company will also play its part in Booker's growth. At the recent annual Booker senior management conference, I spelled out my medium-term plans for the group, and how I expect all the companies to perform. Booker will focus on its three main business areas of food wholesaling, food processing and agribusiness. We will build market share, generate more cash and invest for growth.

*Tonnes of
potential profit
– Page 5*

TEF's role (and of all the operating companies) is to be the best in your markets by proving yourselves better than the competition. You'll make long-term growth plans that will include appropriate investment and achievable budgets. You'll manage your people well and care for the environment.

TEF and its sister company Booker Farming are renowned for sensitive handling of the environment and to me it is vital that the drive for bottom-line profits should continue to take account of such concerns; only by doing so can we preserve the quality of the rural environment on which both companies depend for their long-term success.

I know that you can do all of these successfully. On my visits to TEF operations, I've been impressed by the professionalism and commitment of management and staff and I wish the TEF team good fortune in the future. We will keep in close contact and I look forward to visiting more of your sites during the coming year. ”

Preserving the quality of the rural environment

Confirming the company's commitment to wildlife and conservation requirements as an integral part of TEF's management, a two-day meeting was organised recently for all District managers.

Wildlife and conservation



Examining woodland design in Eskdalemuir laid out for shooting and for conservation purposes.

The Acland Wildlife Centre at Eskdalemuir provided a suitable and very appropriate venue for over 30 managers. Set in the heart of the largest multi-ownership forestry complex in Europe, the Acland Centre lies adjacent to Burncleuch, the home of Borders Region Senior Wildlife Manager, Ronnie Rose. The Centre is a well-used meeting place for clients and visiting groups, forestry students and school children.

Principal speakers leading the seminar under the chairmanship of Forestry Operations Director Martin Wilkinson were our Forest Ecologist Baxter Cooper and Ronnie himself.

The seminar introduced further guidance to staff on the wide range of increasingly-important subjects covering company wildlife and conservation policy, crop protection, forest design, sportings and the efficient control of deer and of other potentially-damaging animals.

The company is in a very strong position, having the services of Baxter Cooper to provide ecological advice and conservation recommendations and having the long, practical experience of Ronnie

Rose, who is particularly well-known for his work with deer.

The meeting was not blessed with fine weather, but that did not deter field visits to inspect the layout of deer glades and stream-sides and the design, construction and maintenance of large ponds. The objectives for the meeting were to increase awareness of company expertise and resources and to encourage staff to be more proactive in identifying conservation opportunities and in maintaining the high standards which we have set.

The seminar also provided a very appropriate opportunity for Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington, a non-Executive Director of TEF, to address the staff. Patrick is Chairman of the Red Deer Commission and the content of the seminar was a subject on which he has considerable knowledge.

A rapt audience at the Acland Wildlife Centre





Visiting the iron age village site

Man's roots in the forest

The need to safeguard the remains of earlier land use and historic sites has long been recognised by foresters and woodland owners. Because forests are often located in areas with a history of relatively low intervention by our predecessors, woodland sites and upland farmland tend to be very rich in the traces of early land use. These have long been obliterated from most of the more intensively cultivated lowland farmland and from urban areas.

In recent years, Borders Region have undertaken a number of large scale afforestation schemes where new sites have been drawn to the attention of Local Authority archaeologists. At Lethem, there were extremely well-preserved family farm

enclosures which were granted as clearances by licence within the great Jedforest. These areas are now to be set aside as open ground within the future woodlands now being created around them.

Archaeological survey work has been carried out over 6,500 acres of land since 1992, some for the company directly on such as Lochlyoch, the site of the UK's largest farm woodland planting of 2,000 acres.

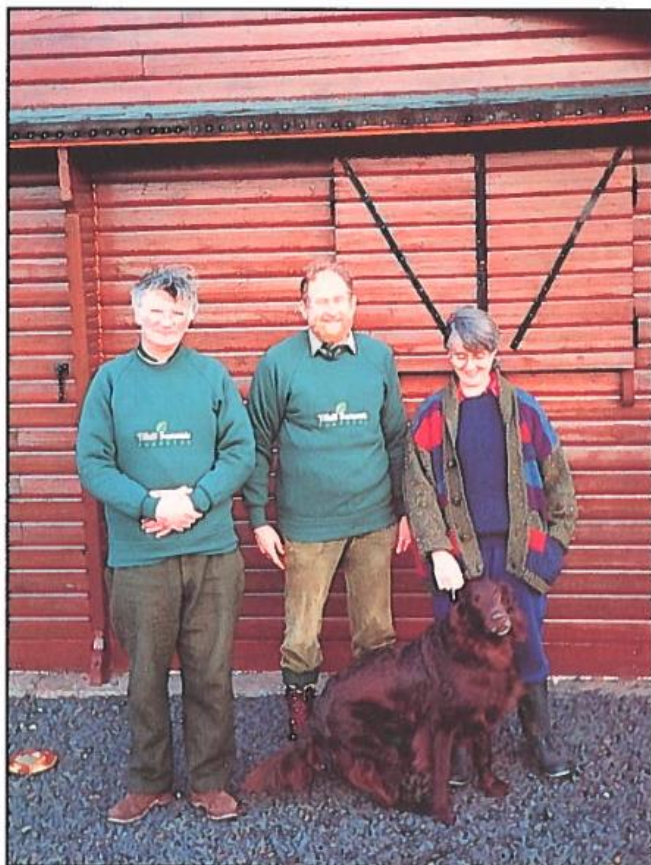
Our surveyor in Lanarkshire was Tam Ward, a respected amateur archaeologist. Tam is the Director of the Biggar Museums Trust, which with five excellent museums in this small market town lays claim to more museums per head of population than anywhere in Britain.

To expand their understanding of the changes in occupation pattern and land use from prehistoric times, Tam gave a very detailed slide show and lecture to local staff, using the Moffat office as his theatre, followed the next day by field visits to a range of local sites and discoveries. Of the many sites visited, one was a previously unknown stone circle with the huge fallen stones partially hidden. These great blocks, when mapped and surveyed to scale, were aligned to both the summer and winter solstice; a small scale Stonehenge a few hundred yards from the

A74 Carlisle route and found as a result of pre-construction field work for the road upgrading operation! This would be a lifetime discovery for many archaeologists, yet it is only one of the many new recordings made by Tam Ward and his wonderfully enthusiastic team of fieldworkers. Our thanks go to the Biggar Museums Trust and to Tam Ward for his continuing education work.



Examining a small burial cairn



*Rev. Dr Norton, Bryson Middleton,
Mrs Norton – not forgetting Rusty!*

Time for celebration at Norwood

The owners, several guests and staff of TEF met recently to celebrate the felling of the first thinning trees at the Borders Norwood Forest which, following a recent adjacent acquisition by the Norton family, now extends to some 948 hectares (2,342 acres).

The first planting took place in 1975 on behalf of the Norton family. Local Tilhill staff at the time included Bryson Middleton and John Jackson as his Forester, with both involved in initial establishment work. Nineteen years on, Bryson was in the position to cut the first tree, ably assisted by District Harvesting Manager, Stewart Mackie. Bryson and Stewart have been heavily involved in timber operations for many years, particularly thinnings. They have been leaders in the development of training courses for timber cutters and both are fully certified chainsaw operators.

Onlookers who gathered to record the event included the Rev. Dr. Peter Norton and Mrs Sheila Norton along with guests Mr Hugh Fraser, a trustee of the Estate, John Jackson who is now the Estate's shooting tenant and Mr Josip Grbaval, a visitor from Sarajevo.

The day's events were recorded on video by Bob Smith, one of the Region's Wildlife Managers. This included the presentation by Vaughan Hammond, Regional Director, of TEF sweatshirts to Dr Norton and Bryson. Spirits were further raised when Dr Norton produced a bottle of champagne to toast the future success of the woodlands and the family. The party retired to the family's woodland chalet for a splendid festive lunch and then the cutting of some carefully-selected Christmas trees to round off a memorable celebration.

Ardnadam Heritage Trail

The Heritage Trail, a joint initiative between TEF, BICC and Argyll and Bute Countryside Trust, is due to be officially opened in June.

The Countryside Trust are aiming for a big "name" to conduct the opening ceremony. Among other benefits, the scheme highlights the commitment of TEF to public access.

The Trust are producing a leaflet about the Trail. This will include detail on the subject of wildlife written by Baxter Cooper, TEF's forest ecologist.

New district created

On January 1, 1994, the districts at Oban and Fort William were merged to form the new West Highland District.

The new district will cover an area from the Mull of Kintyre in the south to Plockton in the north, together with all of the western isles. The managed area is presently just over 20,000 hectares. However, with the appointment of Miller Harris as Business Development Manager within the district, it is confidently expected that the managed area will increase significantly.

Opportunities are already being developed in the north of the district with the extension of native woodland on large west highland estates, while on the more intensively farmed areas of Kintyre, opportunities under the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme are being actively considered by a number of clients.

Tom McLellan is District Manager, responsible for operational matters and the district is located at Oban, with sub offices at Fort William and Lochgilphead. This allows the six forestry operations staff to work close to the centre of their area of responsibility, thereby ensuring a high level of cost effective forest management input and a good spread of staff based locally throughout the district.

Congratulations . . .

Bryson Middleton (jnr) on his marriage to Iona on November 27, 1993.

Neil and Katherine McInnes on the birth of twins Beth and Sarah on March 22, 1994.

Shaw Mortimer, Surveyor based at Survey Department, on 25 years' service.

Dave Petro, Forester, Dunoon District, on 20 years' service (See also back page).

Andrew Binmore, promoted to Fellowship of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

Hello to . . .

Angela Shuttleworth, Secretary, NW England.

Claire Harris, Secretary, Marches.

Kelly Mitchell, YTS Assistant, Stirling.

Toby Scott, Harvesting and Marketing Manager, South Wales.

Berik Davies, GIS Operator, Survey Department.

TPP - Tonnes of Potential Profit or Timber Purchase Problems?? Certainly, if you haven't got nerves of steel and if you are not prepared to stick your neck out - beware. On the other hand, if you like making money and can cope with a few headaches, go for it. So says David Owen, District Manager at North Wales, runners-up in the 1993 Performance League.



CAT 320L with LAKO 60 Head cutting bars and pulp production 80T/day

Bryn Gwyn is 111.2 Hectares. The clearfell area is 50 hectares, all p60 Sitka spruce. Standing volume is 15,000m³ and break out is 5% logs, 15% bars and the rest pulp. Outturn is averaging about 750 tonnes per week.

Said David Owen, "Bryn Gwyn was bought in 1993 having been on the market since early 1991. Problems of access and the risk of not obtaining a felling licence had put off a succession of potential purchasers, despite our assurances that there was money to be made.

"Thanks to Tim Kirk's skill in negotiating the price, the road, the rights of way, access etc, the property was finally bought. The only slight problem was that the felling licence was not through. On July 30, when we purchased the property and handed over the money there was still no felling licence. FA asked for a three-month extension to the three-month consultation periods, but, finally, it arrived at the end of October.

"It took a week to get the road-building contractor in and a month to build the road. Instructions from on high were - **Never mind starting in January when the road has settled, we want it started tomorrow.** So we found the contractor, got him organised, agreed rates and determined to extract 1500 tonnes by Christmas. Then it snowed!

"The contractor was stuck 20 miles from the nearest tarmac road in 12 inches of snow and the low-loader was in a ditch somewhere in a wood in the borders. Eventually the snow melted and haulage arrived in mid December. Despite these drawbacks we made quota and exceeded it, thanks to Shotton staying open over Christmas and the New Year.

"At present, there are two machines bringing out 150 tonnes

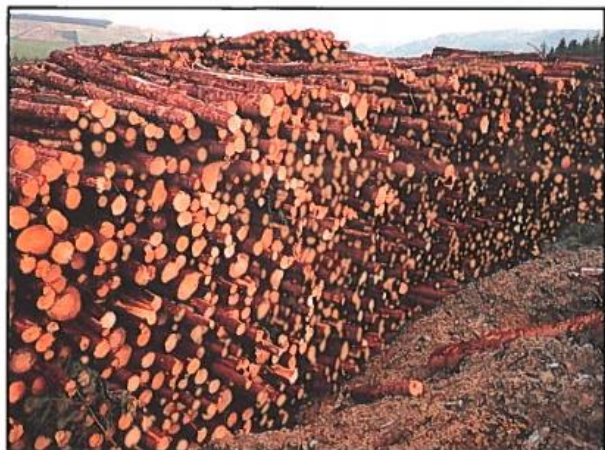
Nerves of steel amongst the woodlands

per day with a forwarder working flat out three weeks in six, and more lorries than we've ever seen. The road is holding up, the volume is as we measured it, and the profit is rolling in.

"And we've got another one, but only 1,000 tonnes. We're looking at two more, and we've got a Harvesting Manager. We also have a client who wants us to fell 10,000 tonnes over the next 12 months."

Who shouted "Timber!"?

Incidentally, part of Bryn Gwyn is a very nice 12-year old Sitka spruce plantation of 30 hectares. If anyone wants to buy it, call Tim Kirk.



Pulpwood for Shotton



Albert Selby,
*Production Planning,
Warehouse Samples
Manager, Armstrong
World Industries
Limited, with
Graham Chalk, DDM
Yorkshire District*

Tilhill covers new ground at Cleveland

Multi-national company Armstrong World Industries Limited, based at Teesside Industrial Estate, Thornaby, together with Tilhill Economic Forestry, last month completed the planting of a broadleaved woodland on unused industrial land adjacent to the company works. The trees have been planted for the benefit of company employees and the local community. The new woodland, a significant contribution to the development of the Community Forest in Cleveland, includes a network of footpaths allowing public access to much of the site. The new paths link into existing Public Rights of Way running alongside Stainsby Beck.

Albert Selby, Production Planning Warehouse and Samples Manager commented: "Armstrong World Industries Limited are delighted to be able to support the Cleveland Community Forest initiative in a practical manner by planting a considerable proportion of our Thornaby site with a

collection of broadleaved trees. This action will improve the environment in the vicinity of the factory and improve wildlife."

He added, "We are continually seeking to improve our environmental contribution to the community with recent investments in state-of-the-art pollution control equipment and significant reduction in waste generation and increased recycling."

TEF has planted over 11,000 trees, including oak, ash and cherry, on the six-hectare site. Shrubs species such as dog rose, hawthorn and hazel have also been planted to provide cover and food for a variety of bird species.

Perch poles are situated throughout the site to encourage birds of prey. The birds will act as an environmentally-friendly pest control; helping to limit vole numbers which, if unchecked, can inflict considerable damage on young trees.

David tots up a score



David Petro completed his 20th year of service on April 22, 1994, and is pictured receiving a token of the company's appreciation from Doug Baptye, who used to run his empire from Dunoon before being called to HQ.

David is one of many examples of the holding capacity of the area, having spent all his time with the company at its Dunoon office.

He came into forestry after a close encounter of the teaching kind, arriving amidst a staff sufficiently young, fit and numerous to require a Board of Selectors to pick its rugby team.

David's years of experience growing up with the trees in Cowal, have resulted in his appointment as forester on over 9000 hectares of woodland.

The anniversary was fortuitously on a Friday so we were able to incorporate a small celebration without any significant disruption to custom. An extremely modest gentleman, it is probably enough of a shock that he is the subject of this entry in "Tree Scribe."

Mechanised planting in North Yorkshire



This season Yorkshire District has planted two significant areas of Farm Woodland, both of which have been intimate mixes of broadleaves and conifers. In the core areas of both these schemes there were four major species to be planted in varying proportions.

Fortunately the Company had, on a trial basis, the Egedal planting machine and this was employed by the District to carry out the work. The two sites to be planted varied from thin arable soils over limestone through to heavy grassland sites. The programme presented quite a challenge to the District's Forester, Simon Rochester, local agricultural contractor, Mick Moreley and two experienced

planters, Dave Wardell and Steve Allanson.

The team soon became familiar with the machine and 120,000 trees and shrubs were planted in about fifteen days in the prescribed random mixes, planting four species at one time. The quality of the planting was excellent with all plants consistently spaced and firmly planted in straight rows.

Working on the relatively easy terrain of the farmland enabled subsequent spraying operations to be mechanised. The District has now developed an ATV mounted spraying unit that can accurately apply a spot application of herbicide automatically to two rows at a time. The

District was able to use this farm planting operation as a useful promotional exercise and held an open day on one of the sites which attracted a number of local farmers, estate owners and created a great deal of interest. In particular, favourable comments were made by some of the traditional estate owners about planting intimate mixtures.

We await the outcome of the long overdue Forestry Review report recommendations on incentives for forestry to see if this type of operation becomes common practice in the forestry world. Let's hope so!

Valmet 901 harvesting machine cutting pulp



Efficiency prizewinners

The spring meeting of Borders Region District Managers was an appropriate opportunity for MD Bob Shaw to present to Charlie Fulton, the Manager of Dumfries and Galloway District, and to Vaughan Hammond, the Regional Director, framed copies of certificates recognising top place in the District Performance League for 1993.

Charlie's team had an exceptional year in 1993 with significant extra business executed in a very cost effective and efficient manner. Flagship of the year's activity was the completion in six weeks of the largest Farm Woodland Premium Scheme planting in the UK over an area of 760 hectares.

This scheme involved the application of machine planting and simultaneous herbicide application for the conifer crops and the development of a new ground tining and spraying system which prepared two rows at once for the planting of the broadleaved areas.

The entire District staff shared in the first prize of £3000, a well-earned reward for tremendous achievement.

The runners-up prize of £2000 was shared by the team from North Wales District, ably led by David Owen. Some excellently-executed contract work complemented the more traditional forestry and timber business to achieve a highly commendable performance.

Congratulations to both Districts. Who will be the 1994 winners?



Bob Shaw presents the 1993 Efficiency Prizes to Vaughan Hammond and Charlie Fulton



Dumfries and Galloway District staff

From crops to trees



After three years directing the nursery business, Andrew Miller transferred to a senior position in the strengthened management of Booker Pensions. He was succeeded on March 1 by Richard White, a divisional director of Booker Farming.

Richard has been with Booker since 1986, latterly having had executive responsibility for seven farm production units. He combined this role with a proactive approach to new business development involving high net worth individuals and city investment institutions.

After gaining BA Hons in Economics at Exeter University, Richard spent almost five years in technical sales and production management with two large farming-based companies following which he joined chartered surveyors Bidwells as an associate partner. A five-year spell developing new clients in farm and estate management was ideal experience for the Booker Farming post.

Richard is married with two young children, lives near Winchester and enjoys both indoor (squash) and outdoor (sailing) pursuits.

We hope he still has some leisure time despite the demands of the Nurseries Division. We hope to read more of Nurseries in succeeding issues of "Tree Scribe".