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# FOREST RESEARCH Newsletter

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Issue 4/2003

## Congratulations and Thanks

June saw the last of the FR Key Performance Indicators for 02/03 shown as achieved. We have known for a while that the science quality and financial targets were met, and the returns from PPD (now Forestry Group) and FE now show that, at 97.9%, we also achieved our customer satisfaction target (97%). There is some tension between these targets, which require us to balance expenditure and output even in years of tight resourcing. I believe that 2002/03 has been a year of hard work and genuine achievement. Well done and thanks for all the hard work and the continuing positive approach.

Professor Jim Lynch will start work with FR in July and I will be returning to the role of Chief Research Officer. I know that you will all join with me in welcoming Jim and wishing him every success as Chief Executive. I hope that you have felt that FR has been effectively led over a year, which has seen the completion of our first quinquennial review, and major post-devolution changes for the FC as a whole. I have enjoyed the last year and I hand over to Jim confident that FR will continue to deliver high quality science, development, surveys and related services. As a result of the change in CEO, Bill Mason and a number of other staff have taken on additional responsibilities during the year. I feel that we have all pulled together well and that this has been much to everyone's credit. Many thanks for your very strong support and help over the period that I have been acting CEO.

**Peter Freer-Smith**

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## People News

### Welcome to:

- Dr Elena Vanguelova who has joined ERB, Elena is a Biogeochemist.
- Scott Howard who has joined Silv (N) from Canada under the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience scheme (IAESTE). Founded in 1948 at Imperial College London, IAESTE now has programmes in 80 countries and in excess of 300,000 students have taken part since it's inception.
- Owen Wainhouse who has rejoined Stats and IT Services at AH for the summer.
- Sam Catchpole who has joined TSU (S) at Talybont as a Research Worker.

### Congratulations to:

- Anna Brown (Pathology AH), had her viva for her PhD and has come through the ordeal successfully. The title of her thesis is 'Biological control of decay in seasoning utility poles'.
- Joyce Rammel (TDB Ae) who has not only gained a BSc in Natural Sciences this month, but, has also won the Shot and Discus competitions at the Civil Service Athletics Championships and won the Hammer Throw at the Scottish Championships.
- Duncan Ray (WEB) who has been invited to be Deputy Co-ordinator of IUFRO work group 4.11.03 (Information management and information technologies).
- Jason Hubert (Silv N) and Kirsty on their marriage on 17 May. Their honeymoon took them trekking in Uzbekistan and Kazakstan.
- Stuart A'Hara (TIB) and his wife Denise on the birth of their baby son, Andrew on 24 May.
- Caroline Bristoll (ERB) who was married to Alec on 15 June, they are currently honeymooning in Antigua and Iceland.



- Heather Moreland (Admin NRS) who will now be staying at NRS on a Fixed Term Appointment until June next year.

### Secondments:

- Steve Lee (TIB Project Leader for conifer breeding) has been seconded to the Sustainable Forestry Group in Silvan House until the end of the calendar year. Steve will be considering the re-drafting of the Forestry Guidelines and assisting with some research commissioning work.

### Farewell to:

- Tobias Jackson who has recently left TSU (S) at Talybont.

## Science & Business News

### New technology for Entomology

Entomology Branch staff, led by Dave Williams and supported by Franki Lowe and TSU staff, have been working to develop an in-house nematode production system for use in the biological control of pine weevil, *Hylobius abietis*. A new diet has been developed that appears to be working well and providing an encouraging yield of nematodes per bag, although there are still technical problems to be solved in eliminating sporadic contamination by fungi.

One of the most labour-intensive parts of the original process used for rearing nematodes, was extraction from the sponge matrix in which the nematodes grow. Joint work with BHR Group at Cranfield University has culminated in delivery of a novel harvesting system for extracting the "worms". BHR Group is expert in fluid dynamics and designed the prototype cyclone-separation system. This method uses a two-stage separation process. First the diet-impregnated sponge is passed through a roller system, known affectionately as the "automangle". This is designed to remove most of the nematodes from the sponge into a liquid medium. The second stage is a fully automated, computer-controlled separation system, based on passing the nematode mix through cyclones to separate the worms from the diet. In design tests, this system gave separation of 96% of the worms in 7% of the original volume and this extends the 'shelf life' of the worms. To place the new system in perspective, the previous labour requirement for a 200-unit production run was up to 6 man-days; the new design should achieve this using less than one man-day.

### AGILE council to meet in Edinburgh

Juan Suárez (Silv N) is one of the eight council members of AGILE (Association of Geographic Information Laboratories in Europe - [www.agile-online.org](http://www.agile-online.org)) and has been responsible for the organisation of the next council meeting at the end of August in Edinburgh. AGILE represents 80 organisations from 22 European countries. There are important items for discussion at this meeting, including the participation of the group in several EU Framework programme 6 initiatives and the response from the group to the EU INSPIRE programme (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) <http://inspire.jrc.it>. The organisation of the 7th AGILE conference in 2004 and the 'Memorandum of Understanding' currently signed by the organisation with GIS companies like ESRI, Intergraph, and Bentley are also tabled for discussion.

### Learning in the forest

Forest School is a concept recently imported from Denmark, and pioneered in the UK by Bridgwater College (click [forest school](#) for further information). In contrast with the well-tryed forest classroom approach, forest school involves the teaching of the whole curriculum in the forest environment, for perhaps a whole day each week, for a term. Part of the philosophy is to encourage pupils through small achievable tasks, and those involved claim enormous benefits for all ages and categories of children and especially those with learning difficulties or who are disaffected.

The Social Research Unit is managing a contract with the New Economics Foundation, in which the effects of a Forest School programme are being evaluated, using qualitative research techniques, including self-appraisal. Learning outcomes, as well as social outcomes in the wider community are the subjects of study. A central aim is to develop the methodology, which will then have relevance for evaluating other community projects.

## New Publications

### Restoration of Wooded Landscapes

The theme of the publication is native woodland restoration at the landscape scale, tying in ecological theory with practical implementation, illustrated through a number of case studies.





Written for researchers, policymakers and practitioners, this publication comprises the proceedings of 'The Restoration of Wooded Landscapes' conference held at Heriot-Watt University in September 2000. There are five main sections. The first section covers current international and UK policies, incentives and restoration activities; the second describes the latest research and modelling tools. The third and fourth sections look at national and regional planning strategies and local initiatives. Finally, section draws these themes together and highlights future priorities for research and implementation.

### Woodfuel Meets the Challenge

Collaboration between FR, FC England, Defra and the FC Sustainable Forestry Group has resulted in publication of a new leaflet about woodfuel. This will be used at a series of forthcoming events featuring woodfuel, including the Royal Agricultural Show and the South West Woodland Show, at which FR staff will be giving seminars and demonstrations. The leaflet focuses on the opportunities now available to grow energy crops and the use of woodfuel as an energy source, as well as giving landowners and farmers information about getting involved in setting up woodfuel supply chains and making their woodfuel more marketable. To view a pdf file of the leaflet click [here](#).

### Visits & Conferences

- Juan Suárez (Silv N) travelled to Vancouver recently in response to an invitation from Steve Mitchell from the department of Forestry at the University of British Columbia. He took part in a seminar about windthrow and initiated the discussions for a future integration of the ForestGALES program in Canada. After that, he travelled to Victoria to meet staff from the British Columbia Ministry of Forests. They discussed the possibility of linking TASS and TYPSE models, to model stand variability in ForestGALES and to predict forest stand parameters in the analysis of Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data. Juan also visited the Pacific Forestry Center to discuss further co-operation in the areas of individual tree canopy identification using Aerial Photographs and the reconstruction of individual canopy architectures using LIDAR.
- Dave Tracy (TSU Cairnbaan), Jim Pratt (ex Pathology NRS) and Kath Thorpe (Pathology AH) recently attended the 4th meeting of the EU MOHIEF project in Poznan, Poland.
- Barry Gardiner, Juan Suárez, Colin Edwards and Bill Mason (all of Silv N) gave a research update to about 50 people at the start of the recent ICF conference at Heriot-Watt University, entitled 'An industry reborn; the UK's new forests'. The presentation was notable for being the first time that spatial data collection from remote sensing has been linked with the use of spatial decision support tools such as ForestGALES.
- Joan Webber (Path AH) was invited to speak at the 2nd International Elm Conference in Segovia, Spain. Joan talked about managing Dutch elm disease through a better understanding of the interactions between pathogen and insect vector.

### Conundrum

Spinning, blue, peppermint and lemon,  
Varnish-leaved, silver-top, cabbage and ribbon,  
A tree for all seasons from a place in the sun  
And a balm for the chest if you've need of one.

The answer for the last conundrum was English elm (*Ulmus procera*). English elms are susceptible to the deadly Dutch elm disease, which is carried by elm bark beetles (*Scolytus scolytus*). When the main tree dies it almost always produces shoots from root suckers, these survive and grow until they too, seemingly inevitably, become diseased and die.

### Forthcoming Events

**Friday 4 July @ 16:15:** There will be an opportunity for all Alice Holt staff to meet Prof. Jim Lynch informally, at the opening of the newly refurbished garden outside the staff restaurant. Drinks will be available and there will be a BBQ from 17:00 onwards, people are most welcome to bring their own food to cook and Catherine and Linda will provide some salad. AHSSC will be cooking a limited number of sausages and burgers for those who wish to purchase them.

**29 June to 2 July:** The Royal Show at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire. TDB and other branches will represent FR, together with the West Midlands Conservancy.

**Open now until 14 September:** The International Festival of Gardens, hosted by Westonbirt Arboretum. FC staff can visit the festival free of charge as part of the FC non-pay benefits scheme, for further details please see [www.festivalofgardens.co.uk](http://www.festivalofgardens.co.uk).

**14 September:** Calling all female members of staff. Are you interested in taking part in a women's 5 kilometre fun run or walk? The 'Flora Light Challenge for Women' is taking place in Hyde Park with proceeds to go to a charity of your choice. If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact Liz O'Brien by email or AH extn 2291, for details and an application form.

**21 to 18 September:** The XII World Forestry Congress will be held in Quebec, Canada. The theme is to be 'Forests, Source of Life' with 3 main topics, forests for people, forests for the planet and people and forests in harmony. See [www.wfc2003.org](http://www.wfc2003.org) for further details.

## Next Newsletter

The deadline for articles for the next newsletter is Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July.

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