

Forest Research

FR EYE

September 2006



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the September issue of *FR Eye*. This month's issue includes news of recent and upcoming events in the forestry calendar as well as details on some of Forest Research's current projects.

Many thanks to those readers who gave feedback on our launch issue - as always, all comments are welcome. If you missed the first issue, you can still find it from our archive at: 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:

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BOOTSTOCK ANNUAL PARTY

The annual Bootstock party will soon be upon us once again and this year's event promises to be a fun-packed day out for all the family. The festivities will take place from 1pm on Saturday, 9 September at the East Grange Loft near Forres, and will include live music, good food, free camping, a raffle, auction and a licensed bar. Tickets are priced at £10 and can be obtained from the contact details below — advance booking is advisable.

The event is run by the Bootstock Association, a registered Scottish Charity that works to help create educational opportunities for disadvantaged children in Nepal. The association was set up in 2004 by Hugh Mackay and colleagues at TSU Newton Field Station and is supported by many Forestry Commission staff.



So come along and have some fun for a good cause!

For further information, call 01343 543165 or email bootstock@hotmail.co.uk

DOES CATTLE GRAZING IMPROVE BLACK GROUSE HABITAT?

The Black Grouse population of Argyll and Bute has dropped drastically over recent years, raising fears for its survival. Forest Research has recently become involved in a project to see whether grazing cattle can help improve Black Grouse habitats to boost their numbers.

The birds live around forest edges and in open habitat areas in and around forests. To halt their decline and assist recovery, open areas of local FC Scotland forests are managed in a grouse-friendly manner, which involves flailing patches of heather on moorland and hill areas. This breaks up the vegetation, making it easier for Black Grouse chicks to forage for caterpillars and other insects that make up their diet in their first few weeks. This method is found to help but is time consuming, expensive and only improves the habitat temporarily – a more sustainable method is needed.

Ross Preston, of West Argyll Forest District, approached Forest Research with a request for technical help with a possible solution. He suggested that grazing cattle would trample through the vegetation, opening it up in the same way as flailing. To test his theory, he needed scientific expertise and help to accurately monitor the trial. Our team visited RSPB's Geltsdale Reserve to see similar management there and were impressed with the results. So, with the help of local farmer Ruaridh Mackay, we set up a trial of cattle grazing on hill and moorland enclaves in Minard Forest.

Steg McBirnie and Fraser McBirnie of FR's Newton Field Station assessed the starting condition of the vegetation and, thanks to a funding partnership between FR and Scottish Natural Heritage, will make regular checks over the next four years to monitor the effects of the grazing. They will be comparing cattle-grazed ground with ungrazed vegetation in fenced enclosures, as well as monitoring insect numbers during the chick-rearing season each June. We hope that the cattle grazing will benefit Black Grouse as well as other wildlife.

Russell Anderson and Liz Poulson



ROYAL WELSH SHOW REPORT

This year's Royal Welsh Show proved a great success, with considerable interest in Forest Research's presentations and recent publications.

Chris Jones (Research Liaison Officer for Wales) manned FR's display, alongside Forestry Commission Wales colleagues. Visitors included land owners, foresters and contractors, as well as guests from environmental and agricultural sectors. There was a clear demand for practical forestry information, with over 200 Information Notes and Practice Notes distributed during the four-day show.

Presentations by FR authors proved popular, attracting around 60 people and resulting in some useful discussions about the two books:

- ▶ *Forest Mensuration: a handbook for practitioners* by Robert Matthews and Ewan Mackie
- ▶ *FC Technical Guide: Forest fencing* by Roger Trout

There was also a popular display about *Hylobius* (including live beetles and damaged trees). This was the first public presentation of the new biological control service being provided by Forest Research. For further information on this service, see www.forestresearch.gov.uk/nematodes

Andy Hall and Ian Tubby followed their presentation with a discussion on the development of the new Biomass Energy Centre with an invited audience of around 40 interested people from Welsh organisations.

Says Chris: "It was a successful event that allowed us to get face-to-face with many people who need forestry information, raising our profile in Wales and helping us to demonstrate the wide range of work that we're involved in."

SUMMER SCIENCE EXHIBITION

In early July, Forest Research's Sam Evans and Susannah Kable went along to the Summer Science Exhibition in London, hosted by the Royal Society. The event is held each summer to showcase the latest cutting-edge science and technology over a wide range of subjects.

Forest Research joined Edinburgh and Sheffield Universities to present a display on 'The Breathing Forest', which discussed the impact of forest carbon cycles on climate change models.

As in past years, the event proved very popular, with many visitors to the FR stand interested in how trees and forests might affect the changing climate. For further details of current research on this subject, visit: **www.forestresearch.gov.uk/carbon**

ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

A new working group, coordinated by Forest Research's Hugh Evans, is focusing on the growing international spread of invasive organisms — such as fungi, insects, nematodes and plants — through worldwide trade. Wood packaging can transport bark and wood-boring beetles to new locations, enabling them to relocate much further than they might naturally travel. The group aims to find ways to address these concerns and offer new measures to help reduce the spread of pests, diseases and pathogens.



As a new working party on Alien Invasive Species and International Trade, the group was set up by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), a non-governmental international network of forest scientists that has members from over 110 countries worldwide.

First meeting

The group's first meeting took place in July in Jedlnia, Poland, and included discussions on a range of topics, and demonstration visits to local forest and nursery sites. The local organisers, Tomeck Oszako and his colleagues, did an excellent job that contributed significantly to the success of the meeting.

In addition to chairing the event, Hugh presented a paper on '*ISPM15 treatments and residual bark: how much bark matters in relation to founder populations of bark and wood boring beetles?*'

The working party is keen to establish links with other related IUFRO working parties and to stimulate debate and exchange of views on all aspects relating to controlling the spread of invasive species.

For further information, visit: www.forestresearch.gov.uk/iufroinvasives

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Forest Research Annual Report and Accounts 2005–2006

July 2006, 100 pages (£20.60)

This Report describes the work of Forest Research during the period April 2005 to March 2006 and presents the audited accounts for the financial year.

Copies are available from The Stationery Office
(www.tsoshop.co.uk)

or a pdf version is available to download from
www.forestresearch.gov.uk/annualreports



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

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/publications

EVENTS

Full details of FR's events are available from the FR website: www.forestresearch.gov.uk/events

20 September 2006: *'Pests and diseases of amenity trees'*, Gloucestershire
Workshop to raise awareness of pests and diseases affecting amenity trees.
Organised by the International Society of Arboriculture and Forest Research
www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6NZBXN

21–23 September 2006: *'APF International Forest machinery Exhibition 2006'*, Warwickshire
Exhibition and display of forestry, woodland, arboriculture, utilities and estate management
machinery, equipment, supplies and services.
www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6NZHBF

17 October 2006: *'Diseases and decay of trees — implications for hazard assessment'*,
Farnham, Surrey
Workshop introducing the processes of disease and decay in trees, and covering the basic
principles of investigation and diagnosis.
www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6RCBNT

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If you experience any poor service, please contact Mark Goodall mark.goodall@forestry.gsi.gov.uk, providing full details, i.e. a copy of the order form, outline of the problem and response of Two-Ten staff to your complaint.