

Science and Business News June 2005

'Trees in a changing climate' conference

Widespread media coverage was given to the 'Trees in a Changing Climate' conference held at Surrey University earlier this month. The conference, which was jointly organised by the Royal Horticultural Society, Forest Research, the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) and Notcutts, was opened by Elliot Morley, MP, Minister of State for Environment and Agri-Environment. Sir Crispin Tickell gave the guest address.

FR's Mark Broadmeadow delivered a thought-provoking presentation which challenged the audience to imagine a number of potential future scenarios. FR colleague Clive Brasier followed this with a presentation which explored the need for more effective controls to prevent the arrival of invasive pathogens under climate change. Other speakers were from English Nature, the Oxford Forestry Institute, the National Trust, the University of Bordeaux and the Woodland Trust.



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From left to right: Mark Broadmeadow (Forest Research), Mike Calnan (National Trust), Jeff Burley (Oxford Forestry Institute), Richard Smithers (The Woodland Trust).

Small cow-wheat species recovery project

FR has been awarded a grant from the Scottish Executive's Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme, to take forward recovery work on small cow-wheat (*Melampyrum sylvaticum*). This plant is an annual, found in broadleaved, humid, ravine-type woodlands, where it is a partial parasite on a wide range of plants. Once widespread in Britain and Ireland (over 200 sites) it is now restricted to only twenty two sites, nineteen of which are in Scotland. It is a UKBAP Priority species and a priority for Scotland.

"It's tremendous to be able to take forward research in this area, over the last couple of years knowledge and expertise has been developing and a network of people working on this species has become established. This grant will allow the work to continue", noted Alice Broome, who is responsible for the species recovery work within FR. To aid the species recovery, the project aims to establish five 'replacement' sites within *M. sylvaticum*'s core range and to enhance genetic diversity by taking seeds from at least three donor populations in Scotland.

This work will be delivered by the *Melampyrum sylvaticum* UK SAP National Steering Group, which is comprised of representatives from the University of Aberdeen, Forest Research, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Further information on the project is available at

<http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6ACEMK>

FR scopes the potential for charcoal in remediation

FR has secured funding from University of Surrey's Technology Fund to explore the potential of charcoal in soil and groundwater remediation. FR's Urban Greening and Land Restoration team is collaborating with Frans de Leij at the University of Surrey.

WIAT initiative?

One of FC Scotland's largest recent initiatives is a renewed focus on woodlands in and around towns. Over the next three years £1 million p.a. will be made available through the Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) Challenge Fund. This will enable woodland owners in Scotland to contribute to the regeneration of the urban environment, and to improve the quality of life for people living and working in urban areas, by bringing urban



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woodlands into sustainable management. This initiative is obviously of particular importance to FC Scotland's recently established Central Scotland Conservancy, which is interested in establishing baseline data from which to monitor the impact of the challenge fund. Max Hislop from Forest Research's social research group has been collaborating with Chris Brown, Graham Bull and Shona Cameron in FR's Biometrics Division, to supply datasets which will enable the Central Scotland Conservancy to establish appropriate baseline data for the initiative. "This is a great opportunity for our two research groups to work together and understand how best to handle and analyse attitudinal and social data against more conventional physical data", noted Max. Later phases of the initiative are expected to involve FR further, both in the gathering of social data and in its subsequent GIS analysis. Further details of the WIAT initiative are available from FC Scotland's internet site at <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6azk2t>

Chopwell Wood Health pilot scheme extended

FC England has secured funding from two National Health Primary Care Trusts, which will enable an extension to the Chopwell Wood Health Pilot Project until April 2006. The project enables patients referred by Gateshead General Practitioners to get involved in activities such as cycling, walking, Tai Ch'i and conservation projects at Chopwell Wood. It also facilitates visits by Derwentside schools to Chopwell Wood to participate in outdoor activities. Liz O'Brien (EHSD) is representing FR on the project steering committee and is managing the evaluation of the project, which is being undertaken by Northumbria University Primary Care Development Centre.

FR represents UK at ICP Forests meeting

Forest Research's Nadia Barsoum represented the UK at the 21st Task Force meeting of International Co-operative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests. The working meeting discussed European monitoring plans and programmes and the potential for UK involvement in European ozone monitoring and tree health research.

World Renewable Energy Congress

Robert Matthews, Ian Tubby and Ewan Mackie (of FR's Biometrics Division) attended the World Renewable Energy Congress in Aberdeen in May. Robert presented a paper on FR's "BSORT" model, which produces estimates of standing biomass for woodlands in the UK. The 300 delegates participated in presentations and discussions covering a large range of renewables including: biomass, fuel cells, solar, tide and marine energy and wind power. The congress was held in tandem with the All-Energy exhibition, where businesses selling small-scale biomass boilers and organisations such as the Department for Trade and Industry were exhibiting. The congress also saw the launch of an important report commissioned by the Scottish Executive on the potential of biomass (woodfuel) technology in Scotland.

Norwegians genotype FR's larch collection

The Norwegian Forest Research Institute has placed a contract with FR to supply DNA samples from a collection of eighteenth century larches, situated at Markham Oak Nursery, Alice Holt. This is a unique collection of grafted plants, established in the early 1960s, from specimens from every source known, or believed, to have been planted before 1800 in the UK. Nearly all the trees concerned are from Scotland and may well include the progenitors of the "Scottish Larch". NFRI plans to carry out DNA genotyping of the FR collection in conjunction with Norway's introduced larch. It hopes to infer whether Scotland was the historical source for larch in Norway. FR will be collecting needle samples from which DNA will be extracted by Ecology Division staff.

FR assists Macaulay Institute's landscape research week at Huntly

FR's Max Hislop (EHSD), Chris Quine (Ecology) and FC Scotland's Nicholas Shepherd were involved in the landscape research week run by the Macaulay Institute in June. The event sought to gain an insight into the opinions of local residents on options for future landscapes and to improve methods of modelling such landscapes. Volunteers were able to see, use and react to the very latest technology for exploring different landscape options. It was the first time that a mobile, virtual reality theatre had been put to use to involve the wider community in this way and the event proved the practicality of this approach.

One of the three research projects showcased at the event was the 'Woodland Change' project, in which FR collaborates with



Macaulay's David Miller and the Virtual Landscape Theatre

The Macaulay Institute, as part of the EU VISULANDS project. Brice Huet (a French student working in FR's Ecology Division) created images to visualise the planting and growth of Clashindarroch forest from 1900 to the present day and beyond. Viewers' responses to the visualisations were captured in a questionnaire developed by Max and Nicholas. Chris was on hand to answer questions about the overall process and about the VISULANDS project, which has a particular focus on the Clashindarroch area. For more information about VisuLands <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/visulands>

Putting Ponticum to Bed(dgelert)!

More than 60 delegates from Scotland, England, Wales, Eire and Turkey met in Beddgelert, North Wales in May, to discuss their experiences in the control and management of *Rhododendron ponticum*. The workshop was organised by the National Trust for Wales and supported by European Union, Forest Research, Wild Resources and the University of Bangor. The workshop brought together academics and practitioners with the aim of developing a *R. ponticum* control network to facilitate exchange of information and future action plans in the countries involved. There was much discussion about the level of support afforded by current EU agricultural policy and intervention mechanisms for *R. ponticum* control measures, particularly from the perspective of small woodland owners and farmers. FR's Colin Edwards presented two papers and chaired a workshop session on developing a strategic survey and planning methodology. Full details of the event, including copies of a range of presentations given, is available from FR's internet site <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6D5HKK>.

Forthcoming Events

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

13 September, Timber research update, Roslin

Updating the forest and timber processing industry on the latest research findings.
<http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6C3H86>

14-16 September, Atlantic Oakwoods Symposium, Oban

Collating current knowledge with a view to identifying the need for further research and the role of these woods in conservation planning. <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6A5HK4>

New Publications

Forest Research Corporate Plan 2005-2008 (available on-line only).
Web site <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-5WBKKS>

Forest Research 2005. *Consultation and community involvement in forest planning. Research in Cranborne Chase and North Dorset*. Paul Tabbush, Social Research Group. 32 pages. Price £6. To be distributed shortly.

FCIN069. *Climate Change and British Woodland*. June 2005. Mark Broadmeadow and Duncan Ray.

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