

FR Eye

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“Gosh, I just don’t know where this year has gone...” seems to be the single most common phrase at the moment. And I’m betting it’s not the first year we’ve all said it. Our perception of time certainly changes as we get older — telling a child that they’ll get a coveted new toy in a month will bring on wails of agonised impatience and a protruding lower lip; telling an adult their report deadline is in a month will bring on...wails of panic and a mad scramble to get it done in time! This difference in perception is reported to hinge on the constant newness of things for children, as continual bombardment of new information is thought to make time seem to pass more slowly. As adults, we’ve experienced it all before so our brains are less likely to linger on details that we’ve seen repeatedly — which might be why we sometimes find ourselves having no memory of the drive home.

Nonetheless, however you perceive it, we’re again surrounded by the beauty of autumn. It’s the perfect time of year to get out for a brisk, windswept walk in the woods — good for both body and mind. And, if you feel you want to slow down the approach of the festive season, make sure you stop to smell the roses (while they last)...

This issue

Inside, you’ll find details of a study into the genetic diversity of wood crickets on the Isle of Wight, details of how companies in the US can pay for ecosystem services to balance the impact of development, as well as a farewell from Professor Jim Lynch OBE, FR’s Chief Executive. And a whole lot more...

If you’ve missed any previous issues, they can be accessed via our archive at: www.forestresearch.gov.uk/freye

To contact the editorial team or request an email notification of future issues as they go live, write to us at: newsletter@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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FAREWELL TO JIM LYNCH

As you all know, I will be stepping down as Chief Executive on 30 September. I have enjoyed working with you all and thank you for all the support you have given me. We have a robust Development Strategy that has been widely acclaimed. I hope you will all continue to work towards its implementation. Change is never easy, but I've always known that the strength of FR is the expertise of its staff and I urge you to work together as a team to push forward the plans for FR's future.

Personally, I will be making the most of my freedom to take on challenges and activities on the commercial and academic fronts that excite me. Already I have accepted the Chairmanship of a new company dealing with global land restoration. I will continue to help the Forestry Commission as International Research Ambassador and will continue to serve on the Board of the European Forestry Institute. Several of the other roles I am considering will mean I continue to work on topics in which FR is a key player, so I look forward to working with FR staff in a variety of forums in the future.

Professor Jim Lynch OBE



FOREST NETWORK MONITORS ECOSYSTEM CHANGES

France's network of long-term forest monitoring plots, RENECOFOR, is now over 15 years old, and this summer it hosted a conference in Beaune, France, to discuss '*15 years of forest ecosystem monitoring: results, knowledge acquired and future perspectives*'.

Forest Research's Nadia Barsoum says: "The main purpose of the network is to detect long-term changes in a wide variety of forest ecosystems and to determine what lies behind such changes. This is important for a variety of reasons – not least the effect of climate extremes on the phenology* of trees."

The topics discussed included trends in atmospheric pollution and related ozone damage to trees, as well as forest soil acidification and eutrophication impacting rates of growth, decay and nutrient availability. Other talks focused on ongoing research into the calculation and modelling of the hydrological and nutritional balance of forests.

RENECOFOR has a network of 102 long-term intensively monitored forest plots, each of about 2 hectares, that will be monitored for at least 30 years.

More detail on the UK's own long-term forest monitoring network will be in the next issue of *FR News*.

Nadia also attended the 23rd Task Force Meeting of the International Co-operative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests (ICP Forests) in Zvolen, Slovakia, where EU funding for monitoring under Life+ was explored.

**Phenology: the timing of recurring natural events in their annual cycle (e.g. bud burst, autumn leaf fall), especially in relation to climatic triggers – see www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-5ZYFPW*

LORD SELBORNE COMES TO ALICE HOLT

As near neighbours, Professors Jim Lynch and Peter Freer-Smith were happy to welcome Lord John Selborne to Forest Research at Alice Holt in September. Lord Selborne chairs the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and took the opportunity to discuss the Forestry Commission's tree collections with Richard Jinks.

He also met with Joan Webber and Sandra Denman to discuss some of the disease epidemics currently attacking UK woodlands, plantations, and urban as well as garden trees, and was shown horse chestnut trees affected by bleeding canker at Alice Holt Forest. During his visit he also met with Professor Jeff Burley of C-Questor.



Left to right: Professor Peter Freer-Smith; Lord John Selborne; Professor Jim Lynch and Professor Jeff Burley

LANDSCAPE GENETICS PROJECT ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

To improve our understanding of the relationship between landscapes and woodland species, Forest Research is undertaking a genetics project on the Isle of Wight. Landscape genetics is an exciting new discipline that has emerged from advances in molecular genetics and improvements in methods of analysing genetic data spatially. Studies in this field will quantify migration rates for selected species and provide information on the interaction between landscape features and the way different populations of a species evolve.

The project on the Isle of Wight is exploring the distribution of genetic diversity in populations of wood crickets (*Nemobius sylvestris*), a woodland specialist species. To determine the genetic variation within and between the wood cricket populations, a set of DNA markers has been developed and crickets have been collected from both the island and the mainland during the summer. It is hoped that this work will explain the patterns of genetic diversity and determine which landscape features may promote or hinder the transfer of genes from one population to another.

For more information on this project, contact **Tytti Vanhala**, **Joan Cottrell**, **Kevin Watts** or **Sallie Bailey**.

Kevin Watts



INVESTIGATING PAYMENTS FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES: EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTIONS IN THE US

The degradation of ecosystems is caused in part by the lack of market value for their benefits, such as biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration. Schemes whereby landowners are paid to provide these benefits ('payments for ecosystem services') provide incentives to conserve such ecosystems. At present, there is relatively little experience of these schemes in the UK, so earlier this year Forest Research's Gregory Valatin went to America with Jenna Coull from the Forestry Commission to find out more about American experiences and perceptions of such systems.

Wetland and conservation banking

In the US, developers are able to meet requirements to compensate for unavoidable impacts to wetlands and endangered species habitats by paying other organisations ('bankers') to establish wetlands or habitats elsewhere. In this way, the developers transfer their legal liability and speed up the process of obtaining a permit. The new wetlands and habitats ('banks') are large and easy to monitor, and are generally considered of greater ecological value than on-site projects.

Carbon trading

The US has developed the largest voluntary carbon markets in the world, with the government facilitating provision of offsets by the forestry sector, and the US Forest Service obtaining limited private sector funding for forestry offset projects. Mandatory emissions trading initiatives are under development at state and regional levels, with federal restrictions expected within the next couple of years. The inclusion of forestry offsets is considered important in allowing tighter emissions reduction targets to be set.

Conclusions

Gregory Valatin, FR's senior economist says: "In the US, payments for ecosystem services are considered to be an important way to obtain private sector funding for nature conservation and offsetting environmental impacts. However, issues such as assessing and valuing ecosystem services, and designing schemes to cover a multiplicity of benefits, remain largely unresolved."

For further information contact [Gregory Valatin](#).



LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY WORLD CONGRESS

The International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE) celebrated its 25th birthday this July at the 7th World Congress event in Wageningen, the Netherlands. FR's Amy Eycott, Darren Moseley and Kevin Watts participated, giving presentations on climate change and habitat fragmentation, modelling techniques for reducing fragmentation, and applying forest habitat networks to target native woodland expansion.



*Motorway bank
cinema in Holland*

The conference covered a diverse range of topics, from small to large scales, wilderness to urban areas, and theory to practice. Those attending also had the opportunity to see some of the Netherlands' famous large-scale ecological restoration projects, such as 'green bridges' over motorways and the demolition of industrial units that were blocking large herbivore movement.

Amy Eycott

GROWING LINKS WITH SCION RESEARCH 'DOWN UNDER'

Following the agreement last year of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Forest Research and Scion Research in New Zealand, Dr Darren Kriticos left his native Canberra to visit FR's Tree Health researchers at Alice Holt Lodge in Surrey.

During 2006, the MOU led to an initial exchange of scientists between the two organisations on short-term fellowships funded by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The exchanges helped to strengthen FR's ties with research institutes in New Zealand and Australia that have a common interest in temperate plantation forestry.

Darren's recent exchange continues the growing links between the two institutes and provided an opportunity to discuss collaboration on future research projects.

Darren is particularly interested in biosecurity, contingency planning and the impacts of climate change. During his visit, he had discussions with a number of FR's researchers who were particularly interested in his expertise in spatial ecology and the use of CLIMEX, a commercial climate-matching software programme that predicts the distribution of animals and plants based on their environmental requirements. Darren rounded off his stay by giving an interesting and well-attended seminar on CLIMEX and climate change at Alice Holt.

David Wainhouse



WHAT'S NEW ON THE FR WEBSITE



RESEARCH

Habitats and Rare Priority Protected Species (HaRPPS)

Developing a combined information retrieval system and decision support tool to provide information and guidance for managing habitats and rare, priority, and protected species of forests and woodlands in Britain.

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/harpps

Cydcoed evaluation programme

Summative evaluation of Cydcoed Phase I and II programmes that help community groups in Wales make use of woodland for community development.

www.forestresearch.gov.uk//fr/infd-76kc7h

The Great Storm of October 1987

Summary of the research carried out into the impact of the storm and the effects on the regeneration of broadleaved and conifer woods.

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infd-76pden

'Offenders and Nature' schemes

Examining schemes that involve offenders working as volunteers on nature conservation and woodland sites.

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/offendersandnature

NEW PUBLICATIONS

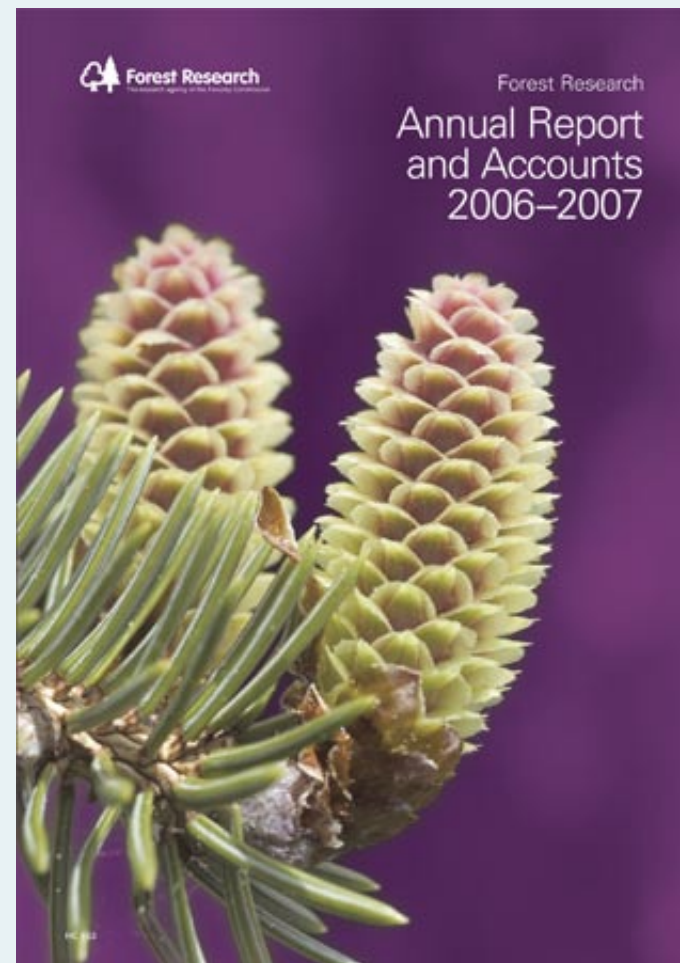
Forest Research Annual Report and Accounts 2006–2007

July 2007, 112 pages (£18.00)

This Report describes the work of Forest Research during the period April 2006 to March 2007 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



Cont.

NEW PUBLICATIONS (CONT.)

Information Notes

The role of forest genetic resources in helping British forests respond to climate change

Jason Hubert and Joan Cottrell, June 2007 (FCIN086)

Resistance of young conifers to feeding damage by pine weevil

David Wainhouse and Sara Brough, August 2007 (FCIN087)

Ten years of intensive monitoring in British forests

E Vanguelova, N Barsoum, S Benham, M Broadmeadow, A Moffat, T Nisbet, and R Pitman, August 2007 (FCIN088)

Practice Guide

Raising trees and shrubs from seed

Peter Gosling, September 2007 (FCPG018)

Practice Note

Controlling grey squirrel damage to woodlands

Brenda Mayle, Mark Ferryman and Harry Pepper, August 2007 (FCPN4 Revised)



Cont.

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

11 October

Assessing timber for the wood processing industry

Workshop on timber assessment methods organised by Forest Research and James Jones & Sons Limited.

Dunkeld Hilton House Hotel, Dunkeld, 9.30–16.00

11-12 October

Reconnecting people and outdoor spaces

First national conference of its kind on creating environments and outdoor spaces that promote positive health and well-being, organised by Health Scotland and Forestry Commission Scotland.

Crutherland House Hotel, East Kilbride

25 October

Forest Research annual research update 2007

Update on selected research being performed by Forest Research, with a focus on climate change. Organised by Forest Research, Forestry Commission Scotland, the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) and the Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) Ltd.

Drumossie Hotel, Inverness, 9.30–15.50

Site selection for harvesting brash

Interest is growing in harvesting brash residues following timber extraction to supply the biofuel market. This requires careful planning, since the removal of brash poses a number of hazards to the forest environment that can threaten sustainable forest management. Tom Nisbet, of FR's Environmental and Human Sciences Division, has produced a protocol to guide the selection of suitable sites. The protocol classifies soil types according to the risk of ground damage, soil infertility and acidification, and describes best practice measures to control the risks on appropriate sites.

The protocol is available on the [FR website](#).