

Science and Business News February 2005



Scottish Crossbill

Alice Broome, of Forest Research's Ecology Division, attended the sixth meeting of the Scottish Crossbill Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group, held at the RSPB Abernethy Reserve in Speyside in January. The Steering Group is led by the RSPB and has representatives from Forest Research, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and Scottish Natural Heritage. Conservation action is considered necessary for the Scottish crossbill as it is thought to be Britain's only endemic bird. The current efforts of the Steering Group are focused on gaining basic information on the distribution and population size of the species through a national survey, and understanding impacts of forest management by relating forest composition and cone production to the bird's habitat selection.

Forest Research to Evaluate Sport England projects

Forestry Commission England has been successful in bidding to Sport England for projects, under the umbrella of "Active England" at Bedgebury (Kent) and Haldon (Devon). Under these projects "sports hubs" will be developed in a forest setting, to encourage those who are not already enthusiastic sports people to benefit from sporting activity in a healthy environment. The consultants Hall-Aitken have been engaged by Sport England to evaluate Active England. Forest Research's Social Research Group will evaluate the forestry projects on behalf of Forest Enterprise.

Next steps for LIDAR in Dean project

Earlier this month, Forest Research hosted a workshop to discuss the results of an airborne LiDAR survey of the Forest of Dean. FC and FR are collaborating with English Heritage in order to test the potential to use LiDAR surveys for archaeological prospection. The pilot survey used a part of the Forest of Dean where various archaeological surveys have already occurred, which provided a good test site. Whilst there remain some limitations to the method, archaeologists from the Gloucester County Archaeological Service and staff from English Heritage are very excited by the survey results. A specification is now being developed to survey the rest of the Forest of Dean. A paper on this work has been submitted to the archaeological journal *Antiquity*. Further information is available from Peter Crow in Environmental & Human Science Division.

New study investigating the role of floodplain forestry at Ripon

Forest Research is taking forward FC-funded floodplain forestry research by collaborating with Defra, the Environment Agency and English Nature in a new project near Ripon. *The Ripon (Laver-Skell) Multi-Objective Project* seeks to develop effective multi-functional approaches to flood risk management at the catchment scale. As part of the project, FR's Tom Nisbet and Huw Thomas (EHSD) have won Defra funding to help evaluate three sites on the River Laver as potential locations for floodplain woodland. The funding will be used to install instrumentation and undertake survey work with which to model the hydraulic impact of establishing floodplain woodland at these locations.

National Populetum at Alice Holt

Forest Research has an important genetic collection of poplar species and cultivars at Alice Holt, which is registered as the national collection. Rothamsted Research, which holds the national willow collection, visited Forest Research in January, to discuss opportunities to develop more tangible links between the collections. Forest Research has supplied Rothamsted with flowering poplar shoots from the National Populetum for genetic and cross-fertilisation studies.

Forthcoming Events

Full details of FR's events are available on FR's Internet site:
www.forestresearch.gov.uk/events

10 March, NRS – Annual FTA/ICF Research Update sponsored by FC Scotland

Topics include the following:

- Improving the timber quality of Sitka spruce through tree breeding - the Kershope study. Steve Lee and Barry Gardiner.
- Forest habitat networks - Duncan Ray
- Climate change and Scottish forests - Mark Broadmeadow.

- The gales of January 2005 - Bruce Nicoll.
 - The dieback of birch in new native woodlands - Sarah Green.
 - Reduced Hylobius damage with Continuous Cover Forestry? - Roger Moore.
- <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-69AFFV>

5-8 April, IUFRO Conference, 'Sustainable Forestry – Theory and Practice', University of Edinburgh.

This conference aims to demonstrate how scientific knowledge has evolved to address challenges posed by sustainable forestry. FR's Duncan Ray is organising the conference.

<http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-64dh2h>

21-22 April, Climate change in the Scottish uplands, Perth

One in a series of trans-disciplinary seminars on sustaining mountain landscapes: conflict and compromise in British uplands. <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-698E77>

22 April, 13:30 NRS Staff Seminar

Fine root dynamics and C sequestration. Douglas Godbold, School of Agricultural and Forest Sciences, University of Wales, Bangor. www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-64TF45

31 May to 3 June, ForestSAT 2005, Sweden

Conference about the operational tools in forestry using remote sensing techniques.

<http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/website/forestresearch.nsf/ByUnique/HCOU-4Z2KQ6>

14–15 June, Trees in a Changing Climate, Surrey

A conference to bring home the implications of climate change to all those who plant trees.

<http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-64GGZJ>

New Publications

Forest Research, 2004. *A sort of magical place: people's experiences of woodlands in northwest and southeast England*. Liz O'Brien. 64 pages. Price £10, copies available from Jenny Claridge, Forest Research, Alice Holt Lodge, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4LH, Tel: 01420 526239. Email: jenny.claridge@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or liz.obrien@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

FCIN064 *'Proving it!' Evidence Gathering for Forest Managers*. February 2005. S Martin and E O'Brien, Forest Research. Available early March.

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