

# Annual Report and Accounts 2006–2007



**Cover photo:** Female Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) flowers and foliage.

Forest Research

# Annual Report and Accounts 2006–2007

Together with the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report on the Accounts

Presented to Parliament in pursuance of Section 45 of the Forestry Act 1967  
and Section 5 of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1921

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# Chief Executive's Introduction



I am delighted to share this *Annual Report* with our many friends, partners and stakeholders. The past year has been both demanding and exciting, with a number of new developments at Forest Research (FR). We have always adapted our research to answer the changing needs of our customers and the forestry and land-use sectors — over the past five years, 43 of our 56 programmes of research have changed significantly to meet changing requirements. However, over the past year, we have recognised that a step change is needed to ensure that FR continues to be responsive to the changing context of its customers and an attractive partner to work with. To achieve this, our new Development Strategy, which is in its early stages of implementation, guides our focus on topics that are a priority for our customers, so we can better answer their needs.

I was pleased that the FC Executive Board and Board of Forestry Commissioners approved the plans put forward in our Development Strategy in September 2006. At the heart of the Strategy is the understanding that FR must grow into a more sustainable organisation, with a more diverse range of funding sources in order to survive in a competitive world. Through the Strategy, we have set out to achieve this by increased innovation, improved links with other scientific and research organisations, increased scientific and business excellence, and strong governance.

The Development Strategy is being implemented as a sequence of actions that will carry forward into the future, and this year has seen good progress in its initiation. I have been greatly assisted in this by the appointment of Dr David Shannon, the former Chief Scientist of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), to act as a facilitator on a consultancy basis. Our activities have also been supported by Dr David Evans, the former Research Director of Syngenta, who has been invaluable in advising on the financial and IP aspects of the development. And, last but not least, I have been particularly pleased to see the commitment of FR staff to implementing the new Strategy.

**Highlights of 2006/07:** The past year has seen many significant events and achievements.

- An international conference on **Forestry: a Sectoral Response to Climate Change**, jointly organised by FR, FC and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), took place in November at Wilton Park, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Conference Centre. To be published by CABI as *Forestry and Climate Change* (due in Autumn 2007), the book will share the most current ideas from key international experts on forest and climate change issues with a wider audience.
- In November 2006, we opened the **first UK Research Forest** at Alice Holt. Now other research organisations can access this very special research environment along with 50 years of environmental data.
- We successfully launched the **Biomass Energy Centre** (BEC) on behalf of Defra and the Department of Trade and Industry (Dti) as the British knowledge hub for biomass. So far, the BEC has responded to over one thousand enquiries, offering expert, impartial and up-to-date advice.
- Our research into **community use of woodlands** has continued to grow. New research is considering diversity amongst forest and woodland users, and the restorative powers of woodlands on schoolchildren, for example, with another study assessing the effects on offenders.
- Another key area of growth has been in **land regeneration**, with extensive research and consultancy advisory services to support FC activities across the UK on projects such as Jeskyns Farm, Thames Chase Community Forest, Newlands, Woods in and around towns (WIAT) and Cyd Coed.
- There was intense media attention on Horse Chestnut trees in autumn 2006, and we were able to respond immediately to the press and other concerned organisations with expert advice on Bleeding Canker and other **pests and diseases**.
- Environmental research is inherently international, so we were particularly pleased to welcome a group of **senior Chinese government officials** to learn about Forest Research's current research programmes and open the prospect of exchange visits.
- Following the award of PSRE-3 funding last year, we've made good progress in developing our **Intellectual Property** (IP) expertise, including the recruitment of an IP manager and establishment of an IP steering group with external members. We have implemented new internal procedures to assess and support innovation, and have developed a significant portfolio of development projects that have already generated significant business.
- We are proud of our research and so were delighted to welcome **FC Commissioners** to Alice Holt last autumn, including our two new Commissioners, Olutayo Adebawale and Calum MacDonald.
- Fellowships awarded by the OECD allowed us to **exchange researchers with Scion/Ensis** (New Zealand). Our two organisations now share a Memorandum of Understanding.
- Closer to home, we've set up initiatives to **reduce our carbon 'footprint'** – from small things like turning equipment off when not in use, to more video-conferencing to reduce travel between sites.



### Finance

Income in the year increased by 8% compared to the previous year, with a 7% increase in payroll costs while other operating costs increased by 12%. The net deficit for the year from normal operations, after the cost of capital charge of £475,000 and depreciation, was £21,000, representing a cost recovery rate of 99.9%. Capital investment amounted to £580,000, covering a wide range of scientific and technical purchases, as well as office, laboratory and infrastructure refurbishments. In cash flow terms, the Agency generated a net surplus of £357,000.

This report demonstrates FR's very successful research and development activities. For these, we depend entirely on the expertise and hard work of our staff and I would like to thank all FR staff for their many and varied contributions at this particularly exciting and demanding time.

I hope this *Annual Report and Accounts* will give you a good overview of our research during the past year and how it may benefit us all. I encourage you to visit our website and sign up to our regular newsletter so we can continue to keep you informed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jim Lynch'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J'.

**Professor Jim Lynch**  
Chief Executive

## Targets and achievements over the past six years

Performance measure		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
<b>Customer satisfaction</b>							
	Achieved	97%	98%	97%	97%	97%	–
<b>To monitor and respond to customer satisfaction<sup>1</sup></b>	–	–	–	–	–	–	Achieved via RSMB/CFS <sup>2</sup> feedback
	–	–	–	–	–	–	
<b>Peer-reviewed papers</b>	Target	48	48	45	45	45	45
	Achieved	48	48	45	47	45	45
<b>Identify FC priority areas for peer-reviewed papers<sup>1</sup></b>	–	–	–	–	–	–	Achieved and agreed with CFS
	–	–	–	–	–	–	
<b>Reports, FC publications<sup>3</sup> and articles</b>	Target	–	–	25	25	25	40
	Achieved	–	–	25+	25+	25+	40+
<b>Increase number of hits on FR website</b>	Target	–	–	–	–	15%	15%
	Achieved	–	–	–	–	Target exceeded	Target exceeded
<b>Joint Code of Practice for Research Guidelines<sup>1</sup></b>	Target	–	–	–	–	–	Comply
	Achieved	–	–	–	–	–	Achieved
<b>External review of research programmes<sup>3</sup></b>	Target	–	–	Silviculture	Social Research	Biometrics	E&HS
	Achieved	–	–	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
<b>Formal training (average number of days per member of staff)<sup>1</sup></b>	Target	–	–	–	–	–	4
	Achieved	–	–	–	–	–	4
<b>Review grading procedures<sup>1</sup></b>	Target	–	–	–	–	–	Review procedures
	Achieved	–	–	–	–	–	Target met
<b>Reduce sick leave to below FC average<sup>1</sup></b>	Target	–	–	–	–	–	6.2
	Achieved	–	–	–	–	–	5.6
<b>PSRE3 targets<sup>1, 4</sup></b>	Target	–	–	–	–	–	Achieve targets <sup>4</sup>
	Achieved	–	–	–	–	–	Targets met
<b>Unit cost/ research day (unweighted) 98/99 =100</b>	Target	94	92	90	88	86	84
	Achieved	81	79	78	75	72 <sup>5</sup>	72
<b>Unit cost of support services</b>	Target	94	92	89	87	85	83
	Achieved	86	84	82	82	73 <sup>5</sup>	73
<b>Cost recovery</b>	Target	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Achieved	100%	100%	100%	99.8%	100%	99.9%
<b>Income from customers<sup>3</sup> other than FC</b>	Target	–	–	£1.5m	£1.5m	£1.9m	£2.1m
	Achieved	–	–	£1.65m	£2.11m	£2.01m	£2.4m

1 New targets set for 2006–07.

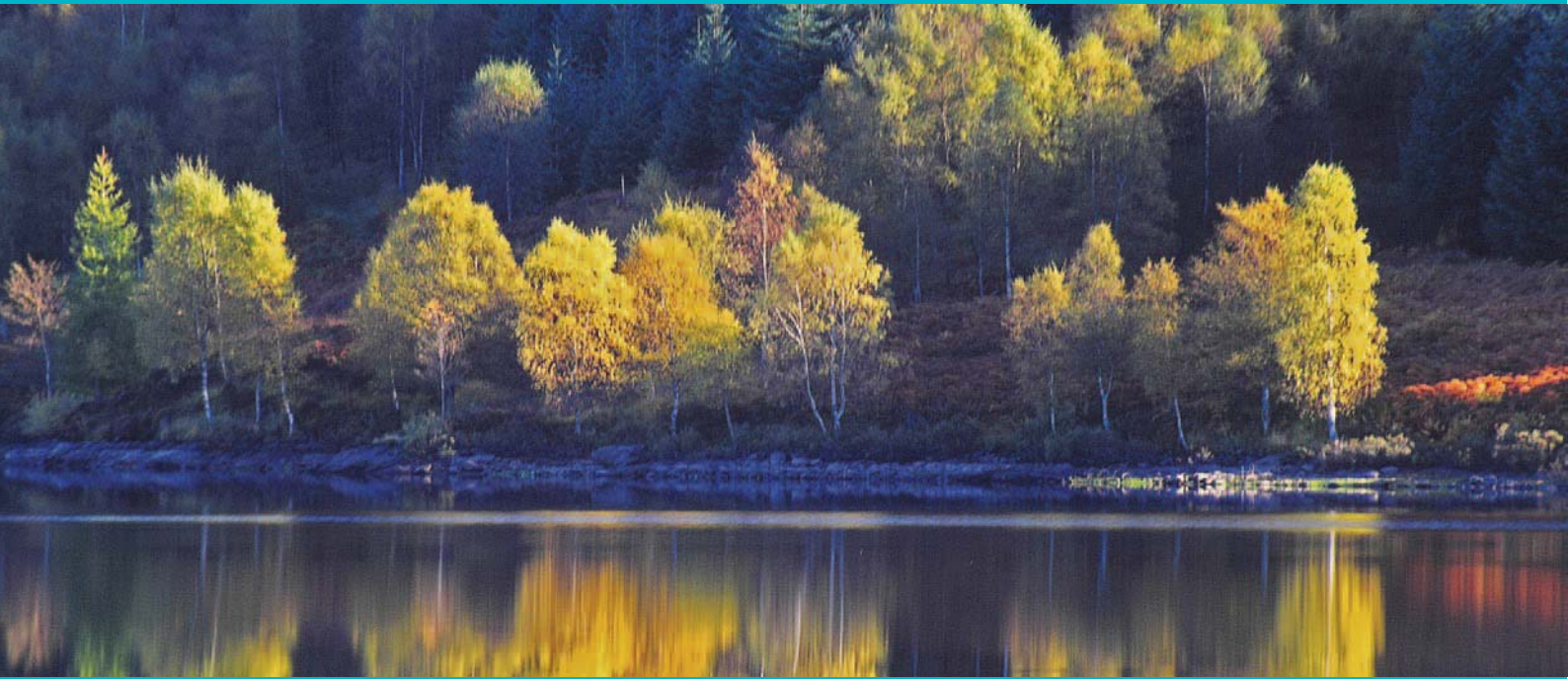
2 Research Strategy Management Board (RSMB); Corporate and Forestry Support (CFS).

3 New targets set following the Agency's first Quinquennial Review.

4 PSRE3 targets as agreed with the Office of Science and Innovation.

5 Efficiencies achieved during 2005–2006 following divisional reorganisation.

# About Forest Research



Forest Research is an agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research.

## Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of Forest Research (FR) are to assist the Forestry Commission (FC) in achieving its high-level objective.

On behalf of all three administrations, to take the lead in development and promotion of sustainable forest management and to support its achievement internationally.

### FR's aims

To support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development, by providing high-quality research and development in a well-run organisation.

### FR's objectives

- To inform and support forestry's contribution to the development and delivery of the policies of the UK government and the devolved administrations.
- To provide research, development and monitoring services relevant to UK forestry interests.
- To transfer knowledge actively and appropriately.

## Research funding

Much of FR's work is funded by the FC with Corporate and Forestry Support acting as purchaser of research and other services in support of forestry in Britain, including the particular needs of England, Scotland and Wales. Forest Enterprise was responsible for managing the FC estate during 2006–07, and purchased research, development and surveys specifically related to this estate. In recent years, FR has successfully applied for external (non-FC) funding from government departments, the European Union, UK research councils, commercial organisations,

private individuals and charities. Collaborative bids with other research providers and consortium funding have become increasingly important, placing emphasis on effective partnerships.

## Activities

Research and development are essential components in delivery of the benefits of sustainable forestry in a multifunctional landscape. FR's research, surveys and related scientific services address the social, economic and environmental components of sustainability. There is a focus on providing new knowledge and practical solutions based on high-quality science. Our projects provide understanding, policy advice and guidelines on implementation of best practice (e.g. on forest hydrology, continuous cover forestry, timber quality, land reclamation to woodland, and restoration of native woodlands). Much of the research is directed at increasing the biodiversity, landscape and recreational benefits of woodlands. Protection of GB woodlands from pests and diseases, and predicting the impacts of environmental change are also overarching themes.

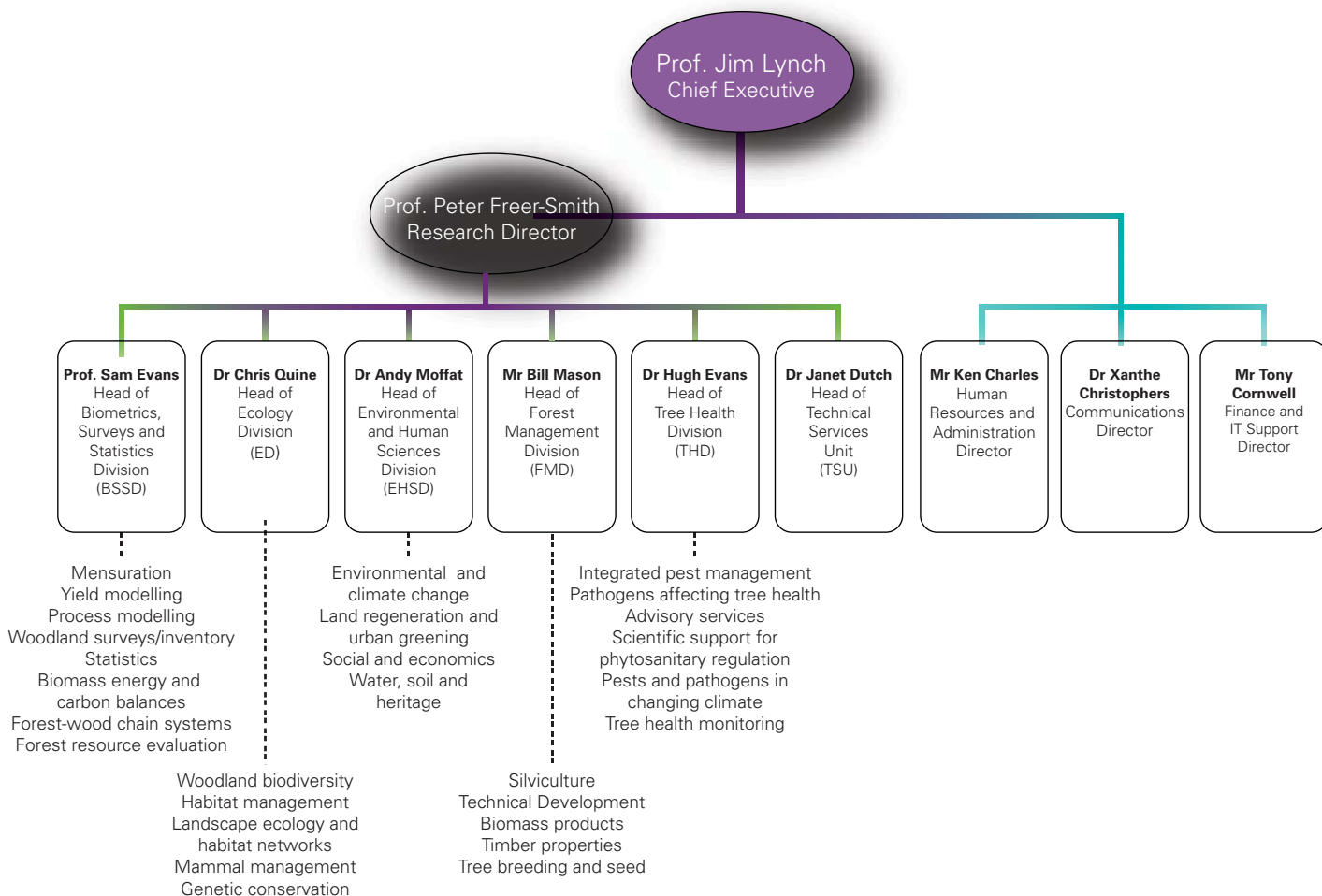
FR works closely with the FC, the Commission of the European Communities and other international organisations to ensure compliance with international agreements on the sustainable management of forests and related subjects. The Agency also carries out work on genetic conservation, tree improvement, seed testing, method studies, product evaluation, crop inventory, surveys (e.g. The national inventory of woodland and trees), and monitoring.

### Resources

The Agency has two main research stations, Alice Holt Lodge in Hampshire and the Northern Research Station on the Bush Estate south of Edinburgh. The main office of Technical Development (part of Forest Management Division) is located at Ae in Dumfriesshire with subsidiary offices in the English Midlands and Wales. The Agency also has six field stations (the Technical Support Units) from which an extensive network of field trials, sample plots and monitoring sites is assessed. Contact information is given on the inside back cover.

The Agency employs 280 staff, not including visiting scientists and sandwich students. FR has published a Corporate Plan for the period 2006–2009 and copies are available to download from [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/corporateplans](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/corporateplans)

### Forest Research Organisation 2006–07



## Advisory Committee on Forestry Research

### Chairman

#### **PROFESSOR D. J. READ, FRS**

Biological Secretary and Vice-President of the Royal Society, and Emeritus Professor of Plant Sciences University of Sheffield

### Secretary

#### **PROFESSOR P. H. FREER-SMITH**

Research Director  
Forest Research

### Members

#### **PROFESSOR C. WARD-THOMPSON**

Director, OPENSspace Research Centre and Research Professor of Landscape Architecture  
Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot-Watt University

#### **PROFESSOR D. EVANS**

Consultant in the field of novel crop management solutions  
Farnham, Surrey

#### **PROFESSOR J. M. LYNCH**

Chief Executive  
Forest Research

#### **DR C. CAHALAN**

School of Agricultural and Forest Sciences  
University of Wales Bangor

#### **PROFESSOR R. CLIFT, CBE**

Professor of Environmental Technology, Centre for Environmental Strategy  
University of Surrey

#### **PROFESSOR P. JARVIS, FRS**

Emeritus Professor of Forestry and Natural Resources  
Institute of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences  
School of GeoSciences  
University of Edinburgh

#### **DR S. C. GREGORY**

Forestry Commission  
Corporate and Forestry Support  
(up to February 2007)

#### **DR J. PENDLEBURY**

Forestry Commission  
Corporate and Forestry Support  
(from January 2007)

#### **DR K. J. KIRBY**

Forestry and Woodland Officer  
Natural England  
Peterborough

#### **PROFESSOR C. A. GILLIGAN**

Professor of Mathematical Biology and Fellow  
King's College  
Department of Plant Sciences  
University of Cambridge

The Advisory Committee provides guidance for the Agency and the Forestry Commission on the quality and direction of FR's research. The Advisory Committee met in May 2006 for a tour of research work in The New Forest and in December 2006 at the Northern Research Station, Edinburgh. These meetings allow Committee members to meet staff and to keep up-to-date with FR's work; focus is usually on those research programmes to which Visiting Groups have been appointed in the year.

The Committee appointed and received a report from an external Visiting Group to Environmental and Human Sciences Division (chaired by Professor Roland Clift, with Professors John Handley and James Curran as members). The Visiting Group rated the four research groups of the Division on a four-point scale (A down to D) on the basis of science

quality and overall relevance, delivery and progress. The evaluations were as follows:

- Water, Soil and Heritage Research: science quality A, overall delivery A
- Environmental Change Research: science quality A/B, overall delivery B/C
- Social and Economic Research: science quality A/B, overall delivery C
- Land Regeneration and Urban Greening: science quality A, overall delivery A

The Visiting Group gained an overall impression of 'an active research community, with some able and highly motivated staff and a good age structure'. The Group felt that there were tensions arising from FR's objective of broadening its research base and expertise beyond the immediate concerns of the FC, and from the need for FR to become more

actively engaged in influencing the policy process. In one of the four research groups in particular, the group detected a disproportionate effort spent on reporting research internally and in the 'grey literature'. The Visiting Group's final comment was that '...if a way can be found to resolve these tensions, we consider the Division overall to be in good shape, and well set to provide good service in future'.

In addition to the work outlined above, members of the Advisory Committee on Forestry Research are closely involved in the implementation of FR's Development Strategy. This has been through the provision of advice on the Strategy and of external expertise on appointment and promotion boards. We are also grateful to Professor David Evans for chairing the team that is currently reviewing FR's finance and management systems.

# National and international links, visitors and events



Forest Research operates in the high-profile area of the environment and natural resources, alongside universities and other research organisations. We are keen to share knowledge with like-minded institutions and to continue to build collaborative links both at home and abroad. Over the past year, we have welcomed many visitors, including scientists and policy-makers from both the UK and the international community. Our staff have participated at a wide range of events, ensuring that FR is increasingly known for providing excellent research coupled with practice-based outputs both within and beyond the UK.

Forest Research's links with Scion/Ensis in New Zealand have been strengthened with exchange visits between scientists as part of a fellowship award from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Scion/Ensis scientist Dr Nod Kay came to Alice Holt for seven weeks to work on aspects of island resource allocation in relation to colonisation of broadleaved trees by insect defoliators. In return, Dr David Wainhouse visited Scion/Ensis in New Zealand to study the potential pests of radiata pine. Other visitors from New Zealand included Dr Ross Beever, from Landcare Research NZ, and Dr Beccy Ganley from Scion/Ensis. Their visit was prompted by discovery of a pathogen in New Zealand which had been first identified by FR in Cornwall in 2003. The New Zealand researchers visited pathologists at Alice Holt to discuss their current research on the new species of invasive *Phytophthora*, *P. kernoviae*.

FR's Scientific Director, Peter Freer-Smith, undertook an OECD fellowship working with the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) in Bordeaux. During his visit, Peter carried out a review of sustainable management, certification and forest protection, which will be published in the journal *Ambio*.

Bill Mason, Chris Quine and Robin Gill delivered presentations at the British Ornithologist's Union discussion meeting on 'Woodland Birds: their ecology and management' at the University of Leicester, describing forest management, stand management and herbivore impacts.

In June, Liz O'Brien participated at the 12th International Symposium on Society and Resource management (ISSRM) in Canada, giving a presentation on 'Trees and woods in inner London: residents from two social housing estates and their perspectives on Peabody Hill Wood'. This annual meeting forms the largest gathering of social scientists and natural resource managers worldwide.

FR's stand at the Royal Welsh Show in Llanellwedd, Builth Wells, was extremely popular with visitors and provided the venue for a number of presentations throughout the event, showcasing recent publications including *Forest mensuration: a handbook for practitioners* and the *FC Technical Guide: Forest fencing*. It was also the first public presentation of FR's new biological control service using nematodes to reduce damage caused by weevils (*Hylobius abietis*).

FR's land regeneration experts joined a range of companies and organisations at the Environmental Technologies/ International Clean Up exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham in May. The event provided a good opportunity to inform industry visitors about the breadth of our research in this field and to show our extensive capabilities in the land regeneration and urban greening sectors.





In early July, FR collaborated with Edinburgh and Sheffield Universities to present a display on 'The Breathing Forest' at the Royal Society of Arts Summer Science Exhibition in London. The presentation proved very popular with visitors, and focused on the impact of forest carbon cycles on climate change models. Displays at the summer exhibition are awarded by competition so it reflects well on FR that we have been successful in the past few years — we will have a display again in 2007.

During the year, many members of staff attended International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) meetings and other international events, representing a range of FR's expertise, advice and collaboration. In July, IUFRO held a seed physiology and technology research conference in Canada, where FR's Shelagh McCartan presented a well-received paper on 'Seed fill determination in juniper'. July also saw the inaugural meeting of a new working party on Alien Invasive Species and International Trade in Poland. Supported by IUFRO, and coordinated by Forest Research's

*Clockwise from left: Tony Cooper, Paul Hill-Tout, Wilma Harper, Jim Lynch, Calum MacDonald and Olutayo Adebowale*



Hugh Evans, the group aims to establish new measures to help reduce the spread of pests, diseases and pathogens.

In autumn, Alice Holt hosted a visit by two new FC Commissioners, Olutayo Adebowale and Calum MacDonald. Also attending were Commissioners Gareth Wardell and Tony Cooper, as well as Ian Forshaw

(FC Wales Chief Executive), Wilma Harper (FC Head of Corporate and Forestry Services), and Paul Hill-Tout (Director FC England).

The biennial International Forest Machinery exhibition organised by the Association of Professional Foresters (APF) took place in Warwickshire in September. Responding to the recent interest in woodfuel, the FC's Director General, Tim Rollinson, launched several new, key sources of information on using woodfuel as a sustainable, low-carbon source of energy and highlighted the prominent role of the Biomass Energy Centre. Forest Research supported these announcements by giving presentations outlining the latest work on woodfuel and providing information and advice for visitors.

FR hosted an international workshop on 'Forest storm risk management in the North Sea region' in Inverness as part of the STORMRISK project. The event was hosted by Mark Broadmeadow, Chris Quine, Barry Gardiner, Juan Suarez, Axel Wellpott and Bruce Nicoll. Forest managers and researchers from Sweden, Germany, Denmark, UK and Canada attended.

A key event for climate change was November's Wilton Park conference on 'Forestry: a Sectoral Response to Climate Change'. The international conference was jointly supported by Forest Research, the OECD and the Forestry Commission, and was attended by the Rt. Hon. Ian Pearson MP, the Rt. Hon. Lord Clark of Windermere, representatives of national forest services, and senior scientists and policy advisors from 19 countries. The event also saw the launch of Alice Holt Forest as an active 'Research Forest', opening it up to other scientific

and research organisations, along with access to over 50 years' environmental data. The conference was FR Chief Executive Jim Lynch's last event as Co-ordinator of the OECD Biological Resource Management, after 17 years' commitment.

Four scientists from the Chilean Institute of Forest Research (INFOR) spent six days at our Northern Research Station near Edinburgh last autumn to learn about FR's work on tree establishment under difficult weather conditions. Hosted by Bill Mason, Alan Harrison and Esther Ker, the visit offered an opportunity to share knowledge. Bill Raynor returned the visit to Chile to present a paper on 'Fifty years of research on establishing and growing trees in wind-exposed deforested areas of northern Scotland' at an IUFRO-organised conference.

Alice Holt hosted a visit by a group of senior Chinese government officials in early December. The delegates were keen to learn about the FC's forestry activities and FR's current research programmes, particularly since some of the guests were working towards setting the Chinese Forest Certification Standard. Another guest was New Zealand forest consultant Ian Barton, who met with Colin Edwards and Bill Mason to discuss the benefits of greater use of continuous cover forestry.

Matt Wilkinson, Danni Sinnett and Cécile de Munck represented FR at the Environment Agency's annual conference on 'Environmental Futures'. The event was an ideal opportunity to showcase FR's varied activities across many aspects of the environment and reach some of our newer audiences.



Darren Moseley participated at an FC Scotland seminar focusing on development and woodland biodiversity, as part of the Scottish Executive's Planning Development Programme. Darren explained how woodland data can be used to protect and enhance biodiversity. The event aimed to help unitary authority planning departments recognise the potential effects of development on woodland biodiversity and find ways to reduce this impact.

Jim Lynch attended an OECD meeting on bioenergy in Sweden this January and chaired the scientific sessions. The event included policy makers and scientists from 15 countries, with discussions on the need to establish a global carbon economy to mitigate climate change.



### National links

The national map to the left shows FR's links with an increasingly wide range of UK universities and associated scientific organisations.

Many of our programmes, individual and collaborative, are funded by other government agencies, UK research councils and commercial organisations; these include Defra, Dti, NERC, SNH, Natural England and the Environment Agency. We also collaborate with a wide range of universities countrywide, including: Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Napier, Stirling, Lancaster, Central Lancashire (Penrith), York, Sheffield, Leeds, Bangor, Cardiff, Cranfield, Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter, Bath, Bristol, Portsmouth, Bournemouth, Reading, Surrey, Southampton, Sussex and London universities.



## International links

The international map above shows our links worldwide. In addition to our extensive links across Europe, our wider global links are particularly strong with New Zealand, the US, Canada and China.

FR has active collaborative links with all European member state countries, including:

- INRA, France
- Brussels Free University, Belgium
- Plant Protection Service, The Netherlands
- PRI, The Netherlands
- BBA, Germany
- FVA, Germany
- INIA, Portugal
- University of Évora, Portugal
- EFN, Portugal
- Department of Forest Protection, Austria
- BOKU, Austria
- CSIC in Spain
- IMEDEA, Spain
- JRC in Italy
- METLA in Finland
- SLU, Sweden

Further across the globe we are working with:

- USDA in several areas of the US
- SCION in Rotorua, New Zealand
- Canadian Forest Service, e.g. Victoria, British Columbia
- Forest University Beijing, China
- Madeira National Park, Madeira
- INFOR, Chile
- Liaoning Institute of Forest Management, China
- Kerala Forest Research Institute, India