



FOREST RESEARCH Newsletter

November 2002

FR Quinquennial Review; Stage 2 Report:

The second and final report of FRs Quinquennial Review was sent to the English, Scottish and Welsh Forestry Ministers on the 31 October.

'Many of you will already have seen the summary of the Report and its recommendations which has been published on [e Connect](#). I have replaced the drafts of the stage 2 report which were in the AH and NRS libraries with the slightly altered copy which has gone to Ministers. The report has not yet been agreed by Ministers but is available for your consideration and internal discussion at this stage. I will let you know when it is signed-off by Ministers but that is unlikely to be before their next meeting, in December.

The 2nd stage report is comprehensive, as is required for such reviews, and I believe that it gives the FC, and FR in particular, a strong steer for action over the next few years. Duncan Macniven, who led the Review Team, summarises its aim and main points as follows:

The Report is designed to improve the performance of FR and of the wider FC research effort of which it forms part. For example, it recommends wider consultation on updates of the FC Research Strategy, and a greater role for FR in publishing its research results. It concludes that FC should not outsource a fixed proportion of work, but should take the advice of the Forestry Research Co-ordination Committee on opportunities for a more competitive approach to procurement of research on particular topics. Domestically, it recommends that FR should examine in detail the options for obtaining best value from its largest asset - the Alice Holt site.

The Report also recommends how the "research" part of the Forestry Devolution Review should be implemented. FR's objectives should mention the devolved administrations - Forestry Ministers should approve the Research Strategy - The Welsh Assembly Government should be invited to join the Forestry Research Co-ordination Committee. There should be an open dialogue with Defra and the devolved administrations, and a meeting of stakeholders in each of the 3 countries, about the FC Research Strategy. FR should do more to ensure high-level liaison with policy formers in each of the 4 countries in the UK and FR's intention to strengthen its research presence in Wales should be taken forward speedily.'

I expect that, like me, there will be a number of recommendations with which you wholeheartedly agree and others where further work is needed prior to any action being taken. I would like to assure you that, as for the Forestry Devolution Review, there will be staff consultation and involvement in implementation of the FRQR. The Review covers a number of very important issues and I look forward to working on their implementation with you.

Meanwhile I would like to thank all those staff who have worked so hard on the second stage report and particularly Andy Moffat, who represented FR on the Working Group. The Review has recognised and endorsed FR's achievements over the last five years. I am delighted that the overall recommendation is that FR should continue as a GB agency of the Forestry Commission.'

Peter Freer-Smith, Acting CEO.

People News

Welcome to:

- Tobius Jackson who has joined TSU at Talybont.
- Ian Keywood who has joined TSU at AH.
- Sebastien Lafont who has joined Mensuration, to work on coupling stand and biome-scale models using inputs from earth observation systems.
- Ewan Mackie will join Mensuration on 18 November as a project leader.
- Heather Russell has joined Central Services at AH to augment the typing pool.

Congratulations to:

- Peter Crow (ERB) who has successfully completed his MSc in Geoarchaeology at Reading University. Peter is FR's project leader in research into the management of the historic environment within the FC estate.
- James Duff and Harry Watson (both TSU Mabie), have been accepted on the HNC/D Forestry course at Newton Rigg.
- Jonathan Humphrey (WEB) has been appointed Chair of the British Ecology Society Forest Ecology group.
- Hugh Mackay (TSU Newton) led a successful Himalayan expedition with the Nepal Trust. The trip led a group of western trekkers to the Nepal/Tibet border, to assist the construction of a micro-hydro project: it also trained 12 local people in mountain leadership skills. Hugh, a qualified mountain guide, got everyone safely back to Kathmandu and, as part of the training course, made an ascent of Manguel Peak (5490m) on the Tibetan border.
- Liz Poulson (WEB) raised over £300 for charity by competing in the Great North Run half marathon. Liz ran all the way from Newcastle to South Shields in 2 hr 27 minutes, which was a great first run.
- Rob Sykes won the September NRS golf tournament trophy, against stiff competition, by a single point.

Transfers:

- Rab Beck, formerly Woodland Surveys branch, has transferred to County Services Division.
- Anna Brown, formerly SSRB, has transferred to Pathology at AH.
- David Payne, of AH Central Services has been appointed Seed Technician in SSRB.
- Steve Smith, formerly Silv(N), has transferred to the York Office of FE's North & East District. An Irish ash 'hurly stick', signed by Silv(N) staff, was presented to Stephen as a leaving gift.

Farewell:

We wish the following leavers all the best in their new ventures:

- Jack Allen of TSU(S).
- Fiona Holt (née Kennedy) of ERB.
- Andy Jones of Mensuration.
- Stewart Milburn of TSU Talybont.

STUDENTSHIPS:

- Peter Torr, a graduate from Newcastle University has started a PhD at Aberdeen University to study the environmental impacts of entomopathogenic nematodes, (supervisors Mike Wilson & Stuart Heritage (Entomology)).
- Wendy Bryan has started a PhD at Paisley University on the role of neem as a plant protectant (supervisors are Richard Thacker and Stuart Heritage (Entomology)).
- Richard Curtis has started a PhD at University of Gloucester's Countryside & Community Research Unit, examining the development of social benefit and public participation in decision-making in the context of land restoration (supervisors are Paul Selman and Paul Tabbush (SSRB)).



Science & Business News

All FR HoBs met at the beginning of November. The meeting focused on the work of four working groups which have been looking at FR's Science Strategy, Organisational Structure, Image and Buildings & Facilities. Peter Freer-Smith summarises the progress made: 'We had an excellent meeting largely as a result of the good progress made by the four working groups over the last year. The written reports on the [Image and Building and Facilities](#) groups have been placed on the FR intranet. These two reports have produced a number of valuable ideas and you will find that many of these are now being implemented. The Science Strategy and Organisational Structure groups have also made good progress, but there is a need to draw them together and for further staff consultation. Initial staff presentations/discussions have been organised at AH and NRS in the new year. Overall the work which has been done in the four groups and joint HoB meetings will be a huge help as we implement the changes needed in response to the Forestry Devolution Review and FR Quinquennial Review.'

Duncan Macniven, (Head of Corporate Services) spent a day with Miriam Baldwin and other PB5s, as part of FC's 'Back to the Floor Day' initiative.

WEB has won a contract from Scottish Natural Heritage, to review the balance between open ground and woodland cover in the Uplands.

Mensuration has won a contract to develop an internet site for Short Rotation Coppice Project, funded by Defra, DTI, FC and DARD.

Woodland Ecology staff have been very active, both in support of various Deer Management events (including those at Hertford, Leicester, Norfolk & West Midlands) and at a number of ecological conferences (including Butterfly Conservation at Lancaster, IALE at Norwich, Woodland Trust at Warwick and the PAWS conference at Builth Wells).

Mark Broadmeadow (ERB) attended an IPCC expert meeting on 'factoring out process' as part of the operation of the Kyoto protocol and gave a presentation on the potential use of process models.

FR's Social Research Unit has now completed its three 'expert consultations' on 'Health & Well-Being: trees, woodlands & natural spaces' – one in each of the 3 GB countries. These well-attended events included health professionals, foresters, community development experts and environmental organisation professionals. Health is not just the absence of sickness – it develops from a healthy lifestyle and a healthy environment. The consultations suggested new partnerships and ways of using trees and woodlands to promote health.

Coillte, FR's Irish equivalent, hosted an action-packed tour by Silv(N), which included: the continuous cover trial in Enniskerry Forest; the native woodland restoration at Shelton Abbey; the Coillte nurseries at Ballintemples the afforestation of Cutaway peatland at Turnduff and the farmland afforestation at Kilcock.

Gary Kerr (SSRB) and Sophie Hale (Silv(N)) attended a study tour organised by the Continuous Cover forestry group, to the northern Alps and western Jura. The tour covered many aspects of continuous cover forest management in both public and private forests. It was emphasised that there can be no blanket prescription for managing uneven-structured stands. Instead, the focus must be to understand the objectives for a particular site, influenced by the site itself, and to manage the stand accordingly.

Barry Gardiner (Silv(N)) visited Canada to attend an IUFRO Workshop on the connection between forest resources and wood quality.

Juan Suárez (Silv(N)) gave a presentation on wind damage to the Finnish Society of Forest Science.

Jonathan Humphrey (WEB) gave a presentation on biodiversity in Britain's forests at a COFORD conference in Eire.

Hugh Evans (Ento) visited Canada as part of an EU mission discussing pinewood nematodes. Progress was made in agreeing standards for heat treatment of wood. Heated discussions on risk assessment and elimination of vectors in untreated wood resulted in progress towards a new management approach.

Over 80 arboriculturalists attended a one-day seminar on 'Global warming & the health of trees' in Leeds. Funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, FC and the City of Leeds, the seminar was organised by Kath Thorpe (Path) and chaired by the Tree Council Chair.



EU project updates

- Ned Cundall (TIB) represented FR at the second co-ordination meeting of the RAF project (Realising Ash's Potential). Ned is co-ordinating the establishment of an international provenance trial of *Fraxinus excelsior* and analysing the seven partners' previously established provenance trials. The new provenance trials will be established at 16 sites in 7 countries. Further details: www.teagasc.ie/advisory/forestry/rap/index.htm and www.fraxigen.net.
- Mike Perks (Silv(N)) represented FR at the COLDTREE meeting in Sweden, which discuss some novel ideas to control *Hylobius* during restocking operations.
- Dave Tracy (TSU(N)) and Jim Pratt (Path) attended the third meeting of the MOH/IEF project (modelling *Heterobasidion* Injection in European Forests). The project aims to develop a decision support tool to help forest managers predict incidences of *Heterobasidion* infections in different coniferous ecotypes.

Forthcoming Events

21 November: Research Update Seminar at Wolverhampton Science Park on, 'Working Woodlands in the West Midlands', run by FR in conjunction with ICF.

26 November: Scottish Forestry Forum at Battleby (Perth). Bill Mason (Silv(N)) will represent FR.

6 December: NRS staff seminar, commencing 13.30 by Kevan Gartland of Abertay University on, 'GM elms to fight Dutch elm disease?'

6 December: AH Staff Seminar, commencing 10.10, by Kevin Watts (WEB) on, 'Landscape ecology in North Wales: trees, butterflies and felt tip pens.'

Conundrum - which tree species am I?



In the land where the buffalo roam
I gave my support to the Sioux at home
Bent by name but less in nature
My role is best to mix and nurture!.

[Answer to October Conundrum: The Yew].

Thanks to Alan Harrison (TSU(N)) for this contribution.

Next Newsletter

Deadline for contributions for the joint December/January Newsletter is 10 December 2002 .

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