

## Research Conference 2014 - Speaker Biographies

### Keynote speaker

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**Richard Benyon MP** was Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs from 2010 to 2013. He has been MP for Newbury since May 2005. Richard has also served as a Shadow Minister for the Environment, Fisheries and Wildlife. Prior to this appointment he was a Party Whip. He was also a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee. Richard lives in west Berkshire where he farms. He is a former soldier and is a founder Trustee of the charity Help for Heroes.

### Guest speaker

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**Chris Musgrave FRAgS** Managing Director, Musgrave Management Systems, an Estate Management company looking after estates in the Marlborough area covering over seven and a half thousand acres. Chris also manages the 'contract farming' for Temple Farming where machinery and grain storage is contracted out to neighbours. In 2012 Chris was chosen to spearhead a new Government-funded environmental scheme – a Nature Improvement Area – of which there are only 12 in the country. He has a strong ethos of 'profitable farming with a care for the environment' and to this extent the outstanding biodiversity on the Downs is testament to his style of 'land management'. Chris is also a family director of Musgraves (a family owned International food distributor), Chairman of the Family Education Committee and sits on the Family Council. Chris has sat on the CLA National Agricultural and Rural Economy Committee, is currently a member of the GWCT's Lowland Research Steering Committee and sits on the Council of Partners for the North Wessex Downs AONB. He was made a Governor of the Royal Agricultural University in 2010, as well as being awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Agricultural Society in 2012.

### Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust speakers

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**Professor Nick Sotherton** (BSc Agricultural Zoology, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; PhD Agricultural Entomology, Southampton). Nick has worked at the GWCT since 1976. He became Research Director in the Lowlands before becoming Director of Research in 1998. In 2005 he was awarded the RASE Research Medal for his contribution to agricultural science. In 2010 he was appointed as an Honorary Visiting Professor in the Centre for Rural Policy Research at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Biosciences at the University of Exeter. Research interests include farmland ecology, sub-lethal impacts of pesticides on non-target species and the mitigation of the impacts of intensive agriculture on the environment.

**Dr Alastair Leake** (BSc Horticultural Science, Reading; PhD Organic and Integrated Farming Systems, Leicester). Alastair worked as a Production Manager for a large-scale tomato nursery in the UK before moving to the Co-Operative Farms to establish a 10-year ground-breaking farm-scale comparison of organic, integrated and conventional farming techniques at a 200ha site. Alastair took over as Head of the GWCT's Allerton Project from 2001, based on a 300ha estate in Leicestershire. The project seeks to reconcile highly productive agriculture with a wide range of environmental objectives. Alastair has been a member of the Advisory Committee for Pesticides (ACP) for seven years, and latterly Deputy Chairman, the BBC's Rural Affairs Advisory Committee & LEAF Advisory Board; a Director of The Arable Group (TAG), the Rural Energy Trust and Chairman of the UK Soil Management Initiative (SMI).

**Peter Thompson**, GWCT's Biodiversity advisor, gives advice to farmers on practical methods of implementing conservation programmes developed by the Trust's Farmland Ecology Unit. He is BASIS qualified and spent 10 years advising farmers on agronomy before joining the GWCT. He sits on numerous committees including Defra's Species

delivery group and arable expert group. He is conservation advisor and assessor for Conservation Grade and is involved in the Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement area – the only farmer-led NIA amongst the 12 nationally appointed NIAs. He is CFE co-ordinator for Hampshire.

**Dr John Holland** (BSc Horticultural Science, Reading; MSc Insect Pest Management, Southampton; PhD Entomology, Lincoln University, New Zealand). John is Head of Farmland Ecology. John joined the GWCT in 1992 to work on the LINK funded Integrated Farming Systems project, becoming Head of Entomology in 1998 when that project finished. His research has focused on the ecology of insects on farmland with the aim of understanding the impacts of farming practices and developing techniques to enhance their numbers, with an emphasis on beneficial insects and those important in the diet of farmland birds. Next year he will co-ordinate a European project that aims to quantify the impact of semi-natural habitats on key ecosystem services such as pest control and pollination. He is currently convenor of the International Organisation of Biological Control working group 'Landscape Management for Functional Biodiversity'.

**Professor Chris Stoate** (BA, PhD, Open University). Chris has worked for the GWCT's Allerton Project at Loddington since it started in 1992 and is the project's Head of Research. He co-ordinates a wide range of research into all aspects of agri-environmental management and has worked in West Africa and southern Europe, as well as the UK. He is the author of 90 research papers and a book, *'Exploring a Productive Landscape'* which takes a look at the past, present and future relationship between productive land use and the environment on which this depends. Chris is Trustee Director of the Welland Rivers Trust and is a farmer in his own right, ensuring that the research he co-ordinates is practically grounded and accessible to a wide audience.

**Dr Julie Ewald.** (BS Biology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA; MS Parasitology; University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA; PhD Parasitology, University of Glasgow). Julie is Head of Geographical Information Science and manages a small team of researchers and students who undertake spatial analysis and database management. She also runs the Sussex Study, the Trust's long-running project on the flora and fauna of the cereal ecosystem. Julie's research includes work on the conservation of farmland birds, especially grey partridges, agricultural intensification and the effects of conservation management undertaken by farmers, shoot managers and other land managers. She is a member of IUCN/SSC Sustainable Use Specialist Group and serves on the Pesticides Forum Indicators Group.

**Dr Andrew Hoodless** (BSc Applied Biology, Southampton; PhD Ornithology, Durham). Andrew is Head of Wetland Research. His PhD on woodcock ecology was funded by the GWCT and he subsequently joined the Trust in 1994. He is currently regarded as one of Europe's leading authorities on the Eurasian woodcock. He has broad cross-taxa ecological experience gained through work on birds, mammals, invertebrates and plants on large-scale multi-site projects and has worked on waders and gamebirds in the uplands and lowlands. He led the Upland Predation Experiment during 1999-2002 and became Head of Wetland Research in 2010. His research interests include woodcock migration and sustainable population management, wader population ecology and the effects of agri-environment and game management on wildlife.

**Mrs Teresa Dent** (BSc Agriculture, Reading). Teresa has lived and worked all her life in the countryside. The initial part of her career was as a farming consultant with Strutt & Parker where she was a partner for 13 years. She joined the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust as Chief Executive at the end of 2001. In this role, she has been able to combine her practical and business experience of farming and land management with the conservation prescriptions and policy produced by the Trust scientists. Teresa believes in practical, pragmatic conservation that finds space for wildlife alongside economic land uses. Teresa is a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society, England and a Board Member of the Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Partnership.