



Newsletter

Issue 6/2003



My first three months

As I reflect on a busy three months of information gathering, I realise that the world of public sector science is changing rapidly. There will surely be increased audit of our activities, but there is also much scope to collaborate with other bodies. For example, we hosted an excellent discussion day with potential partners from Rothamsted and not only look forward to the return visit, but also to future potential collaboration in all three countries that we serve with our GB remit.

I am looking carefully at our structure and organisation to ensure that we are fit for purpose in meeting the requirements of our existing customers and new opportunities. I will consult with you all with some suggestions over the next couple of months. I am fully aware that I cannot expect full consensus on the way forward, but will consider all comments before making decisions which I hope will set us on an ever more productive path.

Prof. Jim Lynch

People News

Welcome to:

- Bevan Stephens who has joined Central Services AH as an Administrative Support Officer.
- Linda Tedford who has joined TSU (N) as a Research Assistant.
- Anna Elliot (Silv N) and Jacqueline Neal (WEB) Sandwich Students who have joined FR for the next year.

Congratulations to:

- Dave Tracy (Cairnbaan) and his wife Anne who have just celebrated 30 years of marriage.
- Sarah Green (Pathology @ NRS) and her husband Bill on the birth of their baby son, Alexander on 11 September. Whilst Sarah is on maternity leave Steven Hendry will be acting Head of Section.

Transfers:

- Victoria Stokes has transferred from Mensuration to SSRB, where she is now providing scientific assistance to the Alternative Establishment Systems and Silvicultural Systems programmes.
- Helen Sellars has transferred from WEB to Silv (N), where she will be working as a Research Assistant.

Farewell to:

- Ken Williams who retired from FR on 19 September after a total of 32 years with the Commission in Wales. During this time Ken has been with Research & Surveys Branch initially at Betwy-y-coed research Office and latterly at Gwydyr Uchaf (Llanrwst), as part of the Talybont Survey Team. Best wishes for your retirement Ken.
- Ned Cundall, who is leaving TIB to join his family on Vancouver Island. Ned joined FR in 1994 to pick up the fledgling improvement programme in broadleaved species, which had begun in the early 1990s. Since that time, considerable interest in the breeding of broadleaves has developed. Ned's work has involved the evaluation of seed sources in ash, oak, sycamore, beech and birch in a series of nation-wide trials. He has also represented FR through participation in the work of the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programmes initiative and has been involved in a number of EU contracts as well as being a member of the Social Broadleaves network of the European initiative on forest genetic resource, EUFORGEN. Best wishes for your future in Canada.

- Carlos Ontiveros Pérez who has recently left Silv (N).
- Anthony Lovat and Helen Taft both Silv (N) and Karen Osbourne (TIB) Sandwich Students who are leaving FR to resume their studies at University.

Science & Business News

FR's Framework Document

FR's revised Framework has now been published. This sets out the various powers, responsibilities and reporting structures, which govern FR's conduct and delivery. It has been updated to reflect changes made in response to FR's Quinquennial Review and to FC Devolution. To view the Framework Document or the 2003-2006 Corporate Plan please click [here](#).

Dendroctonus micans

Hugh Evans (Ento) and Nick Fielding (TSU Shobden) attended a meeting of the *Dendroctonus micans* Working Group at Silvan house. This was to discuss the future boundaries of the UK Protected Zone against this bark beetle pest. The final decision on movement of boundaries has yet to be confirmed. But it was agreed that FR would field test a unique monitoring system for *D. micans* using a synthetic attractant based on the bark beetle larval aggregation pheromone, to trap the specific predator *Rhizophagus grandis*. This is currently being deployed in forests where both the predator and prey are known to be present. If the predator is captured then the prey must be present (they cannot breed on any other prey species), thus avoiding the need for visual surveys to confirm the presence of the bark beetle pest. The programme will be extended next year to sites where the predator will be pre-released and act as a proxy for *D. micans*.

New funding for Bassenthwaite project

Tom Nisbet (ERB) has been successful in obtaining funding from FC England for a joint project with Lancaster University, to identify where, why and how woodland could help tackle sediment and eutrophication issues in the Bassenthwaite Lake catchment.

Tom also gave a presentation on 'Identifying areas for floodplain woodland' at a seminar hosted by FC Wales and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), entitled 'Managing water & wetlands through woodland expansion & restoration'.

The aims of the seminar were to:

1. promote communication about the value of wet woodland as a habitat and its potential role as part of a natural system, which helps to manage water quality and water flows.
2. promote discussion on the opportunities and constraints of expanding the cover of woodland on wetlands, with particular reference to floodplains.
3. outline the site assessment criteria for identifying potential sites for wetland woodland creation, with particular reverence to floodplains.
4. demonstrate silvicultural practice, economic value and incentives for the establishment and restoration of wet woodland.

Changes at Talybont

Many of you will be aware that for some time now Chris Jones has been performing a representational role for FR in Wales, while still maintaining control of the Talybont Field-station. This situation has now changed. While Chris is still operating out of Talybont, he will be continuing his representational role partly for FR and partly for FC Wales, he will have no direct involvement with experiments or surveys.

Day to day running of the field station has now passed to Carl Foster assisted by Colin Clayton (field experiments) and Rachel Sparks (surveys).



Broadmeadow on the Beeb

Mark Broadmeadow (ERB) recently appeared on the BBC's 'Breakfast Program' and the local section of the 'Political Program', to present the case for effects of climate change on British woodlands and the threat to 'native' species.

South West Woodland Show

The woodfuel display, 'The Quest for Sustainable Energy: Woodfuel Meets the Challenge', initially produced for the Royal Show, was again on display at the South West Woodland Show on Friday 12 September, and was well received. Ralph Harmer (SSRB) and Andy Hall (TDB, Rugeley) gave half-hour seminars on PAWS and Woodfuel respectively, both of which were well attended. The show, which was organised by the FTA, was opened by Ben Bradshaw (Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) who also launched the FC England booklet *So you own a woodland?* edited by Jenny Claridge (Publications).



Andy Hall in action

Soil in focus

Andy Moffat (ERB) and Paul Hill-Tout (FC England) recently met Mark Kibblewhite, Director of the National Soil Resources Institute (NSRI) to discuss the benefits the FC might expect if soil and water policies were developed in line with broader Government and European directives. NSRI (based at Cranfield University) was newly established in 2001 in order to create a unified Institute with the necessary expertise and the research capability to focus on the long-term development of the sustainable management of soil and land resources both in the UK and around the world.

Controlling *Phytophthora ramorum*

Joan Webber attended an EU Working Group on 'Control Measures for *Phytophthora ramorum*' in Brussels recently. The purpose of this group is to advise DG SANCO E1 on whether the emergency measures currently in place to control the spread of the Sudden Oak Death pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum*, need to continue and, if so, whether any amendments to the measures need to be made.

Modellers meet

Alice Holt hosted a Modeller's Forum on Wednesday 24 September. The aim of the meeting was for as many of FR's modellers as possible to give an overview of their projects, with the intention of determining areas where closer collaboration might be achieved. Not all modellers were able to attend; however another meeting is planned, probably for early December.

Forest Pathologists meeting

Pathology Branch organised the Forest Pathology Group Meeting in Thetford in September. The meeting was attended not only by UK Pathologists (including past and present members of Pathology Branch) but also by Pathologists from Ireland, Italy and Spain. Presentations given by FR staff included Sudden Oak Death (Joan Webber & Sandra Denman), stump treatment (Kath Thorpe), red band needle blight (Anna Brown), *Armillaria* (David Rose) and *Phytophthora* on horse chestnut (Joan Webber).

Feeling the heat!

During the hottest week of August Steve Sloan, Colin Gordon and Dave Watterson (Mabie) carried out treatments for 3 Ento experiments (alternatives to Permethrin), using a prototype plant conveyor and working in temperatures around 100F whilst wearing full spray suits. Thirsty work! Across the FC the long hot summer has caused problems for many others. One of the more unusual examples being the cry for help from the Education Officer at Westonbirt, Ben Oliver, who was seeking freezer space for the stuffed animals used in the Westonbirt classroom. They needed to be frozen to rid them of a mite infestation.

One welcome side effect of the heat wave should be spectacular autumn colour. The high levels of sunshine result in high leaf sugar content, these sugars react with phenols to produce a range of pigments that only show in all their glory when the chlorophyll in the leaves starts to break down with the onset of the cooler weather.

Forthcoming Events

17 October: AH Research Staff Update Seminar, 'Back to basics: data management in FR' by Tracy Houston.

31 October: 'Forest management and the biodiversity conservation of coarse woody debris in Tasmania: an opportunity not to repeat history.' A seminar by Jeff Meggs of Forestry Tasmania to be held at NRS in the Library at 13:30, for further details please email helen.armstrong@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

7 November: AH Research Staff Update Seminar, 'Battling with bramble!' Andrea Kiewett.

All AH Research Staff Update Seminars will be held in the main conference room at 10:10.

Conundrum

A lofty tree of ancient line
 Named for Duke and Generals fine
 Soft to touch with blood red heart
 A sweeping spire that stands apart.

The answer to the last conundrum is Leyland Cypress (*Cupressocyparis leylandii*) which originated from natural crosses between *Cupressus macrocarpa* and *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*. This occurred three times in two locations, Leighton Hall, Montgomery and Ferndown, Dorset, between 1888 and 1940 and gave rise to just 10 plants. The multitude of Leyland cypress we see now comes from cuttings from these 10.

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