



British Ecological Society

**British Ecological Society: 29th Annual General Meeting
17:10, The Auditorium, University of Hertfordshire,
de Havilland Campus, Hatfield
Wednesday 9 September 2009**

Nominations for Council and Officers of the Society: BIOGRAPHIES

Nominations for Election to Council

Dr David Coomes Department of Plant Sciences, University of Cambridge

David graduated from the University of Cambridge in 1989 with a degree in Natural Sciences. He had spent his undergraduate summers working on farms in Somerset, an experience that led him to specialize in applied biology. After graduating, he was employed as a farm manager in Zambia, before returning to Cambridge as a PhD student under the supervision of Prof. Peter Grubb. His thesis comprised a series of experimental studies based in Venezuelan lowland rain forests, seeking mechanistic explanations for the comparatively low diversity of plant communities found on white sand soils. David then swapped the heat of the tropics for the luxury of an air-conditioned office at Imperial College, Silwood Park, working as a postdoc with Prof. Mark Rees on neighbourhood modeling of annual plant communities. They pursued a range of questions concerning mechanisms of coexistence, inspiring an enduring interest in research at the interface between mathematical theory and empiricism. In 1998, David became a staff scientist at Landcare Research, New Zealand, and helped design and implement a carbon monitoring system for indigenous forests and shrublands. In 2000, he was invited to take up a lectureship at the Department of Plant Sciences, Cambridge, and has remained there ever since. David has broad interests in the conservation and community ecology of forests, including physiology, invasive biology, ecosystem management and population biology.



Professor Rosemary Hails Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Oxford

Rosie has an active research group in population ecology (having published over 70 peer-reviewed papers to date), and currently runs a section of around 40 staff. Her personal research interests include the persistence and transmission of insect pathogens, exploiting pathogens for biocontrol, the role of pathogens in regulating insect and plant populations,



population ecology of feral crop plants and the risk assessment of genetically modified plants and viruses.

She has worked at the interface between science and policy as a member of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission. She is currently a member of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) and a member of the Environment Working group for the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). In collaboration with the Institute of Biology and the British Ecological Society, she is developing the 'Natural Capital Initiative' (NCI) – a body which will hold a series of events focused on the Ecosystem Approach. This approach is now being widely promoted by Defra, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World resources Institute and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The purpose is to provide a framework within which more holistic decisions may be made about the management of our natural resources. The NCI is organizing symposiums, stakeholder workshops and public engagement events to bring together the key players (scientists, government, industry and the public) in making the ecosystem approach effective.

She is a Supernumary Fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford, a senior research associate of Oxford University and a visiting professor at Oxford Brookes University. She was awarded an MBE for services to environmental research in June 2000.

Nomination for Early Career Researcher

Dr Thomas Ezard Imperial College, Silwood Park

Following an undergraduate degree in Mathematics and an Ecology and Evolution Masters course, Thomas's research assesses the interaction between the stochasticity in the natural environment and the structure of populations and phylogenies. A failure to incorporate this interaction neglects critical aspects in community regulation, and therefore ecological and evolutionary change. He does this by constructing and analyzing mechanical and statistical models over both ecological and geological time.



During his PhD, Thomas used deterministic and stochastic matrix population models to show that different age-classes make markedly different contributions to variation in short- and long-term population growth within, between and across diverse habitats. Despite significant changes in performance and phenotype with age, individual heterogeneity within these age-classes was vast, affecting the predictability of models of individual performance. Continuing this theme of hierarchical levels of variability, his current work is developing methods to assess how character change, speciation and extinction have combined to generate micro- and macro-evolutionary trends.

Council Nominations for Officers of the Society

President:

Professor Charles Godfray Department of Zoology, Oxford University



Charles is a population biologist with broad interests in ecology and evolution. Much of his current research focuses on exploring questions in community, population and evolutionary ecology using aphids and in particular the recently sequenced pea aphid as model organisms. For example, he is interested in how the population dynamics of insect species feeding on different host plants may be coupled through shared natural enemies. His group has built quantitative food webs to predict the presence of these indirect interactions, and carried out field manipulation experiments to test for apparent competition and related phenomenon. The pea aphid is a complex of host plant-associated populations and his group is using the species to explore questions in ecological speciation, and the role of bacterial symbionts in pea aphid ecology. Currently he is involved in a number of projects modelling the population dynamics and population genetics of mosquito vectors of tropical diseases. Finally he has a long standing fascination with parasitoids and is interested in biodiversity informatics, science and policy issues, and the taxonomy of braconid wasps.

Charles has been Hope Professor in the Zoology Department at Oxford University since 2006. His first degree was at Oxford and from there he moved to Imperial College to do a PhD in community ecology supervised by Val Brown (joining the BES in 1980). After a post doc. fellowship at Silwood Park he returned to Oxford as Departmental Demonstrator Ecology and then in 1987 went back to Imperial where he spent the next twenty years, eventually becoming Head of the Biology Department and where he remains an honorary professor. In 1999 he succeeded John Lawton as Director of the NERC Centre for Population Biology. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2001 and is currently an honorary research fellow at the Natural History Museum and at Rothamsted Research, and a Trustee of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Honorary Secretary:

Dr Greg Masters European Centre-UK; CABI



Greg is a Principal Scientific Officer at CABI focusing on sustainable agriculture and climate change. This work is often aimed at sustainable development in the developing world as well as a focus in the UK and Europe. Research includes working at the interface of theory and experimentation. A particular interest is the interaction between climate change and invasive alien species, climate change and agricultural commodities and the implication of these for food security. During his time at CABI, Greg has appreciated how to work in a more business orientated environment and have been trained in PRINCE II project management. CABI enables Greg to work at the interface between academia and industry.

Greg has been a member of the BES since 1989 and is currently in his second term as Honorary (Council) Secretary. If re-elected, Greg will enter his third and final term as an Officer of the Society.

Chair of Education, Training and Careers Committee:

Dr Libby John
Department of Biology and Environmental Science,
University of Sussex

Libby is a senior lecturer in ecology at the University of Sussex, organising and running courses on Biodiversity, the Biology Field Course and Biodiversity Theory and Practice, she is also currently the Head of Department. After completing a BSc at Sussex, she moved on to a MSc before completing a PhD in Alberta.



Libby's research centres on plants and their communities, with specific interests in the effects of heterogeneously distributed nutrient supply on plant growth and competition, the effects of herbivores and nutrient availability on plant community structure, the impact of a dominant plant species on biodiversity and investigations of pattern in plant and lichen communities.

Greg Masters, Honorary Secretary, August 2009



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