
FOREST RESEARCH Newsletter

Issue 1/2003

Planning for the next three years

Over the last month a major task has been the drawing together and completion of our Corporate Plan for the next three years (2003/04 through to 2005/06). A number of staff have helped with this and HoBs have provided input – many thanks. It's an important document; our aspirations for the next three years are described and FR's overall budget and performance indicators for 2003/04 are set out. This year the recommendations of FR's Quinquennial Reviews and of the Forestry Devolution Review are major influences. I have also given careful consideration to the main mechanisms by which we hope to move forward over a successful and exciting three years. The plan goes forward to the Forestry Commissioners on 6 February.

I know many of you have been busy with the equally important business of agreeing targets and programme/project costs for 2003/04 with the FC (PPD), Country Services and FE – Schedule 1s etc. My impression is that this has been going well. FR and programme level planning will come together as we approach and move into 2003/04. We will see the benefits of thorough liaison work and the good relationships that we have developed.

At the end of January interviews were held to select FR's new Chief Executive and I expect that we will know who the successful candidate is very soon.

Peter Freer-Smith, Acting CEO.

People News

Welcome to:

- Dr Sandra Denman who has joined Pathology (AH) as a Project Leader, working primarily on Oak dieback.
- Alexis Achim who has joined Silv N as a Plant Modeller.

Congratulations to:

- Matthew Griffiths who graduated from the University of Leicester in January with an MSc in Geographical Information Systems.
- Lorelie Haydon (TSU S) and Paul Ives (ex TSU S) on their recent, 'secret' marriage, best wishes for your future together.

Farewell to:

- Roger Boswell who retired on 26 January 2003 after almost 33 years with the Commission, all of them spent at Alice Holt. Beginning his career as a Temporary Experimental Officer in the Statistics Branch of the Research Division, he moved through the ranks to Principal Scientific Officer and finally Principal Statistician. During his long career Roger has provided statistical support of an exceptional quality and he has deservedly commanded the respect and gratitude of all the project leaders he worked with. If proof were needed he has co-authored more than 40 publications. In 1992 Roger began to go deaf and started to attend lip-reading classes, his deafness has been progressive. Throughout Roger showed a remarkable, and always remained cheerful, reliable and loyal to customers and colleagues alike.
- Mark Lightfoot who is leaving Stats and Computing.

Secondments:

- Ian Willoughby will be working as Deputy Conservator for the SW England Conservancy of the FC for the next 2 months.

Dave's cookery classes

Dave Tracy (TSU N) gave a cookery demonstration with a Scottish flavour to the Retirement Association in January, this is the third demo in six months and more are planned.



Battle of the skittles giants

Following a thrilling match the final of the AH skittles tournament came down to a sudden death playoff between the two team captains. Ian Tubby (captain of the Rogues) walked calmly to the line, the tension in the hut was immense. With a score of 8 it looked as though the Rogues had victory in their hands. The pressure was on Tony Hutchings who needed a strike to snatch victory for the ERB Warriors. The first ball removed 2 pins, the second another 2, it was down to the last ball. It left his hand, there was a sharp intake of breath from the spectators as the ball travelled down its path of destiny. But it was not to be. So after over a year of competition, the new AHSSC skittle trophy was presented to the Rogues, (Ian, Anna Brown, Dave Williams and John Farquhar).

Cross-country prowess

At the Civil Service Scottish Cross-country Championships Joyce Rammell (TDB), Louise Sing (WEB) and Liz Poulson (WEB) came fourth in the women's team competition and Tony Lovat (Silv N), Russell Anderson (WEB) and Paul Clavey (FE, NW England) came equal third in the men's event.

Christmas at Alice Holt

Christmas was celebrated in style at Alice Holt, with a delicious meal, our thanks to Catherine and Linda and a 'cabaret' in the social hut. [Click here to view photos.](#)

Science & Business News

Annual Report 2001-2002

Forest Research Annual Report and Accounts 2001-2002 has just been published, following formal presentation in both Houses of Parliament on 29 January 2003. HoBs will hold copies; enquiries to: Jenny Claridge, e-mail: jenny.claridge@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

New wood fuel resource study

The Forestry Commission is leading a new study to estimate the size of the wood fuel resource potentially available in Britain. The DTI, Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Executive are funding the work. Helen McKay of PPD is leading the project and the partnership includes the Forestry Contracting Association (FCA), FR and FE. The forest industries are represented on the steering committee.

The study will examine the potential wood fuel resource available from FC and private sector forests within each Forest Enterprise District. It will also assess the resource available from short rotation coppice, co-products from primary timber processors and arboricultural operations. FE staff, guided by TDB and FCA are producing harvesting and environmental constraints, which will be applied to FE outputs and adapted for the private sector.

Mensuration are extending and adapting yield models to predict all biomass, rather than just timber. Stats and computing are adapting both the FE and private sector timber forecasting systems to use the yield models and assortment programs. FE will produce forecast outputs for the state forests and Woodland Surveys will produce private sector outputs. The results will be combined and presented on a website.

Potential users of wood fuel will then be able to access the website and look at the wood fuel potentially available from forestry and woodland, primary processors and aboricultural operations in each Forest District. A service will then be provided to those who wish to have the same information by some other geographic region, or radius of a proposed site. The results, by Forest District should be available by April/May 2003.

Further research into Red Band Needle blight

Red band needle blight, which infests Corsican pine, is of increasing concern to FE in East Anglia. There has been a marked increase in the incidence of this reportable disease over the past few years, which may be climate change related although it may also indicate a change in the pathogen. Anna Brown, who has recently rejoined Pathology, will be working on the problem.

Keeping an eye on Dormice

WEB has been asked to participate in a contract by the Highways Agency investigating mitigation of impacts by the new A3 road scheme at Hindhead on Dormouse populations.



New report from the Social Research Unit

Liz O'Brien completed her report 'Public and institutional perspectives on forests and trees: a view from Vermont' which resulted from her USA secondment in 2002 and as a fulfilment of a Scottish Forestry Trust contract.

Visits & Conferences

- Hugh Evans (Ento) gave a keynote-invited paper to the Canadian Forest Service Pest Management Forum 2002 in Ottawa. The paper was in a special session entitled 'Globalisation of Forest Pests' and concentrated on the European perspective. The meeting included papers from scientists and pest management practitioners from all parts of Canada and the USA.
- Clive Brasier (Path) has attended a symposium on Sudden Oak Death in Monterey California, hosted by the USDA Forest Service. The meeting will deal with recent research findings on SOD and plant health regulation in North America and Europe. Clive is presenting some of the FR research on the host range of this new pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*, and differences between European and North American populations of *P. ramorum*.
- Woodland Ecology Branch had a strong representation at the Mammal Society / FC Symposium 'Managing Woodlands and their Mammals' on 22 & 23 November. Chris Quine and Roger Trout helped organise the event and Chris chaired 2 sessions, Helen Armstrong, Robin Gill, Brenda Mayle and Roger gave presentations. An FC publication is to be prepared with extended abstracts from the talks.
- Joan Webber (Path) attended the plant Health and Seed Inspectorate conference (13-15 Jan) in Blackpool and gave two papers on the work Pathology have been doing on the Sudden Oak Death pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum*. These reported on work looking at the host range of the pathogen and an intensive survey at four woodland sites where the pathogen has been found on rhododendron.
- Sarah Green, Joan Webber, Anna Brown and Sandra Denman (Pathology) will be attending the International Plant Pathology Congress in New Zealand. They will present 6 posters and give various presentations on the research of their branch including work on biological control of decay in pine, SOD, and dieback of birch in Native Natural Woodland.
- Liz Poulson (WEB) presented results of the last 2 years coning work at the Scottish Crossbill steering group meeting. They requested the survey be expanded to include Lodgepole pine.

Forthcoming Events

13 March: AH conference room, time to be confirmed. Staff briefing by Sandy Greig re developments in FC England with regard to grants and associated topics. Open to all.

26/27 March: Scottish Forest Industries Cluster, 2nd Cluster Conference, 'Sustainability & Innovation in Scotland's Forest Industries', at Crieff Hydro, Perthshire.

Conundrum

Pioneering in the ice sheet's track,
Bark mirroring the snow, branches mourning its lack,
Rest on me now as I burn and crack,
Not long till the spring brings my bright green back.

The answer to last month's conundrum was Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) Used to make palling fences, imported originally by the Romans. Roast chestnuts, perhaps not so relevant with central heating! Widely used for quality coffins, as the wood is durable.

Conundrum: Alan Harrison

Next Newsletter

The deadline for the next newsletter is 7 March

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