

Bush Telegraph

The House Magazine of the Edinburgh Consortium for Rural Research

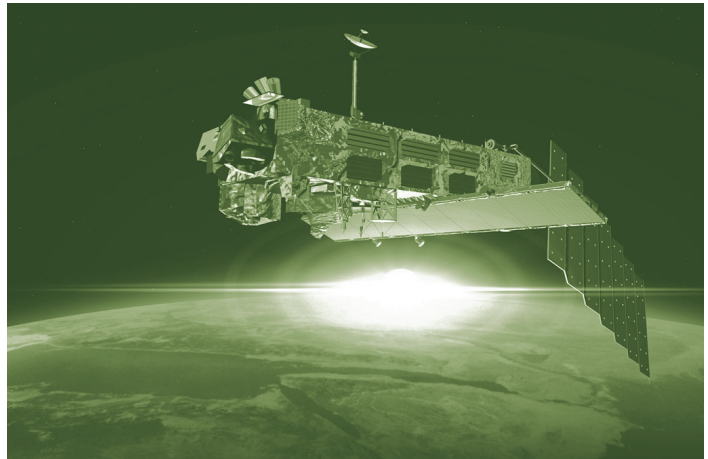
CLONING THE FUTURE

Our main event this side of the solstice has been the annual ECRR Peter Wilson Lecture at which Professor Ian Wilmut addressed a full house at the Royal Society of Edinburgh (our co-sponsors, together with the Institute of Biology, Scotland).

Professor Andrew Miller, successor to Peter Wilson as General Secretary of the RSE introduced the first lecture commemorating Peter's outstanding contributions to all three sponsoring bodies, and more widely; particularly since he came to Edinburgh in 1984 as only the ninth holder of the University of Edinburgh's Chair in Agriculture and Rural Economy since its establishment in 1790. Peter had a pivotal role in the establishment of ECRR and became its first Scientific Director in 1990 from when he grew its membership to create an outward-looking voluntary association of science-based organisations linked through their interests in a broad spectrum of rural research aspects. We were privileged to have Bunny Wilson and her son David as guests of honour in the audience for this first lecture bearing Peter Wilson's name.

As is often the case, the continued presence of Ian Wilmut at the forefront of science in therapeutic cloning is based on a long career in the subject area which led him there. From researching the deep-freeze preservation of boar semen for his PhD in Cambridge, through his contributions to the birth of the first calf from a frozen embryo ("Frosty"), to his research, in Scotland, into embryo survival and gene transfer for the production of proteins to treat human disease, Ian's understanding progressed to the point where he led the team which produced the famous "Dolly" as the first clone of an adult animal. On this occasion, Ian Wilmut treated us to an exposition of progress (and setbacks) made in this field together with an indication of the threshold we are on with the prospect of more successful and efficient techniques for therapeutic cloning. He left us with the sense that although outstanding breakthroughs have been made, there is so much more to be achieved in a research sense, before the full benefits and applications might be realised.

In thanking Professor Wilmut on behalf of the sponsoring institutions and the audience, Prof David Atkinson, of the Institute of Biology, welcomed the honest, even humble, approach that Ian had taken. The caution, which he had emphasised, must be in the forefront of our minds as we progress down this road to greater insights. We now understand that we should temper early excitement about beneficial applications, as many of them will take some time to emerge from the considerable research effort required into the future.



A speaker from the European Space Agency is to outline recent developments in Earth observation technology at the ECRR forum on 11 May 2005

The next major ECRR event will be our biennial forum, on 11 May, organised with the Edinburgh Earth Observatory and in association with the Aberdeen Research Consortium. It will be hosted by SNH at its Battleby Conference Centre (near Perth) with sponsorship from the Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry Society and the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute.

This forum is designed to provide insights into the contemporary use of Earth Observation, by satellite and aircraft, across a spectrum of research applications in climate change, forestry, landscape, food security, crop monitoring, health and hazards. Gordon Campbell of the European Space Agency (ESA) will reveal future possibilities, as he scans the horizon for us in his keynote lecture. The sponsoring organisations represent networks of research institutes and universities throughout Scotland, and they bring the focus of the meeting to issues directly relevant to Scotland and to its worldwide research activities, particularly in developing countries.

For delegates, the Forum is intended to be a learning experience in a rapidly advancing technical field. Global and localised data acquisition that was not possible just a few years ago is now being exploited; new capabilities will be brought forward in the next few years to expand our opportunities even further.

The complete programme can be found in this issue of the Bush Telegraph with registration through our website www.ecrr.org.uk

Chris Browitt
ECRR Scientific Director
March 2005

MRC Human Reproductive Sciences Unit



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The Unit recently went through its quinquennial review with a positive recommendation of about £18m from the visiting subcommittee, which now goes to the Board and Council for ratification. The Unit has also secured £900,000 for research from its spin-off company, Ardana which focuses on reproductive health. Ardana has been highly successful having raised over £50m, and has one drug in the market, one undergoing registration and one in Phase II. The company successfully completed an IPO (an Initial Public Offering on the stock market) in March realising £20m.

The Institute of Medical Cell Biology is nearing completion and the Unit and Division of Research and Developmental Sciences will relocate in July along with the Centre for Inflammation Research and the Centre for Cardiovascular Research. This grouping of 600 researchers will provide excellent opportunities for interactions and synergies. State-of-the-art imaging facilities will be a feature of the new Institute.

The ground surrounding the New Royal Infirmary campus has now been secured as a science park and one of the early initiatives being considered is a GMP stem cell facility.

The Unit is participating in the SCI-FUN from 1 to 10 April 2005 at the Royal Museum of Scotland at the Edinburgh Science Festival by putting on the "Battle of the Sexes". Our Centre for Reproductive

Biology is running a public lecture series in the autumn that some ECRR members might wish to attend.

The lectures include the following:

- "Girls surviving cancer: options for fertility"
 Speakers: Dr Hamish Wallace and Prof David Baird
- "The male pill: a new contraceptive for men"
 Speakers: Prof Anna Glasier and Dr Richard Anderson
- "Period problems: a new understanding, new options for treatment"
 Speakers: Dr Colin Duncan and Prof Hilary Critchley
- "Falling sperm counts: a potentially avoidable problem"
 Speakers: Dr Stewart Irvine and Prof Richard Sharpe



The home of the new Institute of Medical Cell Biology under construction at the New Royal Infirmary site at Little France, Edinburgh

National Museums of Scotland



Dr Mark Shaw

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A time for change

For the past three years, under the leadership of the Director Dr Gordon Rintoul and guided by various consultants, the National Museums of Scotland has engaged in a rigorous and all-embracing programme of change in order to create a new vision and to position itself for new national roles in the 21st century as "A World Class Museums Service that Informs, Educates and Inspires", with a strong visitor focus in all that it does.

To realise its ambitions, NMS has established a new Corporate Management Team working with the Director, comprising him and the five new Directors of the following functions: Collections; Public Programmes; Finance & Resources; Facilities Management & Projects; and Marketing & Development, together with the Head of Corporate Policy & Performance. The Head of NMS Enterprises (a separate Company that generates income for NMS's benefit) sits in with this team.

A Change Programme, supported by a Change Manager and teams created to generate and promulgate new values and new business methods in every part of the organisation, has been active throughout a process of intense structural review of all aspects of NMS to ensure that NMS is staffed, resourced and managed in accordance with the new needs – an exercise that has taken three years to complete, and is supported by a major training programme.

The Directorate of most immediate consequence to ECRR members will be the Collections Directorate, under Director of Collections Jane Carmichael (who was recruited from the Imperial War Museum, London, where she had been Director of

Collections). Under her there are five Curatorial Departments (Natural Sciences, which is the re-named former Geology & Zoology; Archaeology; World Cultures; Scotland & Europe; Science & Technology) and two non-curatorial Departments (Conservation & Analytical Research; Collections Management). The main changes have been the reorganisation of the former two Departments of History & Applied Arts and Science & Technological History into the last named three Curatorial Departments above, and the creation of a new overarching Collections Management Department, which encompasses several functions previously held by the Curatorial Departments – allowing central control of collecting activity and the space occupancy and other on-costs it involves – as well as pre-existing remits to do with centralised audit and documentation procedures. The seven Heads of Department in the Collections Directorate (those of Curatorial Departments retain the title "Keeper", and also their gradings) now sit with some 20 others on the Management Forum, a middle-management group covering all functions of the museum that deals with the more practical aspects of management.

Regarding the Department of Natural Sciences, a case to re-create separate Departments of Geology and Zoology (which had come together supposedly as a temporary measure in times of financial hardship in 1995/96) was not upheld. During the reorganisation two senior posts (Curator of Mollusca; Curator of Palaeobotany – which had been left vacant following the resignations of respectively Dr Louise Allcock and Dr Jason Hilton to take up University Lectureships) were deleted, leaving eight rather than ten senior scientific posts and causing the amalgamation of Mollusca with Lower Vertebrates, and Palaeobotany with Invertebrate Palaeontology.

A new Research Framework, directed towards one of NMS's Strategic Aims "To undertake and make available research of international quality, contributing knowledge that creates an understanding

of the past and present for the benefit of the future" has been devised to prioritise and focus research activity, which will be monitored and controlled by a team of two Trustees and key NMS Staff including the Director, the Director of Collections, the Director of Public Programmes, the Director of Marketing & Development, and Keepers. Nevertheless, Keepers will continue to be responsible for the instigation and management of research conducted in their Departments. NMS sets itself a target of having at least 80 peer-reviewed academic publications accepted per annum (averaged over 3 years) but is determined also to ensure that the results of its research reach non-specialist audiences. As a result of post losses, research in Palaeobotany and Malacology has ceased.

And a bit more change

Most of the area in Chambers Street in which Geology and Zoology collections, and also many associated staff offices, are located – the NE and SE corners of the Royal Museum building – has been condemned as not meeting current Fire Safety Regulations, and for some years NMS has been struggling to find the resources needed to clear these areas to enable enclosed fire stairs to be inserted. In the period from early Spring until Autumn this year the research collections of insects, mollusca, birds, most minerals and the large "Type and Figured" fossil collection will be moved down to The Granton Centre, where extensive reorganisation to try to make space for all that must now go there is currently taking place. For the Geologists (with the exception of vertebrate palaeontologist Dr Mike Taylor) and the Entomologists, Granton then becomes the main place of work as the workspace formerly occupied by them in Chambers Street is redeveloped for exhibitions. Some Zoology staff will continue to have their offices in Chambers Street, though with all Zoological sections having most or all of their collections at West Granton and almost all of Geology based there, the heart of the Department will certainly shift. Evolving efficient and time-conserving staff travel arrangements

between Chambers Street and West Granton is another challenge to be met. Some Geological collections (especially most of palaeontology, but also some minerals) will remain in Chambers Street for the time being, and the longer-term location of staff about to be displaced to West Granton is not yet determined. All of this, and uncertainty over the location of essential analytical equipment, may mean that operating conditions will be difficult for the Natural Sciences Department for longer than just the period of the move, and we hope that those with whom we collaborate will bear with us when necessary.

The effect on the public spaces currently used for Geological and Zoological exhibitions in Chambers Street will also be profound, with the several floors of the Evolution exhibition, the Fish gallery, the Mineral gallery, and the Skeleton display all being dismantled, and the large Mammal gallery (where the blue whale skeleton is) as well as the Geology gallery above it being closed, at least until building work is completed but possibly not to reopen with the present content.

These major works will, in the end, provide safe fire escape routes in the NE and SE corners of the Royal Museum, and allow the new and visionary Royal Museum Master Plan to forge ahead so that this fine mainly 19th Century building can be comprehensively redeveloped to be filled with completely new modern museum exhibitions in keeping with the beat of the 21st century. This immense challenge, that includes providing street-level access into the basement area (which will be cleared of stored collections and redeveloped as public space) and opening the access to the upper floors with escalators and wider vistas throughout, is the subject of a major bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, already submitted and currently under review.

And a more personal change

This will be the last time I report to ECRR from NMS, as I retire on 10 May. I hope to become a Research Associate of NMS, and to have more time for research on parasitic wasps in the years to come. It has been good to be associated with ECRR – and I will make sure to tell my successor

(recruitment in progress) the benefits of continuing NMS's membership.

Exhibitions

Now until May 8th (Chambers Street): Dinosaurs Alive! Large scale animatronics of many old favourites, doing their thing. An NHM (London) travelling exhibition, revised and enriched by NMS. Extremely popular – bring children (see www.nms.ac.uk/dinosaurs)

From March 16th (Museum of Flight, East Fortune): The Concorde Experience. NMS's major recent acquisition, now restored to how it looked in service, is available for boarding! (see www.nms.ac.uk/concorde)

July 14th to mid October (Chambers Street): Nicholas and Alexandra, the last Tsar and Tsarina. Treasures from the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and other items from the last years of the Tsars (website in prep.)



High-density mobile racking is an essential feature of the new storage arrangements for the Natural Science collections at West Granton

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



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Predicting the impacts of climate change on upland birds.

Is the changing climate encouraging earlier nesting and will these early arrivals have anything to eat?

Most studies of changes in the timing of bird breeding in response to climate change have focused on temperate passerines. However, the consequences of such environmental change for UK bird conservation may be more severe for other groups, such as upland birds. To examine this, we have analysed large-scale climatic correlates of the timing of golden plover breeding, and the timing of emergence of their adult tipulid prey (both obtained from published sources), to assess the potential for climate change to disrupt breeding performance (Pearce-Higgins et al. 2005). Golden plover laying dates and the timing of tipulid emergence were inversely correlated with spring temperature; birds nest earlier and their food supply emerges earlier in warmer springs.

In combination with historical climate data, these models suggest a nine day advancement of golden plover first laying dates occurred during the 1990s. Climate predictions for 2070–2099 suggest potential advances in golden plover first laying dates by 25 days, mean first-clutch dates by 18 days, and tipulid emergence by 12 days. Given the importance of adult tipulids to young golden plover chicks, these changes may result in a mismatch between the timing of first-laying dates and tipulid emergence, so reducing the success of early breeding attempts.

This work forms a precursor to a new RPSB project commencing in 2005 on the impacts of climate change on upland birds. The new project will repeat the approach described for golden plover, for as wide a range of UK northern, moorland, montane and blanket bog species as possible. Thus, data on the timing of breeding will be collated from published, grey literature and unpublished sources, and correlated with relevant climatic measures to assess the relative sensitivity of each species to climate change. Where relevant, an assessment of likely changes in the phenology and magnitude of peaks in abundance of key prey will also be quantified (e.g. caterpillars, chironomids and meadow pipits). This will test the hypothesis that future climate change will decouple the link between the timing of bird breeding and peaks in abundance

of their prey, allowing an assessment of the relative sensitivity of each species to climate change.

An important part of the work will therefore be to collate existing data on annual variation in the timing of bird breeding, breeding success, and bird abundance from a wide range of sites, to allow correlative analyses in relation to spatial and temporal variation in weather. Additionally, we will require data on temporal and spatial variation in the abundance of invertebrate (focussing on Araneae, Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, Diptera, Hymenoptera and Coleoptera groups), and mammalian (primarily voles) prey, to conduct equivalent analyses on prey groups. These data will be analysed to model climatic correlates of prey abundance, and where appropriate, the phenology of peaks in prey availability.

Please help!

I would therefore be interested to learn of any studies (including unpublished reports / theses) or data sets that could potentially contribute to such analyses. At this early stage, if you hold such information which you would be interested in contributing to the project, even if it is one or two years of data from one site, then please contact James Pearce-Higgins (details above).

References

Pearce-Higgins, J.W., Yalden, D.W. & Whittingham, M.J. (2005) Warmer springs advance the breeding phenology of golden plovers *Pluvialis apricaria* and their prey (Tipulidae). *Oecologia*. (www.springerlink.com/index/10.1007/s00442-004-1820-z)

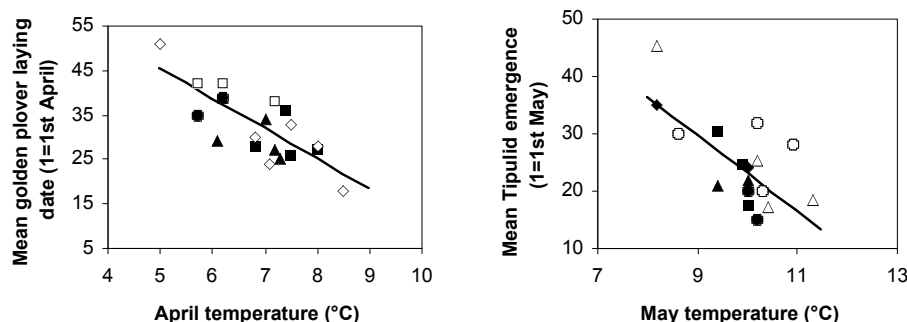


Figure 1: Correlations between golden plover first-laying dates and April temperature (left), and the peak of tipulid emergence and May temperature (right). Data from different study locations presented as different symbols.

UHI Millennium Institute



Anne Edwards

UHI PolicyWeb

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The UHI PolicyWeb was established in August 2004 with financial support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise to improve the 'evidence base' and level of debate around policy issues affecting rural and island regions, such as the Highlands and Islands. It brings together academics, researchers and practitioners from the Highlands and Islands and beyond and its aims are:

- To examine social and public policy and related issues, in the context of rural and island regions.
- To bring forward policy initiatives and to influence decision makers.
- To develop and foster collaboration in applied and comparative social and public policy research.

Activities: The PolicyWeb's main activities include:

- Support for high-level policy discussions on issues relevant to rural and island regions.
- Seminars, round table discussion and dissemination events.
- Production of papers and other publications addressing social and public policy issues.
- Development of relevant collaborative links in relation to research and other related activities.
- Engagement with relevant national and international rural policy debates and activities.

Between August 2004 and March 2005, the PolicyWeb has organised three seminars under 'Chatham House' Rules:

- A 'Think Tank' in September 2004 to assist the PolicyWeb in identifying relevant policy issues and priorities that it should address as a starting point, and guidance on related future activities.

- The uses and applications of broadband. A policy briefing was produced and widely circulated and an 'E-Network' on broadband has been established to share experiences in four areas, health, work, education and infrastructural issues.
- Housing, Planning and Environment: Towards an Integrated and Place-Based Policy. A Policy Briefing is in preparation.

PolicyWeb has also made inputs to national and international events and debates on a wide range of rural policy issues including Healthy Rural Communities; Multifunctionality and Rural Development; Rural Population and Migration Issues; Rural Governance and 'Horizontal Co-ordination'; Transnational Academic Exchanges; The Implementation of EU Policy Reforms including the CAP; Rural Racism; Healthy Ageing.

In addition two meetings have been organised with its Advisory Group, who include individuals from a range of sectors across Scotland with an involvement and interest in rural policy.

Staff: Director: Professor John Bryden
Development Officer: Philomena de Lima
Administrator : Anne Edwards
Website : www.policyweb.uhi.ac.uk

Scottish Academy of Rural Policy (SARP)

Background: Rural Policy has become a major issue in Scotland, the UK, Europe and indeed the world as a whole in the past decade or so. Economic and social research on rural issues has normally focused too much on traditional policy areas, especially agriculture and land use, and far too little on those of vital concern to rural people such as health, education, transport and social policy. Although there are pockets of expertise in Scotland on a generally narrow range of policy issues concerning rural areas (agriculture and forestry, land use, environment), it is generally accepted that there are large gaps concerning the impact of a whole range of social and public policies on rural people and places (for example,

health, education, housing, etc.). There is also a failure to 'join up' the many different aspects of broad and narrow rural policy to support more 'joined up' policy making. In addition, there is a view among policy-makers and practitioners that much academic research relating to policy issues is aimed at the Research Assessment Exercise alone, and stops short of developing a dialogue on the results (and indeed the questions themselves) with non-academic stakeholders. It is against this background that the UHI PolicyWeb has received SHEFC Strategic Research Development Grant (SRDG) funding to undertake a feasibility study in relation to establishing a Scottish Academy for Rural Policy.

Aims: The main aim is to examine the feasibility of establishing, on a long-term basis, a Scottish Academy of Rural Policy to be led and co-ordinated by the UHI PolicyWeb. The study will seek to capitalise on past investments and existing expertise as well as to generate a critical mass of researchers, policy makers and practitioners who can together address the issues and improve policy related evidence and public debates in a more holistic framework. Rather than thinking of stakeholders as an 'add-on' to a research-led initiative, SARP will consider stakeholders as potential partners in its institutional framework. If this turns out to be feasible, then stakeholders would be integral to the governance of the Academy as well as to the generation of research, training, 'think-tanks', conferences and other activities. SARP also intends to capitalise on the expertise and experience of UHI in applying information and communications technologies to the challenges of collaborative working over distance.

Project Team: The project team includes Dr Chris Caswill and Marsaili Macleod, Professor John Bryden and Philomena de Lima of the UHI PolicyWeb. Dr Chris Caswill is our senior consultant for the feasibility study and the team will be assisted by Marsaili Macleod.

University Marine Biological Station Millport



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The University Marine Biological Station Millport (UMBSM) is one of ECRR's most westerly member organizations, based as it is on the Isle of Cumbrae.

UMBSM is formally an institute of the **University of London**, managed in association with the **University of Glasgow**.

UMBSM maintains an active research programme much of which involves national and international collaboration. The Station's small core of academic staff has produced over 500 scientific publications in the last 20 years. They have also been remarkably successful in gaining research grants, generating a total income of £2.8 million over the last 10 years. The research carried out at UMBSM has always comprised both pure and applied aspects; in recent years, there has been greater emphasis on fisheries-related themes of direct practical and socioeconomic significance.

Research Strategy

The current UMBSM Research Strategy emphasizes the following themes:

- New approaches to improving the sustainability of fisheries and reducing their environmental impacts;
- Functional and evolutionary aspects of marine biodiversity, especially in the Clyde sea-area, in relation to local and global environmental change;
- Key processes influencing regional sea-water and environmental quality, with particular emphasis on microbial and chemical dynamics;
- Issues and implementation of marine conservation and coastal zone management programmes both in the UK and overseas.



Rupert Ormond and Mauvis Gore take the lead at the ceilidh celebration of their wedding on 8 May 2004

People & Events 2004/2005

Arrivals

A special welcome to four research students who joined during the year:

- Mohammad Abu Daya from Gaza City, Palestine, studying "Coastal management in East Mediterranean: from satellite to citizen" under the supervision of Dr Rupert Ormond.
- Ana Amorim from Oporto, Portugal, studying "Plankton interactions in the Clyde Sea" under the supervision of Dr Fiona Hannah.
- Thomas Clavierie from Bordeaux, France studying "Morphology and behaviour in the squat lobster (*Munida rugosa*)" under the supervision of Dr Philip Smith.
- Louisa Ponnampalam from Malaysia studying "The ecology and habitat use of spinner dolphins in Egypt" under the supervision of Dr Rupert Ormond.

Centenary of Scottish National Antarctic Expedition

To celebrate the centenary of the safe return of the Scottish National Antarctic

Expedition, in their ship "Scotia" under the leadership of Dr William Spiers Bruce, UMBSM organized a series of talks by several esteemed speakers to coincide with celebrations in Millport. HRH the Princess Royal visited the island to support the events and unveiled a plaque now on a cairn opposite the Marine Station, which marks the original landing site of the "Scotia".

Basking Shark Conservation

One of the principal locations where basking sharks have been regularly seen is South-West Scotland. A project, funded by the Save Our Seas Foundation, is being undertaken at UMBSM to develop a conservation tool for monitoring basking shark populations. If you happen to sight a basking shark in the main study area please contact The Basking Shark Project (Dr Mauvis Gore) at UMBSM (Tel: 01475 530 581).

In Brief...

RBGE Palm House reopens

HRH Prince Charles opened the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's refurbished Temperate Palm House on 18 March 2005. An iconic part of the Edinburgh landscape, the Grade-A Listed Victorian Palm House is the tallest of its kind in the United Kingdom. Its refurbishment programme has been a pivotal part of a larger three-year, £800,000 plus investment project to transform the way in which the organisation communicates its mission to explore and explain the world of plants. The occasion also marked the launch of the Garden's new Windows on the World Experience.

A key feature of the new visitor experience is enhanced interpretation through more than 11 hours' worth of commentary

from botanists and horticulturalists via a state-of-the-art audio-pass system, being featured in the United Kingdom for the first time.

There are 5,400 individual plants, representing 2,400 species and 235 plant families on display in the Glasshouses.

These include:

- Fastest growing plant – *Bambusa vulgaris*;
- Biggest leaf area – *Victoria amazonica*;
- World's worst weed – water hyacinth;
- Most important food crop – rice – more than a half of the world's population eat rice every day;
- Tastiest plant – real vanilla from *Vanilla orchid*;
- Most dangerous plant – *Strophanthus* source of cardiac glycoside (arrow poison) strophanthine;

- Most ancient plant – *Psilotum* – related to earliest land plant;
- Sexiest plant – cocoa – contains chemical similar to human love-hormone;
- Most environmentally responsible plant – jojoba – contains vegetable oil – a substitute for sperm whale oil;
- Celebrity plant – Aloe vera – features in opening scenes of the film, *English Patient*, as a skin salve

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has three Regional Gardens in Scotland at Benmore, Argyll; Dawyck, Peeblesshire and Logan, Galloway and specialists working in more than 40 countries.



The refurbished Palm House at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh

In Brief...

EPIS Entrepreneur Joins ICB

Dr Alison Blackwell and her company, Advanced Pest Solutions Ltd. joined Professor Mary Bownes' Research Group at the Institute of Cell Biology, University of Edinburgh, in December 2004 as part of the 'Edinburgh Pre-Incubation Scheme'. EPIS is an innovative programme to encourage entrepreneurship, funded jointly by the University of Edinburgh, Scottish Enterprise and the European Development Fund. Dr Blackwell has previously held various academic positions within Scottish Universities and is best known for her pioneering work on biting midges in Scotland.

APS Ltd. focuses on the development and implementation of high-technology solutions to pest and disease problems associated with human populations. The company is working on a number of novel applications aimed at filling gaps in the market caused by a combination of redundancy and withdrawal of conventional, primarily chemical-based products. In addition, APS is actively working with research organisations and commercial companies at various stages of their own product development, together with working with key customers on the development and implementation of pest-management programmes.

The company was recently highlighted in 'The Scotsman' as one of the scheme's successes, being the first EPIS-supported project to raise significant first-round funding, within only 3 months of incorporation.

The future of crofting

Presentations made by the speakers and a summary of the seminar and workshops held last November by SAC and Crofters Commission are available on the web at: www.sac.ac.uk/crofting

SAC and the Crofters Commission are actively seeking comment from all interested parties on the future of crofting.

Comment should be sent to: Crofters' Comments, SAC, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JG or email, crofterscomments@sac.co.uk.

Professor Bill McKelvey, Chief Executive of SAC is encouraging feedback. He said, "Crofters have a substantial role to play, as land managers, in the highlands and islands. The new Single Farm Payment Scheme provides opportunities for the development of new types of enterprise, the reshaping of existing

agricultural businesses to become more environmentally friendly and, increasingly, for the production of more output for local markets. Feedback on the future of crofting and conference itself will help SAC ensure that the services it provides are in line with the needs of crofting communities."

Shane Rankin, Chief Executive, Crofters Commission said, "Crofting as a form of land tenure has a significant role in the development of the remotest parts of Scotland. The right to live on and work a small area of land has sustained crofters and communities for decades. The Commission will continue to work with crofters and communities to explore how their land and rights can be used to best advantage.

A number of reports and presentations are available at www.sac.ac.uk/crofting



David Green, chair of the Crofters Commission (left), with Professor Bill McKelvey, SAC chief executive and principal

Earth Observation Forum

The Earth Observation Forum, to be held at the Scottish Natural Heritage's Battleby Conference Centre, near Perth, on 11 May 2005, will review present capabilities in the use of satellite and airborne EO in pursuit of our research and applied goals.

This one-day event is sponsored by ECRR, the Edinburgh Earth Observatory, the Aberdeen Research Consortium, and Scottish Natural Heritage.

To register interest please go to www.ecrr.org.uk

Forum Programme:

	Topic	Speaker
08:45	Registration	
09:10	Welcome	Chris Browitt, ECRR
09:15	Keynote Lecture-Horizon Scanning	Gordon Campbell, European Space agency
Session 1	EO & Climate Change	<i>Chair: Colin Stewart, Scottish Natural Heritage</i>
10:00	Landcover Map 2000	Geoff Smith, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
10:20	Coastal impacts/Habitat	Alistair Rennie, Scottish Natural Heritage
10:40	Conservation	Clifton Bain, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
11:00	Coffee/Tea/Juan	
Session 2	Forests and Landscapes	<i>Chair: Tim Malthus, University of Edinburgh</i>
11:20	Forestry Applications	Juan Suarez, Forest Research
11:40	Landscape Change Impacts	David Miller, Macaulay Institute
12:00	New Applications of Imaging Radar	Iain Woodhouse, University of Edinburgh
12:20	Discussion	
12:40	Lunch	
Session 3	Food Security/crop monitoring	<i>Chair: Chris Browitt, ECRR</i>
13:40	Crop Monitoring	Christophe Sannier, Cranfield Centre for GI Management
14:00	Remote Sensing of Farmer Subsidy Claims	Mike Wooding, RSACL
14:20	Food Security, the MARS-FOOD Approach	Felix Rembold, JRC
Session 4	Health	<i>Chair: David Taylor, Centres for Tropical Veterinary Medicine and Infectious Diseases</i>
14:40	Overview and the Scottish Midge	Beth Purse, University of Oxford
15:00	Landscape Controls Parasitic Disease Transmission in Tibetan China	Mark Danson, University of Salford
15:20	Parasitic Disease Control (Africa)	Eric Fèvre, University of Edinburgh
15:40	Coffee/Tea	
Session 5	Hazards	<i>Chair: Iain Woodhouse, Edinburgh Earth Observatory</i>
16:00	Ground Movements	Chris Browitt, University of Edinburgh
16:20	From Observations to Impact	Peter Buchanan, Met Office
16:40	Environmental Monitoring in Ayrshire	Martin Smith, BGS
17:00	Discussion	
17:30- 18:30	Reception	

People & Events

ECRR DIARY 2005–2006

2005

May 11	Forum Earth observation	SNH Battleby Centre, near Perth	08.45
June 1	Summer Reception	St Leonard's Hall, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh	17.00 19.30
	Executive Committee	SAC King's Buildings	15.00
June 10	SSAC	TBA	00.00
Sep 5	Directors' Lunch	Institute of Aquaculture, Stirling University Host: Professor Randolph Richards	12.30
	Executive Committee	Stirling University	10.30
Oct 3	Directors' lunch:	TBA	00.00
Nov 2	Main Board meeting	TBA	15.00
	Winter reception	TBA	17.00– 19.00
Dec 5	Directors' lunch	Forest Research, Roslin Host: Dr Chris Quine	12.30
	Executive Committee	TBA	10.30
Feb 6 2006	Directors' lunch	Mountain Centre, UHI Millennium Institute, Perth Host: Dr Martin Price	

Farewell & Welcome

Professor Peter Gregory took up post as Director of the Scottish Crop Research Institute on 1 April 2005 on the retiral of Professor John Hillman. Peter was previously Professor of Soil Science at the University of Reading, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Food, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, with special responsibility for research activities at The University of Reading.

John Hillman has been an outstanding scientific leader, not only for colleagues at SCRI, but also for science in general. He has not been afraid to take high profile positions on issues such as GM crops. We know that he will not be resting on his laurels and we wish him well for the future.

Seeing is believing

An inaugural professorial lecture by Chris Glasbey of Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland, Visiting Professor of Image Analysis at SAC, will be given on **Wednesday 27 April 2005** at SAC King's Buildings Campus, Edinburgh, commencing at 17.30 hours. This public lecture will explore the diversity of ways in which computers can be used to interpret digital images in scientific work.

Scottish Centre for Animal Welfare Sciences AGM

The SCAWS AGM will be held on Wednesday 13th April at 14.00h in the Lower Lecture Theatre at the Easter Bush Veterinary Centre. The meeting will be followed by a discussion on animal welfare issues involving castration and tail docking lead by Brian Hosie (SAC), Vince Molony and Joyce Kent (Edinburgh University), with contributions from farmers.

ECRR Member Organisations

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College of Science & Engineering	
College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine	
College of Humanities & Social Science	
Scottish Agricultural College	www.sac.ac.uk
Research & Development	
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Heriot Watt University, School of Life Sciences	www.sls.hw.ac.uk
Napier University, School of Life Sciences	www.napier.ac.uk/fhls/lifesciences
University of Stirling, Institute of Aquaculture	www.aquaculture.stir.ac.uk
UHI Millennium Institute	www.uhi.ac.uk
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Moredun Research Institute	www.mri.sari.ac.uk
Forest Research, Northern Research Station	www.forestry.gov.uk
Roslin Institute	www.roslin.ac.uk
Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland	www.bioss.sari.ac.uk
British Geological Survey	www.bgs.ac.uk
Centre for Ecology & Hydrology Edinburgh	www.ceh.ac.uk
DEFRA Lasswade Veterinary Laboratory	www.defra.gov.uk/vla
MRC Human Reproductive Sciences Unit	www.hrsu.mrc.ac.uk
National Museums of Scotland	www.nms.ac.uk
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh	www.rbge.org.uk
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – Scotland	www.rspb.org.uk
Scottish Agricultural Science Agency	www.sasa.gov.uk
Scottish Crop Research Institute	www.scri.sari.ac.uk
Scottish Natural Heritage	www.snh.org.uk
Scotland & N. Ireland Forum for Environmental Research	www.sniffer.org.uk
Edinburgh Centre for Tropical Forests	www.nmw.ac.uk/ectf
Scottish Centre for Animal Welfare Sciences	

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FUTURE ISSUES

Contributions to the Bush Telegraph are welcomed. All contributions, comments and suggestions can be emailed to Mike Steele at m.steele@ed.sac.ac.uk.

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