



Forest Research Newsletter

September 2002

Progress with the Forestry Devolution Review and Quinquennial Review of Forest Research

Many of us have been on holiday in August; I hope that everyone has enjoyed a well-deserved break and that you return feeling refreshed and perhaps better able to cope with the pressures of work.

By now you will have had the opportunity to read David Bill's 'all staff' email of 20 August, on the outcome of the Forestry Devolution Review (FDR). I feel that the FDR outcome is very positive for the whole Forestry Commission; for us in FR the actions requested build on the clear endorsement of our achievements as reported in Stage 1 of our Quinquennial Review (FRQR). Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales have confirmed that they value the Forestry Commission's role and want the FC to continue as a Government Department. Changes that are required include stronger links with the rural affairs departments in Wales, Scotland and England, and the splitting of Forest Enterprise into three Agencies. These changes aim to achieve greater integration of forestry with other rural policy work and a stronger, clearer connection between management of public forests and the wider policies and strategies of each country.

On research, Forestry Ministers have agreed that they will approve the FC's research programmes and strategy annually, and have asked that our Quinquennial Review should now proceed to its second stage. This is all good news. The FRQR to date has been both comprehensive and positive. It is in everyone's interest for it to be completed now, so that we can take full account of its recommendations, as we respond to the FDR and to our own wish to improve FR's organisation and quality of work. I will keep you informed of the FRQR Steering Group's progress.

I feel confident that over the next few months we will be able to start to respond to both reviews. I very much look forward to this and will need your support. Our own ideas and enthusiasm have been important in defining the way forward. They will continue to be so during completion and implementation. Our energy and innovation will be required to see that we continue to deliver the high quality science, development, surveys and related services in support of the three country forestry strategies.

Peter Freer-Smith

People News

Welcome to:

- David Georghiou who has joined FR as our new Webmaster.
- Danielle Sinnett who is joining ERB as Land Reclamation Research Support Officer.
- Martin MacKinnon who has joined TSU (N), Jack Allen and Stephen Whall who have joined TSU (S) all as Research Workers.
- Hayley Oldale (Personnel and Central Services), Angela Rowston (ERB), Oliver Rendle (ERB), Anthony Lovat (Silv N), Kimberley Daniell (TIB), Karen Osborne (TIB) and Ruaraidh Milne (WEB) who are joining FR on 12 month Sandwich Student placements.

Transfers:

- Lesley Halsall (Stats and Computing) is transferring to Forest Planning to take up the post of Systems Manager.
- Rab Beck (Woodland Surveys) is transferring to Country Services Division to work as Grants and Licences IT Systems Support Manager and GIS Development Officer.

Congratulations to:

- Peter Freer-Smith who has been awarded a DSc by Lancaster University, his alma mater. The degree is awarded for a distinguished record of research and published work, which shows originality and sustained achievement. Evaluation was by two external examiners, who assessed Peter's academic and research contributions in the field of pollutant impacts on forest ecosystems, as published in scientific journals and FC publications.
- Bruce Nicoll (Silv N), on his recent marriage to Krista, best wishes for your future together.

Farewell to:

- Clive Brasier (Pathology) whose career with the FC has spanned 32 years during which he has made an outstanding contribution to our understanding of how tree pathogens behave and evolve. Specialising in researching Dutch Elm Disease and the diseases caused by the *Phytophthora* pathogen, Clive's work has been of immense value to the forests of Britain and the world. We are delighted that Clive has agreed to continue his association with FR as an Emeritus Scientist.
- If you would like to wish Clive farewell in person there is an opportunity to do so on Thursday 5 September, at 3pm in the AH staff restaurant, please contact Carol Lishman for further details.
- Mariagrazia Moschetta (Stats and Computing) who has returned to Italy.
- Helen Tabbener who is leaving TIB at the end of August.
- Katie Jones (ERB), Sandwich Student, who has now left to resume her studies.

Science & Business News

Bog-trotting in Ireland

Russell Anderson (WEB) has begun a consultancy contract for Coillte, advising them on reforestation and restoration of blanket bogs. Coillte is about to launch its first EU LIFE project 'Restoring Active Blanket Bog in Ireland'. The Coillte team invited Russell to visit the project sites to advise on restoration, monitoring and research needs. The main blanket bog areas in the west of Ireland range from Kerry to Donegal and the Slieve Bloom Mountains. All are in, or adjacent to 'Special Areas of Conservation'. The project will face some challenges including the possibility of dense *Molinia* regeneration, as the species responds strongly to the increased nutrient capital resulting from the application of fertiliser during afforestation. Reducing grazing to optimum levels will be required as many of the sites are overgrazed. Russell will report to the project steering group in October.

Project accepted by CL:AIRE

Tony Hutchings (ERB) has had his project 'Development of biological methodology for the assessment of contaminated land for woodland' accepted by CL:AIRE (Contaminated Land: applications in real environments), a public/private partnership which has been set up, in part, to secure funding for its chosen activities.

ESRC sponsorship for SSRB

SSRB has won ESRC sponsorship and will be recruiting a PhD student (CASE) at the University of Gloucester to work on 'Healing damaged landscapes: insiders' and outsiders' participation in land restorations'

New studentship for Entomology

FR has obtained a studentship at Paisley University to study the efficacy and persistence of neem as a potential pesticide against *Hylobius abietis*. This is entirely funded by Paisley University and the supervisors will be Dr Richard Thacker (Paisley) and Stuart Heritage (Ento).

New forum for deer management issues

A public folder has been set up in Outlook so that everyone within FC can post information, or have discussions relating to deer management. The folder's title is FR-Deer Management and it can be found by scrolling down to the foot of the list of Outlook folders, click on the cross by Public Folders – All Public Folders → FR → FR Deer Management. There is a welcome message from Helen Armstrong (WEB) containing instructions on how to post a message. Any comments or expressions of interest should be addressed to helen.armstrong@forestry.gsi.gov





Ecological Site Classification courses

Four ESC courses were successfully completed this field season. A group of foresters, planners and surveyors enjoyed fine early summer weather in the Forest of Dean. Silviculture (N) project leaders undertook ESC training in Glentress Forest and Pratt's Bottom (NRS). A group of National Park land managers, foresters and planners joined FC England woodland officers at Losehill Hall Study Centre in the Peak District National Park for one of the wettest ESC training events ever. The final event this season was at the Ae Training Centre near Dumfries. Training involves basic plant and soil survey techniques and ESC data analysis for forest planning issues including commercial species choice and native woodland management. If you are interested in attending an ESC course for 2003, contact Forestry Training Services at Ae. Courses are open to FC and non-FC personnel. To view photo [click here](#)

Forestry, the new editorial team

There have been some recent changes in the editorial team at the journal *Forestry*. The new team consists of Christine Cahalan (University of Wales, Bangor) book reviews; Catherine Collett (INRA, Champenoux) dealing with special issues, including reporting on international meetings, Gary Kerr (FR) and Helen McKay (FC) who will be dealing with submitted manuscripts. The retiring editors Peter Savill and Howard Wright made the point that manuscripts from FR are valued for their high quality, so please keep sending them in. If you are uncomfortable with the possible scenario under which Helen is your PPD Advisor and *Forestry* Editor, please let us know and one of the other team members will help. For further details, including refereeing policy and instructions for authors please go to www.forestry.oupjournals.org

Changes within Silviculture (N)

Silviculture (N) have reviewed the roles and responsibilities of their personnel. To view a document explaining the details [click here](#)

August

Visits & Conferences

- Chris Quine and Roger Trout (WEB) attended a Steering Group meeting for the Capercaillie LIFE bid. WEB's involvement includes monitoring of deer fences, predator control approaches & habitat change.
- The ForestSAT symposium in Edinburgh, 5 to 9 August, attracted 160 participants from more than 30 countries. It was a rare opportunity for scientists, forest managers, forest practitioners and developers that showed a worldwide review of the latest developments in remote sensing applications in operational forestry. The symposium concluded that there are very good applications, already implemented in other countries, which could be brought into operation in the UK. The next symposium will be in Sweden in 2005.
- FR returned to the Royal Show at Stoneleigh for the first time in several years in July, equipped with the new state-of-the-art FR display boards and the 'Tree Doctor'. We shared a marquee with FC, the West Midlands Conservancy and the Deer Initiative. A total of 4300 visitors passed through the marquee, a great deal of interest was generated especially in the fields of diagnosis of problems in tree health, and the control of squirrel and deer populations.

Forthcoming Events

4 October: **AH** 10.10 in the main conference room. The first in a series of Research Staff Update Seminars, 'Continuous Cover Forestry: bandwagon or opportunity?'

Next Newsletter

Deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is Friday 20 September.

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