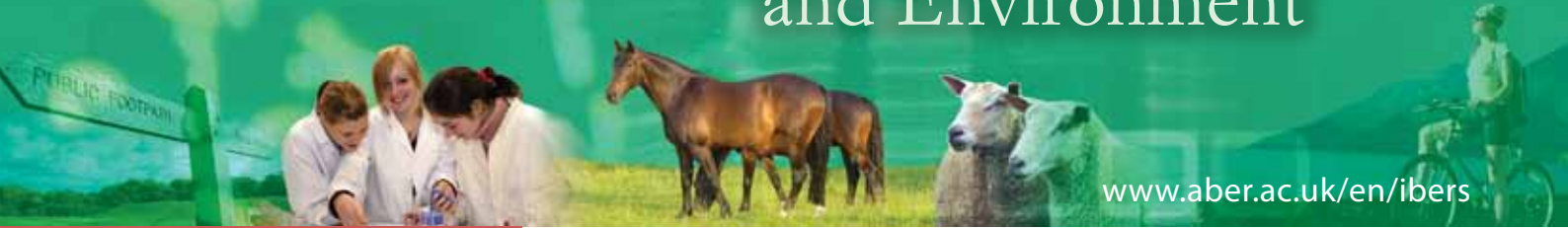


Countryside and Environment



www.aber.ac.uk/en/ibers

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

IBERS Institute of Biological,
Environmental and Rural Sciences

New IBERS Building Opens

After years of planning the new IBERS building on the Penglais campus is now open. Costing £5.6 million, it features state of the art teaching rooms, offices, post-graduate study rooms and its own café area. This building allows all staff involved with teaching within IBERS to work on the same site and will provide new and exciting opportunities of students.



The new IBERS building

A few degrees ahead: two new courses at IBERS

We are pleased to announce that IBERS has added two new and exciting courses to our portfolio of degrees. BSc Environmental Biosciences (C151) and BSc Ecology (C180) will receive their first intake in September 2012. Our Ecology degree is the newest and most modern and forward thinking course of its type in the country. The Environmental Biosciences degree builds on, and improves upon, our previous degree in Environmental Science by focussing on contemporary and future global challenges. The two new schemes complement one another in the scope of topics covered. Both cover

aspects of ecosystem biology and human impacts on these systems, but whereas Environmental Biosciences in addition takes in aspects of physical geography and social sciences, Ecology has a greater focus on how individual organisms and systems interact with and adapt to their environment.

Both degree courses benefit from our excellent location with ready access to a wide range of marine, freshwater and terrestrial habitats. Teaching is integrated with world class research and the excellent facilities at IBERS.

List of Courses

MSc

Managing the Environment

BSc

Countryside Conservation

Countryside Management

Ecology

Environmental Biosciences

Foundation Degree

Countryside Management and
Conservation

Interested?

Phone **Chantal Thomas** on **01970 621904**

Email: czt1@aber.ac.uk

Woodland Management for Biodiversity

Samantha Ward is a new student on the IBERS MSc Managing the Environment scheme. She is funded by the European Social Fund and Welsh Assembly Government 'Access to Masters' scheme to undertake a study of the effects on insect diversity of different woodland management methods used to recover native tree species woodland from exotic conifer plantation in the Rheidol Valley. She will be supervised by Peter Dennis, Dylan Gwynn Jones (both IBERS) and Phil Morgan (Sustainable Forestry Management).

Record recruitment on IBERS courses

Recruitment onto IBERS courses reached an all-time high for September 2011 entry, breaking all previous records. For the first time this year we were unable to offer places to applicants who failed to make the points offered, and this year looks to be just as good.

Countryside Management in Practice study week

Year three 'Countryside Management' and 'Countryside Conservation' students returned to college early in September to spend a week visiting countryside sites around Wales in a Countryside Management in Practice study week. Five days of visits helped students prepare for writing an integrative assignment that required them to plan the future management of the Cambrian Mountains. During the week students visited Tregaron Bog, a wind farm, Cwm Idwal national nature reserve, Lake Vyrnwy, Pwllpeiran, Long Wood community woodland, Nant yr Arian and Coed y Bobl woodland. These visits allowed students to talk directly to staff from a variety of countryside organisations and to experience at first hand the issues and management practices associated with a wide range of habitats.



Students learning about the management of Cwm Idwal National Nature Reserve

Aberystwyth Ecologists venture into the cold Arctic to measure carbon fluxes from the soil

This may not sound like the most exotic trip but it is an important one. The Arctic soil holds $\frac{1}{3}$ of global soil carbon and there is concern that this carbon could be released back into the atmosphere as the climate warms. So

we ventured into the cold Arctic in Swedish Lapland during November 2011 to look at how much carbon is released as CO_2 from the soil during the Arctic winter. This is part of an ongoing research project funded by the NERC and the EU.

Temperatures are of course very low in the Arctic reaching -40°C but these soil systems were biologically active at cold temperatures and do release CO_2 . Such a trip may not be to everyone's taste but we did enjoy seeing the famous *Aurora borealis* (Northern lights) whilst field working.



The amazing *Aurora borealis*

Launch of new Foundation degree course

September 2011 saw the launch of a new Foundation Degree in Countryside Management and Conservation. This vocational course can be two or three years in length depending on whether a six-week or nine-month period of work experience is taken. Practical estates skills form part of the course and students have the option of doing this at advanced level in the final year. Providing the required grades are gained students can progress from this course onto the final year of either the BSc Countryside Management or BSc Countryside Conservation course.

Aberystwyth Conservation Volunteers

The ACV had another successful and active year of weekly tasks in the countryside around Aberystwyth giving students opportunities to get involved with practical management of the countryside and develop their skills. They succeeded in working with new partners and on new sites such as Longwood and Green Phoenix, as well as pairing up with the Greener Gwynedd Group at Bangor University. Not only that, they created more opportunities by doubling tasks some weeks, sending two groups of ACV into the wild! In order to make a lasting mark on Penglais Campus, they have begun work on a campus garden.



ACV building a boardwalk at Green Phoenix

Dr Kipling – makes exceeding fine science!

Richard Kipling successfully completed his PhD on the pollination ecology of Welsh grasslands, before departing to spend the summer working on Skomer Island. Richard's research had demonstrated that pollinating bees are able to discriminate between buttercup flowers of different ages that appear identical to human eyes, because the flowers change their shape and UV reflectance over time.



Dr Richard Kipling