

## Division of Finance and Administration

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The Division is responsible for the provision of the 'non scientific' services to the Institute and encompasses the Units of Engineering and Maintenance, Estate, Glasshouse & Field Research, Finance and Human Resources, Information Technology and Scientific Liaison and Information Services, including Health & Safety, employing a total of 78 staff.

The Division provides a comprehensive service to the scientific community to ensure that they have the resources and ability to carry out research, and that the infrastructure meets all requirements in terms of statutory legislation and health and safety. The variety and sophistication of the work carried out at the Institute continues to increase and the staff within the various Units have responded to this.

The Division is an integral part of the Institute and often provides a breadth and depth of practical experience that is not available elsewhere. The Estates and Glasshouse Unit provide a service ranging from the planting and monitoring of a wide range of agricultural and horticultural trials on the Institute's 400 acres of farmland to the provision of sophisticated facilities in both glasshouses and controlled environment facilities. In doing so they produce consistent, high quality results for scientists despite the vagaries of the Scottish climate.

Similarly the Engineering Unit has to maintain the basic infrastructure of the Institute whilst having to adapt it to meet the needs of increasingly sophisticated (and expensive) equipment. The Institute was very successful in attracting £2.5 million of capital grant from the Scottish Executive Department of Environment and Rural Affairs, which was extremely welcome but had to be managed by the Unit, within an already tight staffing and finance budget. Much of the new equipment requires more sophisticated support and maintenance, and the staff have become extremely adaptable and knowledgeable, whilst continuing to maintain a wide breadth of facilities within a structure that, other than glasshouses, has not changed substantially in the last ten years.

The Institute is increasingly reliant on its computer systems. As such, the IT Unit and its development is central to the Institute's activities. New staff have been

appointed and, building on the investment in the IT infrastructure in earlier years, the Institute plans to invest in an Institute wide information management system to allow it to manage the ever increasing flow of information, provide IT the environment for staff to manage their work, to enable staff to develop the Institute web site, and to allow them to disseminate their work.

In this, staff are also assisted by the Scientific Liaison and Information Services Unit who are tasked with raising the Institute's profile, strategic management of the site, and promoting the science of the Institute to as wide an audience as possible, with particular emphasis on schools. This has been assisted by the appointment of an Education Officer, supported by the Mylnefield Trust. The quality of the displays, posters and presentation is remarkable given the size and resources of the Unit.

The provision of a safe and healthy working environment has always been one of the priorities of the Institute and the Mike DeMaïne, the Institute's Safety Coordinator works closely with the Engineering Unit and all other departments within the Institute to ensure all requirements are adhered to and that a culture of safe working is promoted throughout the Institute. This will be further developed with the increased implementation of procedures under the ISO 9001 standards.

Underpinning all of this is the Finance and Human Resources Unit, which works to ensure that all the administrative processes run as smoothly as possible and that the Institute operates within the available funds by providing relevant and timely financial and management information. Similarly, the HR staff support the Institute staff in all aspects of their work, training and personal development, including accreditation under the Investors in People initiative. Employment legislation and statutory requirements continue to increase and the HR Unit will require to keep pace with such developments.

The Division has to carry out its work within tight financial constraints but the staff approach their work with an enthusiasm and dedication which demonstrates their commitment to the work of the Institute.