

Staff Changes

The latter half of last year saw the retiral of George McCulloch, the Estate's Engineer. With him goes quite a talent for keeping some items of rather aged machinery on the go. The first few months of this year sees the retiral of George Traill, Head Forester at Doune and Nigel Grant longstanding forestry contractor at Castle Stuart.

From the 20th of April the Estate Office is going to seem a very different place with the retiral of Gareth Whymant as Woodlands Manager.

Gareth joined us in 1991 as Head Forester of the Northern Estates from Ardverikie near Newtonmore moving onto the position of Woodlands Manager shortly thereafter. Aside from being an excellent forester Gareth and his wife have thrown themselves enthusiastically into the Estate and local communities with great benefits to each.

Gareth is a very active cyclist and extremely fit for his age. At a health check a couple of years ago he was told he may be 62 but he had the body of a 30 something. Gareth was pleased but I doubt your average 30 something would be.

Gareth also finds time to assist others notably Chernobyl children and the Highland Hospice for whom he has raised a great deal of money.

We wish Gareth and Dee a long and happy retirement and we're very pleased

they will continue to live at Darnaway so we will see plenty of them.

Ben Clinch has been appointed as Woodlands Manager following Gareth Whymant's retiral. Ben moved up to Scotland after working for Fountain Forestry in Wales and the West Midlands to set up as a self employed Forestry Consultant before his recent employment with Bowlts Chartered Surveyors in Inverness. He lives locally in Kintessack with his wife, Mandy and their two young daughters. His interests include deer management, fishing and other field sports.

Fishings Available To Let

There are currently some fishings available to let on the Sluie, Lower Dounduff and Home beats. For further information on cost and availability, please contact Kay at the Estates' Office on 01309 672213 after 1pm.

Forthcoming Events

Antiques Day – 29th April

Darnaway's very own Antiques Roadshow with valuations by Lyon & Turnbull: Darnaway Castle

Wolfrek event – 4th August

Darnaway Forest

(Details from the Estate Office)

Chairman	Lord Moray
Managing Director	A Howard
Group Accountant	W Mitchell
Farms Manager	M Bridges
Woodlands Manager	G Whymant
Doune Estates Manager	L Irwin
Tornagrain DM	N Petrie
Master Of Works	G Reid
Head Keeper	C Munro

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News

March 2012

Last September a very successful era for Moray Estates came to an end with the death of Lord Moray.

Douglas John Moray Stuart, 20th Earl of Moray had been heavily involved in the running of the Estate since coming to Scotland from Africa in the 1940s. He had been Chairman of the Company for over 30 years.

Lord Moray, who was passionate about the Estate, had overseen major changes in the Estate's activities in farming, forestry and property management, much of which is being continued today. His gentleness, humour and great civility will be missed by all involved in the Estate. His son, John, now 21st Earl of Moray, became Chairman of the Company last June.
Gareth Whymant

Partnership Tenancies

The vast majority of the Estates' houses are let to tenants on short assured tenancies where the Estate as landlord is responsible for the maintenance of the house.

The Estate has a few houses, which usually because of isolated location, are difficult to renovate and then let in an economic fashion. In most circumstances the Estate does so anyway to safeguard the property but, on occasion, we enter a partnership with a tenant who, in exchange for a long lease, agrees to take on some or all of the renovations in exchange for a low rent.

Gordon and Patricia Smith are one such couple who have taken on Dounduff Lodge in the heart of Darnaway Forest.

Mrs Smith's first impression of Dounduff Lodge was "a little lonely house in need of lots of love and TLC".

Over the next 18 months the Smiths gave the house exactly that. Their hard work, dedication and ingenious changes have created a wonderful, warm home. They have also tackled what was a rather wild garden creating from it a charming garden of many different characters.



Such projects are not without difficulties and Gordon and Patricia encountered a number en route. These houses can also be a bit of a challenge to live in - being isolated - but also very rewarding.

We are delighted by what the Smiths have brought to Dounduff Lodge and we wish them many happy years there.

If you are interested in a partnership opportunity, or would like further details, please contact me in the office.

Nicole Petrie



Farming – Sustainable Intensification

It is the new buzzword in farming. Basically it means “getting more for less” or, in other words, continuing to increase food production to meet a growing global demand, whilst using fewer resources to achieve this production.

Quite a challenge but one that is high up on the political agenda and will certainly be influential in shaping the upcoming reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy due to be in place in 2014.

The driving force behind this agenda is climate change mitigation through less greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and livestock, prevention of soil degradation and pollution, prevention of loss of biodiversity and wildlife habitats and protection of both fresh and marine waters.

Getting more from less is by no means a new concept and for generations farmers have been pretty good at it, (and some more than others, you might say!) In practice it means constantly striving for greater efficiencies in the use of fuel, fertiliser and plant protection products and looking after our soils by correct and targeted applications of lime and bought in fertiliser. Also important is ensuring that we maintain adequate levels of organic matter by using farmyard manure

Highland Wide Local Development Plan

Just before Christmas 2011, The Highland Council, (THC), received the findings of the Scottish Government’s Reporters Unit review of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan, (HWLDP). The Reporters’ report fully supports THC’s allocation of the Estate’s proposed new town at Tornagrain. The proposal envisages the development of approximately 5,000 homes and all the other infrastructure necessary for a town over the next 40-50 years.

Last month THC gave notice of their intention to adopt the HWLDP on the



or compost and, in some cases, chopping straw and incorporating it back into the soil. In our livestock enterprises we encourage high levels of clover in our swards to fix atmospheric nitrogen that feeds the grass and helps to achieve good livestock performance.

Our modern fleet of large machinery and the new grain dryer at Wester Alves is at the heart of our fuel efficiency policy so we can minimise our carbon footprint per unit of production. Actually increasing yields is a great way to improve our efficiency.

The challenge of Sustainable Intensification is clearly a huge one and will not be solved overnight and the pressures to deliver will grow year on year. I am encouraged that we and many other farmers are doing lots of good things but it is certain that we still have a lot to learn and implement in the future.

Martin Bridges

5th of April. The planning application for Tornagrain, made by the Estate in January 2009, is hoped to be determined shortly after the election of the new council following May’s council elections.

This very exciting development now paves the way for the commencement of Tornagrain in 2013. A detailed planning application for Phase 1 is to be submitted by the Estate later this year. Meanwhile detailed work continues in finalising upgrades to the necessary infrastructure for the town.

Andrew Howard

Woodlands – Winds of Change

The events of the last few months brought to mind the changes that have occurred in the Forest Industry over the life of the late Lord Moray. His early years coincided with the rise of the farm tractor and the demise of the horse, although Terry Talbot a long-term contractor was using horses on Darnaway until the seventies. Cumbersome chainsaws gradually replaced axes for felling, but the snedding of branches was still often done by axe. The new tractors were fitted with wire rope winches which would pull two to three trees at a time out of the woods where they were then crosscut at roadside ready to be loaded on to the lorries which would be dwarfed by today’s juggernauts. Large logs were “barrel rolled” up wooden bearers on to the lorries using the winches, while all small material was hand loaded. Planting sites, including drains, were prepared with axes and spades, and almost every twig was removed from site by burning.



Things have to move on. Chainsaws have been replaced by huge harvesters which can fell and process up to 100 tonnes per day. Logs, cut to length, are now removed from the forest by Forwarders, which can carry loads of up to 18 tonnes. We are prevented under the rules of certification from burning lop and top so it is either broken up or pushed into narrow rows to rot down. These restocking sites are then prepared by excavators or scarifiers which clear the brash and turn up a planting spot for the young trees. There are planting machines but in general this still remains dominated by hand labour.

Despite all this mechanisation our forests still continue to thrive and have become truly multifunctional. The deadwood left after felling provides material for fungi and insects which in turn improve the ecosystem. More broadleaves and open spaces are used to improve the biodiversity of the conifer crops, and provide a more pleasant experience for the increased number of people who visit the woods for recreation. As they have done since time began the trees continue to lock up carbon dioxide at least during their lifetime and often for many years in the timber produced. We should all be proud of the achievements of Scottish Forestry and the Moray Family should be particularly proud of their stewardship of their Estates over the centuries.

Gareth Whyment

The Scottish Open

The Estate is delighted that the Scottish Open returns as planned to Castle Stuart this July. The European Tour are soon to announce the new sponsor of the Scottish Open 2012. Tickets for the event are available from www.europeantour.com. All we need now is sunshine and not a repeat of last year’s deluge.

For further details about Castle Stuart Golf, please visit Castle Stuart’s new website at www.castlestuartgolf.com.

Andrew Howard