

Division of Finance and Administration

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The Division is responsible for the provision of '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 83 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 glasshouses and controlled environment facilities. In doing so they produce consistent, high quality results for scientists whose work is increasingly detailed and accurate.

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 equipment required by the science programmes. The Institute was successful in attracting over £2.5 million of capital grant from the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, and much of the new equipment requires more sophisticated support and maintenance. The staff have become extremely adaptable and knowledgeable in the provision of these services, 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 Information Technology Unit and its development is central to the Institute's activi-

ties. The Institute has invested in an Institute-wide information management system to allow it to manage the ever increasing flow of information, to provide an effective and efficient environment for staff to manage their work, and enable staff to develop the Institute web site, 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 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 presentations 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 Mike DeMaine, 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. The Institute is now accredited to ISO 9001 standards, and work is under way to achieve accreditation under the ISO14001 standard.

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 Human Resources 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 Human Resources 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.