

# IEEM Annual Conference Report

Nick Jackson AIEEM  
Education and Professional Development Officer, IEEM



Ladislav Miko

The Institute's annual conference took place on 13-15 November 2007 in Nottingham and was entitled 'Making the Connections: A Role for Ecological Networks in Nature Conservation'. The conference considered the case for ecological connectivity from the European policy perspective through to its implementation at the local level. It reviewed the theory, science, drivers and

challenges for ecological networks and explored the opportunities for expanding and linking areas for wildlife. It also considered, if and how, current economic instruments could be used to support greater ecological connectivity. It was the best attended IEEM conference to date with over 300 delegates.

Professor Roger Cruts CBE, opened the conference by giving a lecture on the first evening entitled 'Environmental Stewardship: From Distinction to Connectivity'. Roger's talk was an inspirational start to the conference and he spoke about connecting nature, policy and organisations. In nature

- connecting protected areas through corridors, river catchments and through the soil; in policy - connecting CBD delivery, Natura 2000 sites and via CAP reform; and within organisations - connecting with and between organisations and greater stakeholder involvement. His paper is the lead article in this issue of In Practice.

The conference theme was developed through several sessions: Wednesday morning set out the challenges and context with an opening address from Ladislav Miko (DG Environment for the European Commission) who gave an overall

picture of nature in Europe. Field excursions took place on Wednesday afternoon and the delegates went out to see various local sites and find out a bit more about the local examples of connectivity. Thursday morning looked at practical examples of connectivity - from large scale European projects such as the Pan European Ecological Network (PEEN), down to local level projects such as the Living Landscapes for the South East which is led by The Wildlife Trusts. The conference ended with a session looking at prospects for the future and speakers from Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Forestry Commission, National Farmers Union (NFU), Natural England, Defra and Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) all gave their views. The conference finished with a talk from Professor David Hill CEnv, FIEEM who summed up the conference and looked to the future of ecological networks.

The field excursions on the Wednesday afternoon went to the following areas:

1. Rainworth Heath and Rufford Colliery Tip led by Janice Bradley MIEEM and David Sutton MIEEM (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust).
2. Attenborough Nature Reserve and Nature Centre led by Charles Langtree, John Black MIEEM and Mark Speck (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust).
3. Grantham Canal led by Richard Bennett MIEEM and Deanne Cow AIEEM (British Waterways).
4. Beeston Sidings Local Nature Reserve led by Mark Woods MIEEM (Baker Shepherd Gillespie), Paul Owen (Nottingham City Council) and Gaynor Jones Jenkins AIEEM (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust).
5. Birklands & Bilhaugh SSSI, Sherwood Forest led by Paul Barwick (Forestry Commission), Adam Goodall (Sherwood Forest Trust), Iz Barton (Nottinghamshire County Council) and Nic Wort (Greenwood Partnership).
6. Derby City Local Nature Reserves led by David Slinger and Beverley Rhoads MIEEM (Derby City Council).
7. Witches Oak Waters, Shardlow led by Carlos Abrahams

IEEM Best Practice Award 2007 winners: (l-r) Lucy Baker and Lucy Taylor (both Environment Agency), Sean Bennett (FWAG), and Matt Hague (Natura Environmental Consultants)



8. Bennery - Erewash Valley Led by David Goddard.

The Institute's AGM took place on Wednesday afternoon and Professor Stephen Ormerod FIEEM officially became the next IEEM President-elect. See 'Institute News' on page 34 for further details about the AGM.

The main conference dinner followed the AGM and the Institute welcomed the following special guests: Paul Bramhill (Chief Executive of Green Space), Paul Learoyd (Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust), Ed Green (Chief Executive of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust) and Simon Hodgson (Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission).

After the dinner Steve Pullan CEnv MIEEM was presented with a gift for his more than 10 years of service to IEEM. As a newly elected Fellow of the Institute, Richard Naim CEnv FIEEM was presented with his Fellowship certificate.

This year IEEM held its first ever Best Practice Awards competition. Projects that showed best practice whilst contributing to the five objectives of IEEM were welcomed from all sectors of the ecology profession (including the public, voluntary and consultancy sectors) and projects of all sizes were considered. The three finalists (short listed by the External Affairs Committee) produced a poster explaining their project and the delegates voted for an overall winner throughout the first part of the conference. The finalists and their projects are listed below:

- Environment Agency: Aquatic Macrophyte Training, Accreditation and CPD Scheme, and River Habitat Survey Accreditation Training Programme.
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG): Cornwall Farm Environment Link Project.



Richard Naim (on the right) receives his Fellowship certificate from Andy Tasker, IEEM President

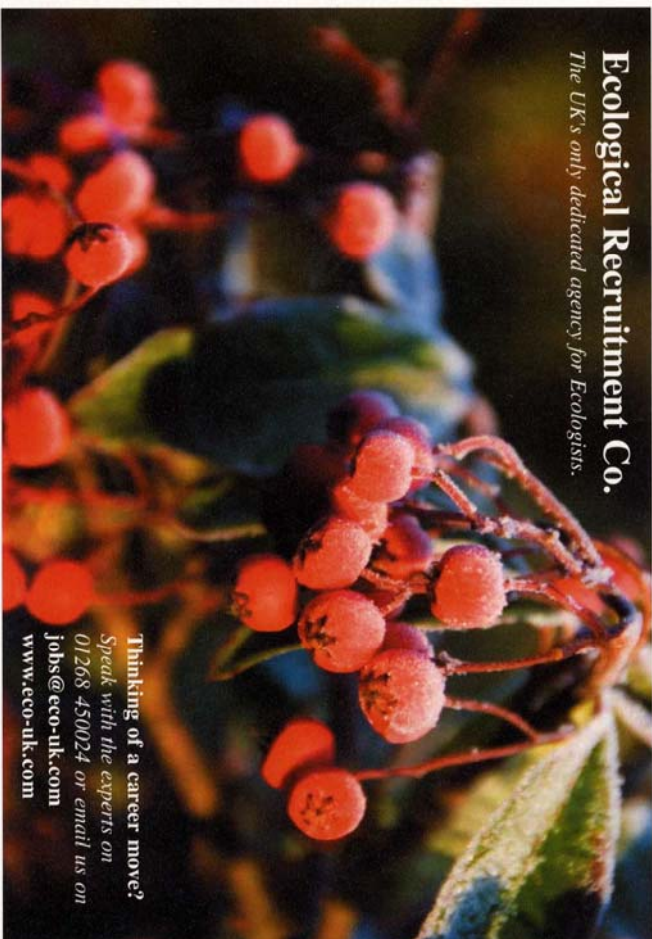
- Natura Environmental Consultants: Green City Guidelines.
- Congratulations go to FWAG who were voted, by the conference delegates, as the winners with their Cornwall Farm Environment Link Project.

The conference speakers' PowerPoint presentations are now available on the IEEM website. The proceedings from the conference will be edited then compiled onto a CD and sent to all IEEM members (a printed copy to those who attended the conference).

I would like to thank all the speakers for a very thought provoking and interesting conference, the chairs of each session and the people who led the field excursions for their time and effort. For details of next year's conferences please see the 'Diary' on page 52.

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