

# Forest Research

## FR Eye

October 2006



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## EDITORIAL

As a warm, autumnal glow spreads across the country, so to does the urge to get out into woodlands to appreciate the annual display of colours and perhaps indulge in the odd kick-around amongst fallen leaves.

As Forest Research's social scientists can testify, spending time in woodland environments is therapeutic.

To those of you who have not yet succumbed to an afternoon stroll, I can only repeat what a certain sportswear company keeps telling us: "*Just do it!*". You'll feel better for it.

Meanwhile, take a look at the latest news from Forest Research and, if you've missed any previous issues, they can be accessed via our archive at: [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/freye](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/freye)

If you would like to contact the editorial team or to request an email notification of future issues as they go live, write to us at: [newsletter@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

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# FR JOINS THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS (APF) IN THE RAIN AND MUD!

The biennial APF International Forest Machinery Exhibition took place between 21 and 23 September at Ragley Estate, Warwickshire, bringing together the largest display of forestry, woodland and arboricultural equipment, supplies and services in the UK. Both the Forestry Commission and Forest Research attended the event, which provided a good opportunity to meet with forestry practitioners and the wider sector.

Responding to the current interest in woodfuel, the Commission's Director General, Tim Rollinson, launched several new, key sources of information about woodfuel's potential as a sustainable, low-carbon source of energy. These included a *Woodfuel meets the challenge* leaflet and a new *Woodfuel: Frequently asked questions (FAQ)* information sheet addition to our *Woodfuel Information Pack*, which answers many common queries about woodfuel. FR's Ian Tubby and Andy Hall held seminars to outline the latest work on the subject and launched the new Biomass Energy Centre website: [www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk](http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk)

There is much demand in the forestry sector for the recent update to *Forest Mensuration: a handbook for practitioners*. Authors Ewan Mackie and Robert Matthews attended the event offering a welcome chance for potential users to find out more and pose questions directly to the writers.

Visitors to FR's stand were invited to take part in a tree-measuring competition, which involved making a simple hypsometer out of cardboard. Visitors then used their handiwork to measure the height of particular trees, with a prize for the most accurate estimate.

The exhibition included the usual range of specialised displays and activities, such as pole climbing, chipper demonstrations and wood turning — each made all the more exciting by the torrential downpours on days two and three! More surprisingly, visitors had the opportunity to try their hand at axe-throwing — with a surprised few discovering a hidden talent...

The next APF show will be held on FC England land in 2008.

*Susannah Kable*



# DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IN FORESTRY

How do the attitudes and perceptions of specific ethnic minority and disabled groups influence their use of woodlands? What is best practice for promoting race and disability equality by countryside service providers, both within and beyond the Forestry Commission?

These are just some of the questions being explored by FR's Social and Economic Research Group in response to legislation on diversity and equality (for example the Racial Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act). The research will help fulfil the FC's legislative duties and actively promote equality of opportunity for people to enjoy Britain's woodlands.

The research into ethnic minority groups focused on a case study of Salcey Forest in Northants Forest District. This employed both qualitative methods (e.g. focus groups and accompanied site visits) and quantitative techniques (e.g. a compilation of existing statistics on the ethnic composition of the district).

A second phase of semi-structured interviews with relevant Forestry Commission staff, local government, non-government organisations, community representatives and members of ethnic minority groups was also conducted.

An Interim Report is available at [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-69UJ37](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-69UJ37)

The research exploring disability and woodland recreation is focusing on developing training packages for woodland managers and a method to assess the impacts of land management grants on disabled access. Also, participatory work with disabled people is helping clarify barriers to woodland recreation and opportunities for enhancing the accessibility of woodland recreation goods, facilities and services.

For further information about the work on ethnicity contact **David Edwards**  
For further information about the work on disability contact **Suzanne Martin**



*David Edwards and Suzanne Martin*

# BARONSCOURT EXPERIMENT

A unique forestry experiment is at last nearing its finale after almost sixty years of waiting. In 1949, a forest of Sitka spruce was planted on the Baronscourt Estate in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, as part of a trial to determine the impact of tree spacing on the properties and quality of sawn timber. Now, the experiment is nearing its conclusion and a number of the trees have been felled for examination; the results could significantly affect the future of forest management.

Over the past few months, researchers from all over the world have converged on the site, including Alexis Achim and Shaun Mochan of Forest Research. Each tree that was felled was immediately measured and analysed before being sawn and X-rayed to determine its density and strength. Soon the wood will undergo detailed laboratory testing and analysis of its structure.

## Long-awaited results

By combining the measurements from the forest, sawmill and laboratory, scientists will be able to gain a valuable insight into the detailed properties and performance of Sitka spruce timber. The results will be used to validate the use of a computer model in Ireland for predicting the timber properties of spruce trees.

Initial results are expected early in 2007 and it is anticipated that the work will help to increase the use of British timber, promote the sustainability of the forest industry and improve future forest management.

The project represents close collaboration between the Northern Ireland Forest Service, Baronscourt Estate, Balcas sawmills, Forest Research, Napier University (Edinburgh), the Agriculture Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and Adam Wilson & Sons Ltd sawmill. Alexis Achim and Shaun Mochan are delighted to work with colleagues in Northern Ireland and to benefit from the legacy and vision of their predecessors.



*Shaun Mochan  
Project Leader, Timber Properties Programme*

# STORM RISK MEETING

In January 2005, a catastrophic storm across northern Europe damaged a massive 85 million cubic metres of timber. As a result, project STORMRISK was commissioned and funded by the EC Interreg North Sea Region in an attempt to gather knowledge and experience of managing forest wind damage, and to make it accessible to forest owners, managers and landscape planners across the North Sea region.

This August, as part of the STORMRISK project, Forest Research hosted an International workshop on 'Forest storm risk management in the North Sea region'. The meeting took place in Inverness and was attended by forest managers and researchers from Sweden, Germany, Denmark, UK and Canada. Forest Research was represented by Mark Broadmeadow, Chris Quine, Barry Gardiner, Juan Suarez, Axel Wellpott and Bruce Nicoll. The two-day workshop included seminars on climate change scenarios, managing forests to reduce risk, responding to forest wind damage, and wind risk models (including ForestGALES). There was also a field visit to Glen Affric, where the group were shown around by Steve Smith (Fort Augustus Forest District Manager) and his team, and discussed the practicalities of forest management for multiple objectives in a windy climate.

Further information on STORMRISK is available from **Bruce Nicoll** or via [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/stability](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/stability)



# NEW PUBLICATIONS

## ***Forest Research Corporate Plan 2006–2009***

September 2006 - <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infd-5wbkks>

## ***Forest Research Development Strategy 2007–2012 (internal report)***

September 2006 - <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infd-5wbkks>

This report outlines plans for 2007–2012, taking into account current external influences and predicting areas of increased interest and growth. It details how FR will achieve increased relevance to the sector and sustainability through improved alignment and linkages, increased innovation, scientific and business excellence and strong governance.

## ***Forest Research Brochure***

September 2006, 14 pages - <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infd-5zqgy5>

The brochure provides an introductory overview of Forest Research, outlining some of our current areas of research. Copies are available by emailing [research.info@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research.info@forestry.gsi.gov.uk).

## ***Technical Services Unit (TSU) Promotional Leaflet***

September 2006, one-page folded leaflet

This summarises the skills and areas of expertise of our Technical Support Unit (TSU). It lists TSU site addresses and gives a map of the field station network across Britain. To get a copy, email [research.info@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research.info@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)



## NEW PUBLICATIONS (CONT.)

### ***Woodfuel: Frequently asked questions***

*September 2006, 4 pages*

A Forest Research factsheet that answers questions about woodfuel in non-technical language. The factsheet is a new addition to Forest Research's *Woodfuel Information Pack*, which contains information on a range of woodfuel subjects. The factsheet is available as part of the *Woodfuel Information Pack*, which costs £10. Details on how to order can be found at [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infid-66sjac](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infid-66sjac) or email [research.info@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research.info@forestry.gsi.gov.uk). (People who have already bought a *Woodfuel Information Pack* should automatically receive a complementary new factsheet to add to their packs — they do not need to order one.)



### ***The quest for sustainable energy – Woodfuel meets the challenge***

*September 2006, 8 pages*

A guide to woodfuel published by Forest Research and the Forestry Commission and with support from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). It sets out facts about the benefits of woodfuel, the different types of woodfuel products, information about drying woodfuel, costs, marketing and sources of woodfuel. It also looks at the future of woodfuel. The leaflet is available free from Forestry Commission regional Conservancy Offices. For contact details, visit [www.forestry.gov.uk/contacts](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/contacts) or telephone 0845 FORESTS (0845 367 3787).



For details of Forest Research publications, or to download PDFs, visit our website at

[www.forestresearch.gov.uk/publications](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/publications)

## EVENTS

Full details of FR's events are available from the FR website: [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/events](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/events)

### **25 October:**

*'Control of invasive Rhododendron ponticum'*, Glencoe, Scotland

A one-day workshop aimed at providing practical solutions to the eradication of the invasive weed species *Rhododendron ponticum*.

Organised by Forest Research and National Trust, Scotland

[www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6TVH7X](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6TVH7X)