



Over 30 delegates travelled to Liverpool to attend the event which focused on Fieldwork. During the day the benefits, educational and otherwise, of providing fieldwork within degree modules and programmes were highlighted. Examples of developments in fieldwork teaching and ways of maximising the outcomes from fieldwork were also presented and discussed. Following a welcome by Simon Dowell, the Director of the School of Biological and Earth Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University, the following presentations took place

### **Introduction**

Allan Jones, University of Dundee and Co-ordinator of the Practical Work in the Biosciences Special Interest Group

Allan introduced the day and set the scene by posing some questions relating to the broad area of fieldwork.

### **Keynote: Biology fieldwork: victim or sinner**

Steve Tilling, Field Studies Council

Steve gave an excellent presentation highlighting the current trends in biology fieldwork and illustrating the implications that these have for the subject, and also the employability of graduates. He then went on to describe some of the barriers to the provision of fieldwork.

### **Fieldwork is good? - the student experience**

Clare Milsom, Liverpool John Moores University

Clare described a survey into student attitudes to fieldwork both pre and post the actual experience. While a substantial proportion of students had some apprehension in advance of the fieldwork, the majority enjoyed the actual field classes. Early analysis of the data indicates that fieldwork encourages students to take a deeper approach to learning.

### **Developing inclusive and accessible fieldwork: where to start?**

Jenny Jones, Liverpool John Moores University

Jenny gave a brief introduction to the area of disability legislation and practice before describing the Disability Support Group that she help set up. Jenny then gave some practical approaches, including a fieldwork audit as a way of identifying potential barriers.

[View Jenny's recommended reading on Fieldwork and Accessibility \(as pdf\)](#)

## Ecological Projects Compendium

Debbie Smith, British Ecological Society

Debbie gave a quick overview of this on-line teaching resource that was launched by the British Ecological Society in 2003. The Compendium is a compilation of successful ecological practical exercises used in undergraduate teaching at universities throughout the UK.

The philosophy behind the Compendium is to share good practice in ecology teaching and to promote fieldwork activities at university level. The projects are presented as short articles that can be browsed on the website or printed out.

Each project is peer-reviewed for ecological and pedagogical content prior to publication and further contributions are welcome.



[View the Ecological Projects Compendium](#)

## Group Activity: Assessment issues with fieldwork

Julian Park, University of Reading and Subject Specialist, LTSN Bioscience

Julian facilitated this session focusing on assessment issues in fieldwork. Delegates were split into groups, asked to consider how they would assess one of the three fieldwork activities and feedback their thoughts to the rest of the attendees.

[Activity 1: Freshwater Ecology](#)

[Activity 2: Forestry, Ecology and Management](#)

[Activity 3: Sand-dune Ecology and Coastal Management Issues](#)

## Using field time effectively

Mark Langan, Manchester Metropolitan University

Mark gave an informative presentation sharing his opinions of fieldwork structure at both the curricula and field class level as well as highlighting some mechanisms used to enhance the efficiency of fieldwork. Using examples from a Level 2 field course in Wales and a Level 3 course in Spain, Mark brought to our attention the issue of level of autonomy that we give learners in field classes.

## Online access to a large-scale field experiment

Alan Fielding, Manchester Metropolitan University

Alan received a grant from the LTSN Bioscience Teaching Development Fund and has done a lot of work producing a very useful website - [TIRERAGAN a real and virtual field experiment](#). Tireragan is a real place, with real, long-term field trials taking place. Alan described the field trials taking place on Tireragan and how he has put this raw data in an accessible form on the website. The data is freely available for anyone to use. Groups are also free to visit the field site.



[Handout: Tireragan a real and virtual field experiment \(pdf\)](#)

[www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/livjm04.aspx](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/livjm04.aspx)

## **From fieldwork to conference: enhancing and motivating the student experience through professional activity**

Annie Worsley, Edge Hill College of Higher Education

Mini-conferences can be extremely useful in enhancing the real world experiences of undergraduates right from initiating and carrying out research, analysing results and synthesizing ideas to presenting research findings. Annie described how Edge Hill incorporate mini conferences into some of their modules and highlighted the benefits for students and the improved employer-student links.

[View "A selected bibliography of Practical Work education", with a number of fieldwork related references.](#)