

BUSH TELEGRAPH

The House Magazine of the Edinburgh Centre for Rural Research

Web Watch ...

ECRR

View the new ECRR web site that is under development at www.ecrr.org.uk

Exploring the mysteries of genetics

On the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA this site explains some of the key concepts and the personalities involved
www.dnafb.org

Bioinformatics basics

A very useful UK resource for those interested in computational molecular biology.
www.hgmp.mrc.ac.uk/CC/P11/index.jsp

Ethical dilemmas explored

The Science, Religion and Technology Project, initiated by the Church of Scotland more than 30 years ago, plays an increasingly important



Scotland's Landscape - a fixed asset ?

8th May 2003 at Scottish Natural Heritage's Battleby Centre near Perth.

A Conference you can afford to attend!



RSPB Scotland

Grazing and moorland birds - can sheep and moorland birds get on?

LEARN

British Geological Survey

BGS identifies groundwater nitrate vulnerable zones for Scotland.



Scottish Institute for Biotechnology Education

Green Fingerprinting at the Scottish Institute for Biotechnology Education to show teachers and pupils techniques to help conservation

School of GeoSciences

IERM + Geology and Geophysics + Geography + Meteorology = *School of GeoSciences*.....
.....and create

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EDITORIAL

You have to read Ian Aitken's column very carefully this month otherwise you will miss his early notice of retirement from the role as ECRR Scientific Director. We must say a big thank you least we forget how important a role he has played in networking amongst the ECRR members. People like Ian and previous post holders play an unsung role in facilitating the flow of informal but important information amongst scientific communities like the one in and around Edinburgh. His replacement will be Chris Browitt who knows ECRR well and we wish him good luck.

ECRR, with ARC and BEN, are organising an excellent conference season on 8th May 2003 at SNH Battleby on **Scotland's Landscape – A fixed Asset?** The registration fee is a bargain and thus there is a wonderful opportunity to attract younger delegates. Please consider persuading colleagues to attend. Perhaps you have research information that would make poster presentations?

Please remember there is an electronic an version of Bush Telegraph available on the ECRR website at www.ecrr.org.uk

Mike Steele
Editor

Correspondents please note.

**Deadline for copy for next issue is
May 26th 2003.**

**All contributions, comments and
suggestions can now be e-mailed to
M.Steele@ed.sac.ac.uk with copies to
m.talbot@bioss.ac.uk please.**

ROTA OF SOLICITED CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUSH TELEGRAPH

MARCH

British Geological Survey
Biomathematics & Statistics Scotland
University of Edinburgh, Institute of Ecology and Resource Management
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC Research Division
University of Edinburgh, Institute of Cell & Molecular Biology

JUNE

University of Edinburgh, Institute of Cell, Animal & Population Biology
NERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Edinburgh
MRC Human Reproductive Sciences Unit
University of Edinburgh Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
University of Edinburgh, Department of Geography
Napier University, School of Life Sciences

SEPTEMBER

Edinburgh Centre for Tropical Forests
CVL Lasswade Veterinary Laboratory
National Museums of Scotland
Roslin Institute
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Scottish Natural Heritage
University Marine Biological Station, Millport
University of Edinburgh, Centre for the Study of Environmental Change
& Sustainability

DECEMBER

University of Stirling, Institute of Aquaculture
Moredun Research Institute
Forest Research Northern Research Station
University of Edinburgh, Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine
Scottish Agricultural Science Agency
Scottish Centre for Animal Welfare Sciences
Scottish Crop Research Institute

ECRR EVENTS – SPRING / SUMMER 2003

Mar 31	Executive Committee	CECS, John Muir Building, KB 11.00am
Apr 7	Directors' Lunch	Biomathematics & Statistics Scotland JCMB, Kings Buildings 12.30pm Host : Rob Kempton
May 8	Forum	<u>"Scotland's Landscape - a Fixed Asset?"</u> One-day meeting SNH Battleby Centre, near Perth.
Jun 20	Directors' lunch	University Marine Biological Station, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae Host: Dr Rupert Ormond
Nov 3	Directors' Lunch, Main Board Meeting & AGM	Moredun Research Institute, Bush Loan, Penicuik Host: Prof Quintin McKellar

SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR'S NOTES:



Professor Ian Aitken

People

Change is refreshing it is said and ECRR continues to experience change amongst senior staff of member organisations which, in turn, alters the composition of its Board. In early February Dr Chris Browitt, who chairs ECRR's Executive Committee, took early retirement from the British Geological Survey and has been succeeded as Head of Station by Dr Martin Smith who, ex officio, becomes a member of the Board. Fortunately, Dr Browitt's continuing affiliation to the School of Geology and Geophysics in the University of Edinburgh allows him to continue in his chairmanship of the Executive Committee and, significantly, the Board recently confirmed him as ECRR's next Scientific Director when the present incumbent stands down in November.

At the Roslin Institute, Professor John Clark, currently Joint Head of the Institute's Department of Gene Expression and Development becomes Director and Chief Executive in August in succession to Professor Grahame Bulfield, now Vice Principal and Head of the College of Science and Engineering in the University.

It is also pleasing that, following the appointment of Dr Charles Jedrej, a social anthropologist, to the Board as nominee of the College of Humanities and Social Science, all three Colleges of the University are now represented within ECRR. Given the University's role as patron of ECRR it is wholly appropriate that all its relevant scientific activities are in a position to facilitate links amongst the constituent members of ECRR.

Events

Annual Lecture: This year's Annual ECRR Lecture, supported jointly by the Institute of Biology (Scotland) and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, was given by Professor John Lawton, Chief Executive of the Natural Environment Research Council, on 14th February. Addressing his theme, 'Life on a little known planet and unsustainable development' in a vibrant presentation, Professor Lawton touched upon the vast diversity of animal, plant and microbial life forms on earth, many of which are still imperfectly understood, the damage already exerted by human predation and the identifiable threats that might be minimised or averted given concerted political action. Stark statistics that illustrated the global devastation already wrought on natural resources such as forestry and marine fish stocks gave the audience not simply reason to ponder but a challenge in identifying conservation actions. For ECRR, there is the additional challenge of identifying the speaker for the 2004 prestigious Annual Lecture.

Landscape Forum, 8th May SNH Battleby, Perth

As previously announced ECRR, with the collaboration of the Aberdeen Research Consortium (ARC) and the Business & Environment Network (BEN) is holding a Forum on Scotland's Landscape on Thursday 8th May at Battleby, near Perth, details of which are given elsewhere in this issue of the Bush Telegraph. As well as the broad intrinsic interest in the theme particular topicality has been imparted by recent publication of the Scottish Executive's Biodiversity Strategy for Scotland which seeks to raise public awareness of a range of environmental issues in marine, rural and urban settings. Conservation and enhancement of Scotland's natural environment are regarded as essential

in their own right and as integral parts of what attracts many tourists to Scotland. The Forum will be exploring several topics directly relevant to the Biodiversity Strategy, thus heightening its appeal to the wider community. Why not register now?

LEAF

For some years now UK farming has been under considerable economic pressure and public scrutiny not least because of concerns prompted by outbreaks of animal disease such as BSE and FMD, by various food safety matters, by animal welfare images and by a range of environmental issues such as GM crops, water pollution and habitat damage. Many of these topics have been and continue to be subjects of research investigations that seek to clarify scientific uncertainty and to inform public debate. The agricultural sector too has been active in addressing public disquiet in a variety of ways. Amongst these is the LEAF initiative (Linking Environment and Farming) which was set up in 1991 as a registered charity to help farmers to improve their environment and business performance and create a better public understanding of farming through a nationwide network of demonstration farms. Its founding members were drawn from diverse backgrounds – farmers, environmentalists, food and agricultural organisations, consumers, government and academics – to ensure that its views and policies were outcomes of wide discussion rather than particular sector thinking.

Whilst originating in England and centred in the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ, LEAF now has a growing Scottish membership, a

Scottish Advisory Council and volunteer demonstration farms. These afford opportunity for public visits to encourage greater public appreciation of the realities of farming, its place in the food chain and its relevance to the local and national economy and to the public good.

In some respects LEAF's mission statement echoes the theme of Professor Lawton's lecture, indicating a degree of common thinking : LEAF is committed to a viable agriculture which is environmentally and socially acceptable and ensures the continuity of supply of wholesome affordable food while conserving and enhancing the fabric and wildlife of the British countryside for future generations.

To find out more about LEAF contact its office at the above address or visit its web site (www.leafuk.org).

And, finally

As a quarterly 'house journal' the Bush Telegraph has been around for several years, the present issue being number 46 in the series. Its circulation has been within the ECRR membership and to groups and individuals having links with ECRR. More recently, it has become available electronically through the web site which may have broadened its readership. However, such is the impact of our publication that the National Library of Scotland has requested its deposition in its collection of notable documents, a request that will be readily met and which may encourage reluctant contributors!

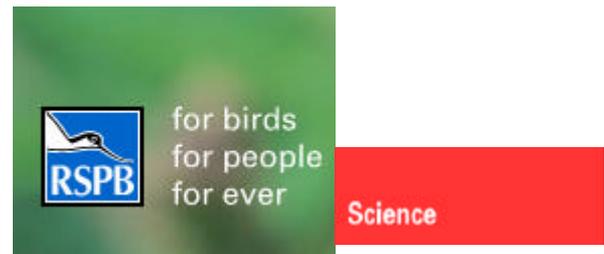
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS - SCOTLAND

James Pearce-Higgins & Murray Grant
RSPB Scotland, Dunedin House, 25
Ravelstone Terrace, Edinburgh, EH4 3TP

Grazing and moorland birds

Sheep numbers have increased markedly in the uplands in recent decades, whilst associated with this the cover of heather moorland has declined, being replaced in part by grassland. Few studies have quantified the impact of these trends on bird populations. We measured the abundance of a suite of moorland breeding bird species and related this to detailed vegetation assessments, across 85 plots in southern Scotland that had been subject to a range of historical grazing regimes. Using General Linear Models, we first analysed the effect of non-vegetation factors that influence bird distribution (e.g. altitude, soils, crow abundance). We then modelled the effect of grazing-related vegetation measures in explaining residual variation in bird abundance in order to assess the likely impact of long-term grazing pressure upon bird densities.

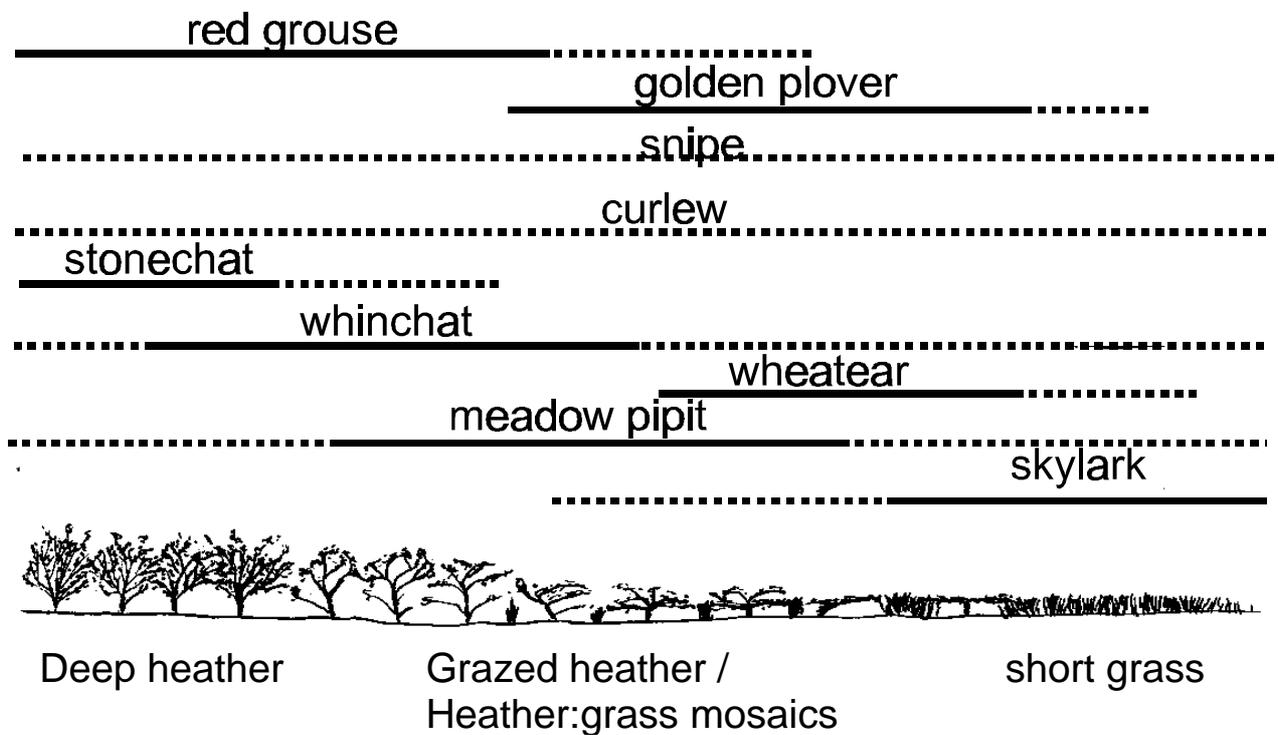
Of the nine species considered in detail, red grouse and stonechat were associated with



vegetation characteristic of low grazing pressure, particularly medium to tall heather cover, although for both species, heterogeneous habitats were preferable to a monoculture of tall heather. Although moorland breeding waders are often considered to have declined due to increases in grazing pressure, we found no evidence to support this in south Scotland. Indeed, the affinity of golden plovers for open vegetation suggests that high grazing pressures enhance densities of this species. Skylark and wheatear densities were highest on moorland with short vegetation, whilst whinchat and meadow pipits were most abundant where bracken or grass, respectively, predominated over heather. These species are therefore unlikely to have been negatively affected by increased grazing on heather moorland. The results of this study suggest that few moorland bird species are closely associated with extensive heather cover, and demonstrate that changes to grazing regimes need to be tailored to the existing habitat condition of a site if they are to be beneficial for moorland birds. Thus, any future widespread losses of hill sheep may be detrimental to some moorland birds of conservation importance.

Further work to examine the applicability of these models to other upland regions is currently underway, and examine in more detail the mechanisms underlying the influence of grazing upon moorland birds. For more information, contact Murray Grant (murray.grant@rspb.org.uk).

RSPB SCOTLAND – Grazing & Moorland Birds (Continued)



Schematic summary of the distribution of nine widespread moorland bird species in south Scotland according to grazing related habitat variation. Lines indicate the range of habitats occupied, with the preferred habitats indicated by continuous lines.

SCOTTISH INSTITUTE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Dr Antony Weir, SIBE, The University of Edinburgh,
Darwin 707, The King's Buildings, Mayfield Road, Edinburgh
EH9 3JR sibe@ed.ac.uk
0131 650 7042.



Green Fingerprinting

Learning about DNA Technology is part of the school curricula. A few support materials and practicals have been developed for teachers showing how this has been applied to forensic science.

However, as ECRR researchers will know, PCR and related procedures have revolutionised many fields of systematics and ecology as well. The Scottish Institute for Biotechnology Education (SIBE) has won one of 5 DNA Anniversary Awards from the BBSRC (and the only award in Scotland) to show teachers and their pupils how techniques such as DNA Fingerprinting can help conservation. For example, identifying individuals of cryptic species (such as otters from their spraints), establishing appropriate seed provenance for reforestation programmes, and examining taxonomic relationships in previously difficult groups. In addition, SIBE staff will be developing discussion activities where teachers, pupils and their parents can look at how research,

commercial or public-sector interests could make use of DNA data and on the threats to civil liberties that such a database raises.

The workshops will initially be run for teachers and subsequently for their pupils and their parents. In addition, to SIBE staff, University of Edinburgh students, the Science and Plants for Schools (SAPS) team and Bio-Rad Laboratories Biotechnology Explorer have agreed to offer assistance in Green Fingerprinting. We have some initial scenarios where DNA Fingerprinting has been used to enhance ecological and systematics research, but we would be pleased to hear from you if you felt your work would fit well into this context and be of interest to school pupils or if you know of any teachers who would like to attend the workshop.

For further information contact us at the address above or speak to Professor Mary Bownes at the next ECRR meeting.

SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH



Professor John Grace, Head of School
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e-mail: j.grace@ed.ac.uk

In my last note for *Bush Telegraph* (March 2002) I outlined the plans for reorganisation of the University, especially how they might influence our work in (the former) Institute of Ecology and Resource Management (IERM). Progress has been made. The former IERM, the Department of Geology and Geophysics, the Department of Geography, and the Institute of Meteorology are now united in the new *School of GeoSciences*. For a while, we were called the *School of Earth, Environmental and Geographical Sciences*; however, there was overwhelming support for the name *GeoSciences*. We define GeoSciences as the sciences relating to the Earth, its landscapes and its human cultures, thus embracing all interests in the School from geophysics to human geography. Formation of the new School has been an exciting and very stimulating project, which will culminate in the largest and, I hope, the most successful grouping of such academics in the UK.

The synergies between the constituent groups have become self evident, and most members of the School have engaged in interdisciplinary seminars in an effort to form new research groupings which will be much more fluid than former departments and institutes could ever have been. Perhaps the brightest product of our recent discussions is the concept of The Edinburgh Earth Observatory, an idea that originated within Geography but which has been embraced by all parts of the School. Here, we would continue our research on topics such as the carbon and nitrogen cycles, long-term change in ecosystems, seismology and survey of natural resources. We would play a more effective role in our international partnerships in global observing networks such as FLUXNET and CarboEurope. The Observatory is but one example - if only a fraction of these ideas attracts external funding we will have succeeded splendidly.

At the same time there are synergies that relate to teaching. With a pool of 80 academics it becomes possible to develop a suite of new courses, concentrating first on MSc and later on short courses aimed at a commercial market (Continual Professional Development, CPD).

Is there a downside? Of course there is. Any reorganisation is disruptive and it consumes people's time and energy, especially as all the usual duties such as student recruitment, teaching, supervising students, reporting research work to sponsors, and so forth continue at full pace. Any reorganisation that involves merging of smaller units needs to worry about the problem of creating a new ethos and a new set of loyalties, especially in relation to the work of support staff whose motivation may be lost whilst the reorganisation is in progress. Other Schools, who reorganised one or two years before us, report a one-year decline in their output followed by a surge.

Other Heads of Institutes who are regular readers of these columns may be interested in the composition of the School. It is one of the largest in the University, although not as large as Biology. We have 1200 undergraduates, 160 PhD students and 100 MSc students. Our staff of 235 is made up of 25 Professors, 56 Readers, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers, 10 Senior Fellows, 75 Postdoctoral and Graduate Research Assistants, and 69 administrative, clerical, IT and technical support staff.

Alan MacDonald and Derek Ball

Hydrogeologists, Murchison House, West Mains Road, Edinburgh,
EH4 SQX, 0131 667 1000, amm@bgs.ac.uk

NITRATE AND NITRATE VULNERABLE ZONES IN SCOTLAND

Nitrate derived from agricultural activity is a serious concern to Scotland's water environment. Groundwater and surface water are interdependent, so contamination of groundwater can have a serious effect on the quality of our rivers and lochs.

European legislation requires nitrate vulnerable zones to be designated in areas where concentrations of NO_3 in groundwater are at risk of exceeding 50 mg.l^{-1} . Driven by this legislation the Scottish Executive asked BGS to assess the extent of nitrate contamination throughout Scottish groundwaters, and to devise a methodology to identify areas vulnerable to nitrate contamination*.

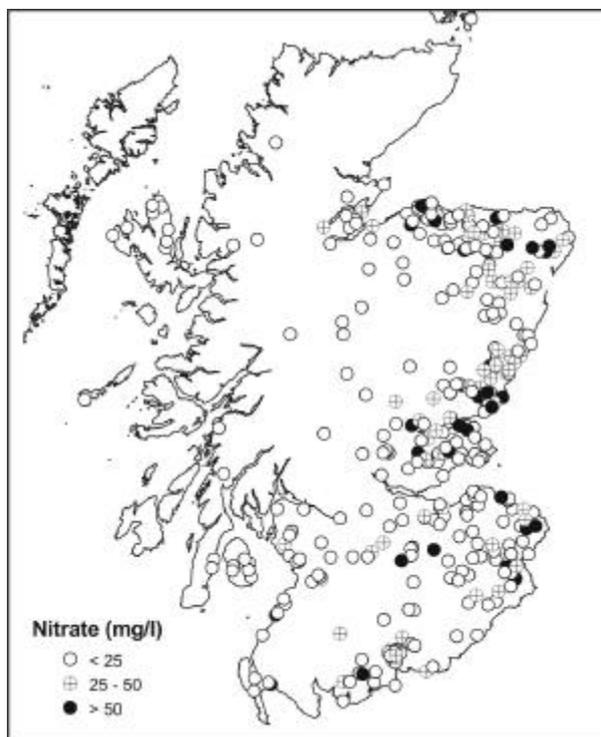


Fig 1. Groundwater nitrate concentrations from boreholes in Scotland.

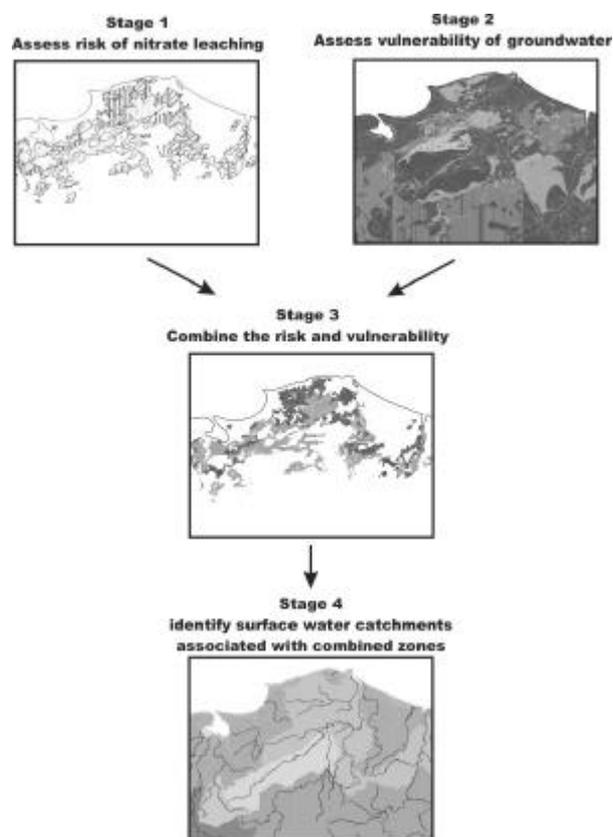


Fig 2 A summary of the methodology used to identify groundwater NVZs in Scotland.

Groundwater nitrate data from a variety of sources were collated (see Figure 1). The data indicate significant nitrate concentrations in groundwater throughout the east of Scotland, where arable land dominates and the rocks are permeable. In these areas, 25% of approximately 2000 samples exceed 50 mg.l^{-1} . Throughout the rest of Scotland, where arable agriculture is rare, less than 5% of approximately 1000 samples exceed 50 mg.l^{-1} .

Groundwater nitrate vulnerable zones for Scotland were developed by BGS using a methodology which combined several datasets (see Figure 2). Digital solid and superficial geology data (at 1:50k) for the

country were interpreted to give an indication of aquifer vulnerability. This was combined with information on the risk of nitrate leaching from crops and soils developed by the Macaulay Institute in Aberdeen. The final zones were then calculated by identifying local water catchments associated with areas of highest risk and vulnerability.

The results of the vulnerability/risk analysis were consistent with the available nitrate data for much of Scotland. Two minor exceptions can be attributed to the presence of intensive livestock rearing and dairy farms. The approximate location of the NVZs is shown in Figure 3.

The nitrate vulnerable zones have now been designated by the Scottish Executive and action programmes are being established to reduce nitrate contamination in these areas.

More information on this project and a GIS showing the data is available at:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/scottishexec/>



Fig 3 Approximate locations of the NVZs designated by the Scottish Executive in 2002.

SCOTLAND'S LANDSCAPE - A FIXED ASSET?



8th May 2003

Venue: Scottish Natural Heritage's Battleby Centre near Perth

This forum is jointly organised by ECRR ARC and BEN and brings together a broad range of individuals and organisations who share an interest in and concern for the rural landscape of Scotland, both managed and natural.

Both as a heritage and a resource Scotland's landscape is an intrinsic asset that should be used for national benefit with due regard for its long term management and external factors such as climate change that may influence management needs. But is it a fixed asset? Could it be used more effectively than at present or is there a risk in too much interference? Public expectations, economic requirements and policy objectives at national and wider levels may call for a shorter or longer term restructuring of core rural industries. In turn, these may impact, beneficially or otherwise, on Scotland's landscape. Is there a clear vision of what is optimal and sustainable?

For delegates, effective outcomes should be heightened awareness of landscape issues of particular relevance to Scotland, of prospective changes in use of the resource as national asset and of how such changes relate to the European policy framework. The forum will also provide opportunity for inter-sectoral networking and development of common interests.

Registration Fee

This has been kept at a very modest level to allow as many students as possible to attend. £25 before 18 April £35 after.

Contact details

ECRR, Room 3618, JCMB, University of Edinburgh, Kings Buildings, Mayfield Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ

Tel: 0131 650 4890 Fax: 0131 650 4901
Email: mike@bioss.ac.uk

Please see the ECRR web pages at <http://www.ecrr.org.uk>. From where copies of the registration form can be printed.

The organisers gratefully acknowledge the support of Scottish Natural Heritage in organising this event.

SCOTLAND'S LANDSCAPE – A FIXED ASSET?

FORUM PROGRAMME ON 8 MAY 2003 AT BATTLEBY CENTRE, PERTH

0930 – 1000 Registration & refreshments

1000 Welcome by Professor Ian Aitken, Edinburgh Centre for Rural Research

Session 1 Some key considerations

Chair: David Graham, Environmental Manager, Royal Bank of Scotland

Rapporteur: Dr Colin Legg, University of Edinburgh

1010 Scotland's landscape - an important part of its natural heritage:

Professor Michael Usher, University of Stirling

1045 Historical perspectives:

Dr Charles Warren, St Andrews University

1115 Drivers of change - the human dimension

Dr Dick Birnie, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute

1145 Open discussion

1210 Session summary: Dr Colin Legg

1220 Lunch

Session 2 Utilising the resources

Chair: Professor Maggie Gill, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute

Rapporteur: Daniel Gotts, Scottish Natural Heritage

1330 Appreciation, recreation & tourism

Dr Bob Aitken, Scottish Countryside Activities Council

1400 Power generation

Chris Bronsdon, Scottish Energy Environment Foundation

1430 Water resources

Professor Peter Maitland, Fish Conservation Centre, Haddington

1500 Break (Tea/coffee)

Session 3 Nature and policy

Chair: Professor John Oldham, SAC

Rapporteur: Dr Ian Bainbridge, Ecology Adviser, Scottish Executive

1520 Enhancing Scotland's biodiversity

Professor Steve Albon, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Banchory

1550 Landscape policy framework

Simon Brooks, Scottish Natural Heritage

1620 Summary of Sessions 2 and 3 : Daniel Gotts and Dr Ian Bainbridge

1640 Close of forum

LEARN: LINKING ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY WITH ACADEMIC RESEARCH

The **Centre for Human Ecology**, Edinburgh, will take over **LEARN** from the end of March 2003.

The service will be renamed:
LEARN: Linking Environment and Society with Academic Research

This is a great boost for LEARN, as CHE will take on the service alongside their core activities and therefore more staff time can be given to LEARN than is currently possible. The service will continue to operate as comprehensively as before.

Gill Calder will continue to manage the email and website until the 31st of March, when CHE take over. The website and email addresses will not change immediately, and both will be redirected for some time, so there will be no loss of any prospective students as a result of this development. As most students need to have decided on a dissertation topic by the end of March, CHE will be taking over at a quiet time, so no problems are expected with the hand-over. CHE have exciting new plans to expand the service into other subject areas - they'll notify

you of these themselves. If you don't know anything about CHE, their website can be viewed at: www.che.ac.uk

Gill is constantly receiving enquiries about new projects, so please do get any topics via the web-form at:
www.scotlink.org/learn/proforma.cfm)
as soon as possible.

Gill Calder
LEARN Project Officer
Scottish Environment LINK
PO Box 23476
Edinburgh
EH4 1YR

Please note the change of postcode
www.scotlink.org/learn learn@scotlink.org

The Editor
ECRR Bush Telegraph
17th. January, 2003.

Dear Sir,
I refer to your Editorial in the December 2002 Bush Telegraph, and to the reference to a possible change of name.

It might be of some interest to your more recent members and younger readers to know the way in which the name Edinburgh Centre for Rural Research came about.

Prior to 1990, the organisation was known as the Edinburgh Centre for Rural Economy. Its function was very different from the present one, and although many of the many member organisations were the same, its main purpose in life was to act as a 'factor' for the farm land at Bush, to tend to such mundane matters as lawns, hedges and drains and to arbitrate over disputed requests for more farm land or for exchanges of one type of land to another, for the purpose of conducting field trials. The member organisations were all sited on the Bush Estate and the 'factoring' role was carried out by a full time Secretary (paid on a Professorial salary scale!) with a staff of about 20 - secretaries, accountants and agricultural artisans. The cost of running this 'service' was very high (£50,000 at 1990's prices) and this had to be divided between the member organisations on some sort of formula, roughly linked to their size and relative holding of land, on long-term lease from the University of Edinburgh. Towards the end of the 1990s there was increasing financial pressure on the member organisations, as a result of their pay-masters squeezing their budgets, and one of the more obvious 'savings' was to endeavour to reduce the subscriptions to ECRE. All this came as a very real shock to the then chairman of ECRR, a retired Scottish law lord and, as the Vice Chairman at that time, I was asked by the University Principal - John Bumett - to

find a new Chairman, more amenable to taking hard commercial decisions. The chair was duly taken up by Quintin Brown, a former Managing Director of SAI (a subsidiary of ICI) and he was faced with a Board of Directors some of whom wished to close the old ECRE organisation down.

Several of us argued that change was needed, not a complete closure, and accordingly a new Constitution was drawn up - and a new name invented, Edinburgh Centre for Rural Research. This change of name was minimal (the initials were almost the same!) but the new role was highly significant. From now on, the emphasis would not be on 'factoring' but on 'facilitating research', especially inter-institutional research. The membership was extended to institutions outside Edinburgh but who nevertheless had programmes of work in common with those pursued by the Bush-based organisations. The membership doubled in a short space of time, and the subscriptions came down to much more reasonable levels. No longer did the Board arbitrate over 'land deals', but instead it discussed research matters of common concern. It developed a programme for the monthly Board meetings aimed firstly at putting 'ECRR on the map' and secondly at allowing Directors to have more regular contacts with the other Directors and scientific colleagues 'on their own home ground'. This pattern has proved beneficial over the last decade, and the decision to change, and not discontinue, the former ECRE has been vindicated.

Whether or not the time has come for the Directors to take another step and change the name for a second time is for them to decide, but this background of the reasons why the current name is as it is may be not only of interest, but also hopefully of some help in coming to a decision.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Wilson.

Former Vice Chairman of ECRE and
Former Scientific Director ECRR

ECRR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

University of Edinburgh

Heriot-Watt University

Napier University

University of Stirling

Scottish Agricultural College

Biomathematics & Statistics Scotland

British Geological Survey

NERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology Edinburgh

Forest Research Northern Research Station

CVL Lasswade Veterinary Laboratory

Moredun Research Institute

MRC Human Reproductive Sciences Unit

National Museums of Scotland

Roslin Institute

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Royal Zoological Society of Scotland

Scottish Agricultural Science Agency

Scottish Crop Research Institute

Scottish Natural Heritage

University Marine Biological Station Millport

ECRR web site : www.ecrr.org.uk