

Research Services

Communication and Information Services At the start of the year, with the arrival of a new head of department, *Scientific Liaison and Information Services* became "Communications and Information Services" (CIS). Sarah Stephens undertook the role of Manager, Information Services and by year's end the former SCRI library had received a major refurbishment, including the provision of a lounge area. It is now designated the Information Centre.

Sharon Neilson had her role as Education Officer widened to include management of the many public and specialist events SCRI stages through the year from Open Days to our involvement in the Royal Highland Show.

Another major project for the CIS team was the construction of an entirely new SCRI website. By mid summer the site was "live" and met with critical approval. Lorraine Wakefield joined CIS as Information and Online

Services Officer. She embarked on a staff training programme to enable scientists and other colleagues to update their own staff pages and publications lists.

As well as the usual calendar of events during 2007, CIS supported the LEAF Open Farm Sunday event with marketing and publicity...arranged the Director's summer event for friends and stakeholders...and in December, staged a news conference in Edinburgh to launch Scotland's involvement in the 2008 United Nations Year of the Potato. To mark the event a booklet was published called "101 things you wanted to know about the potato...but were afraid to ask!"



SCRI news conference in Edinburgh to inaugurate the year of the potato.



Cereal Solutions – July 2007

Estate Glasshouse and Field Services Preparations for the building of a new Venlo glasshouse complex required the site to be cleared of a dozen large polythene and net tunnels which housed mainly soft fruit plants. These have been rebuilt in an adjacent field together with six new tunnels to replace space lost by the demolition of

an old unheated glasshouse. The new tunnels have a fully computerised irrigation system, which can vary the quantity and timing of water applied to suit the individual requirements of the different plant populations. This system was also extended to the newly created standing out ground. This consists of eight large bays which are completely enclosed by a 2-metre high wind break. Aluminium benching is to be installed as it released from life-expired glasshouses.



BBC 'River City's' Stephen Purdon – a special guest at the LEAF Open Farm Sunday.

Estate Glasshouse and Field Services staff were heavily involved in LEAF Open Farm Sunday. Team members operated the ever popular tractor tours linking various locations around the farm where displays, including floral attractant insect traps, global warming and minimum tillage, could be viewed. The new 'Living Field' Study Centre was put to work with many children's hands-on activities. Other events during the year where GFS staff were involved with the preparation and maintenance of the trials, as well as support on the day, were 'Cereal Solutions', 'Fruit for the Future' and 'Potatoes in Practice'.

Finance and Corporate Services Finance and Corporate Services had another busy year managing growth in turnover in excess of 2.5%. The eight members of staff provide assistance and advice to all staff members, working with research and support departments in delivering the service. The Contracts Division was established during the year to provide support with the pre and post award stages of external funding and it works closely with Procurement and Finance, the other divisions of Finance and Corporate Services Department in doing so.

Finance and Corporate Services is also responsible for ensuring compliance with Institute internal controls and continually reviews these controls, with support from internal audit to safeguard Institute assets.

In common with many other organisations involved in research, and in accordance with government recommendations, Finance and Corporate Services now prices external funding on a Full Economic Cost basis when the regulations allow this. The government objective is to ensure that the organisations involved in delivering this type of service are better-placed to sustain the infrastructure that supports the delivery of the service and by complying with the recommendation the department supports the activity of building up reserves to replace ageing assets.

To further support the Institute finances, Finance and Corporate Services endeavours to ensure that best value is achieved with regard to costs. The Procurement Division provides guidance and support in this area in accordance with Institute procedures.

The combined efforts of the divisions of Finance and Corporate services enable the production of annual accounts, monthly management accounts, budgeting, planning and risk assessment while simultaneously providing a point of reference for Institute staff on finance matters.

Health & Safety, QA and Environmental management

Joint exercises with Tayside Fire and Rescue and SCRI's first aid and breathing apparatus teams were carried out



An emergency exercise.



in February and September. The February simulated incident focused on rescue and first aid for people overcome by smoke. It was tied in with the annual exercising of the Business Continuity Plan and added a little realism to the role-play. The second simulated incident, in September, exercised the rescue and treatment of casualties contaminated with flammable and toxic chemicals. The exercises led to reviews of some SCRI procedures and were considered useful by both parties.

Audits of SCRI's Health and Safety, Quality Assurance and Environmental Management systems were conducted by UKAS-accredited auditors in April and November to assess our compliance with the standards OHSAS18001, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 respectively. There were six minor corrective action reports in April, mainly relating to documentation, and one in November. BioSS was audited for the first time in April and was passed as compliant. There are certificates in force for all three standards for the Institute, MRS and BioSS.

This year has seen a significant overhaul of waste management with improved segregation. As well as recycling office paper, glass, aluminium cans, clean spent compost and cardboard we now separate out bare timber and a mixture of building rubble and non-recyclable compost. The latter mixture is used to seal the tops of land-fill sites which are no longer active, for which there is a cost saving. Anything not falling into these categories continues to go into land-fill.

Human Resources. During 2007 the HR department has been working on a variety of projects to deliver the HR Strategy 2006 – 11. Key pieces of work have included

- Delivering diversity awareness training for all staff
- Carrying out a review of the PPDR performance management system
- Identifying key skills required of managers
- Organising a change management training session for approximately 40 middle managers

The year has also involved the 5 HR staff in filling 30 posts across the organisation, and arranging events to meet the training and development for 220 staff.

In May 2007 the HR team was joined by Marelle Dalziel who had previously worked in human resources roles with SEPA and Napier University in Edinburgh.

The HR Committee met regularly during 2007 to review HR procedures as well as looking for alternative posts for staff affected by the end of funding streams. During the year approximately 30 people were affected with 25 staff being moved to work on new projects at SCRI.

The Staff Association has been very active providing social events for all members of the SCRI “family”. The Association has also continued to raise money for charity.

January saw a Burns-themed ceilidh at Bullionfield hall in Invergowrie with 75 people in attendance where one highlight of the evening was an address to the haggis by the Director!

The annual barbecue took place at the end of June and approximately 200 staff, family, and friends braved an early rain & hail storm but eventually enjoyed a lovely summer evening with fine cuisine grilled to perfection by enthusiastic senior staff.

At the end of November, a Craft Fair was held on site with stalls selling jewellery, cards, cosmetics, and home baked goods.

And at the close of the year a Christmas party entertained 39 young children who saw a display of magic tricks and enjoyed party games; they were also treated to some tasty refreshments, and a visit from Santa.

The Christmas lunch was attended by 70 staff members who enjoyed a fine meal put on by the restaurant staff and carol singing by the Invergowrie church choir. Fresh cut trees were available for staff to purchase before the Christmas break.

Other events that took place included 10 pin bowling and a craft night. Blood donor sessions were arranged and are coordinated to allow staff time to attend. The Association gives support to the golf, fishing, and football fraternities along with the corporate sports membership at Dundee University. Salsa, Indian head massage, Yoga and Tai Chi sessions have run throughout the year.

A new regular activity – Pilates – has started and has proved to be popular at lunch times.

Member's benefits include entry into a monthly draw to win meal & cinema vouchers. National Trust admission cards, and a Booker cash & carry card are available for use. We have a corporate subscription to "Which" magazine provided for the SCRI library and is also available to access online. Members are offered 25% off the full cost of any event/activity when they participate. Subscription fees remain at £1.50 per month and membership, currently around 200, is open to anyone

working at SCRI. The office bearers and committee are elected annually at the AGM where members are encouraged to nominate both local and national charities to be beneficiaries of the funds raised throughout the year. In 2007, three charities received £510 each. They are Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland, Dundee under 18's, and Fairy Box at Ninewells Hospital.

The Staff Association remains an integral part of SCRI, as it contributes greatly to the corporate well being and maintains a close working relationship with the Healthy Working Lives Initiative and the Staff Amenities group.