

## Two Routes to your Course



The FSC as an organisation has been working hard with examination boards to develop our courses in line with and on time for the new specifications. This has been followed up with organisation wide training and centre based course development.

Programme Courses have been designed to not only satisfy the requirements of the specifications, but build upon the students' own experiences, giving them the opportunities to stretch and challenge themselves. Following discussions with Subject Officers, Chief Examiners and Moderators we feel that these courses offer the students a high quality fieldwork experience with consistent content and structure giving the students the optimum experience within the length of time available.

We have two ways that courses can be planned:

1. **Programme courses are off-the-shelf courses with pre-determined content and course length** - all our planning for the new specifications has so far focussed on our programme courses. These courses enable the Centre to work efficiently and so there are price benefits for groups choosing the programme option. We must emphasise that we will still tailor the delivery of these courses to the needs of each group.



For A-Level the following FSC Programme durations are available:

A-Level Programme	Course Length																					
	Fri		Sat			Sun			Mon			Tue			Wed			Thu			Fri	
	pm	eve	am	pm	eve	am	pm	eve	am	pm	eve	am	pm	eve	am	pm	eve	am	pm	eve	am	pm
Short (4 day)											or											
Basic (5 day)																						
Extended (8 day)																						

2. **Bespoke Courses** are our traditional courses of varied length or content that can be designed to match your precise needs.

So, whichever option you want, the flexible, traditional made-to-measure course or off-the-peg programme, please get in touch to discuss the best option for you students.

April 2008. News From....

# Malham Tarn Field Centre

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Geography and Biology come to life through fieldwork at Malham Tarn Field Centre. We need no convincing that seeing, feeling and experiencing things first hand is what makes these subjects interesting and relevant to young people. The different Awarding Bodies have recognised this and it is with excitement that we are currently planning and building our resources for the new Specifications. Practical skills form a major component at AS and A2 and there are exciting new topics in both Geography and Biology.

We aim to be ahead of the game at Malham Tarn. There are many curriculum changes ahead. This newsletter is to keep you up to date with opportunities at the Centre. We are sending this newsletter to colleagues we have contact with but if you know of someone else who would like a copy please let us know. Our role as the Field Centre for the Dales is bringing 'Environmental Understanding to All' - so please feel free to spread the word.

**English and Welsh A-levels 2008.** We have been working hard to prepare courses for the new A-level specifications. Details of our new programmes for Geography and Biology are described inside.

**International Baccalaureate.** We know that many schools are considering IB. We have experience leading IB fieldwork so if you would like to discuss this please contact **Robin Sutton** for Biology or **Kate Barker** for Geography.

**GCSE 2009.** Like everyone we are still awaiting detailed news about this but you can be assured we will be putting in the same amount of effort into the revised KS4 curriculum as we have for revised A levels.

**The Big Picture of the curriculum behind the Keystage 3** review may mean you want to develop a cross-curricular topic for a residential or day visit. We have plenty of experience engaging students with learning in new and familiar contexts - why not call me to discuss possibilities.

**How Science Works** - over the last two years we have had successful *How Science Works* day visits for yr 10. Why not combine this with a day of Geography field work to make a residential experience viable and save on transport?

Please pass this newsletter onto a colleague.

Thank you and best wishes,

*Adrian Pickles*

Head of Centre

## What's new in Geography?

The specification changes have given us an excellent opportunity to review our teaching and design fieldwork investigations from a new perspective. Our structured courses clearly outline the progression of skills throughout the course and build in the use of resources such as aerial photos and GIS to support the enquiry process. During the programme we expect students to take an increasing responsibility for designing each day's field study. The longer the programme the greater the number of opportunities provided both for developing geographical skills and key study skills such as communication, numeracy (statistical analysis) and ICT.



**Edexcel** has had the most obvious and largest set of changes. We are privileged to have excellent case studies on our doorstep and are able to offer all four of Edexcel's geographical investigation topics. The flood management scheme in Skipton is well known and our other local town, Settle, has an ongoing and colourful history of re-branding that began with Queen Victoria. Opportunities for fieldwork study of 'Extreme Weather' and 'Unequal Spaces' are available locally, in Wharfedale and the Rural Urban fringe of West Yorkshire. Further afield at Morecambe we have a new investigation studying the growth and impacts of coastline development along with an assessment of its coastal defences.

The **AQA** specification seems likely to be very popular. For the AS geographical skills paper our Cowside Beck fieldwork will remain popular. We have developed a new human environments day, revised our cold environments day and designed a new flood management day centred on the River Aire catchment. Our geographical field investigations course at A2 has been designed explicitly to prepare the students for the assessment and offers a choice of fieldwork looking at local ecosystems or at urban regeneration locally or in West Yorkshire.



**OCR** offers the largest choice for fieldwork applications. Choose from the following list: river processes and fluvial landforms, rural change, ecosystems and succession, flooding, the growth of tourism, and urban change. Our established rural settlements day has been completely redesigned and it now uses an issue-based approach considering topics such as affordable housing provision and the sustainability of management strategies.

**WJEC** continues to place emphasis on geographical research as a means of learning and includes fieldwork opportunities and assessment throughout both units at AS. For this specification we have many key fieldwork opportunities include

- Rural inequality in Craven district; deprivation and regeneration in Keighley urban change for the settlement change work.
- Depositional glacial landforms and their management.
- Catchment management and flooding of the Rivers Aire or Wharfe as parts of hydrological change.

### Contact

**A-level Geography** – Adrian Pickles. Phone 01729-830331 or e-mail [adrian.mt@field-studies-council.org](mailto:adrian.mt@field-studies-council.org)

Check the FSC website [www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org) for more details

## What's new in Biology?

All awarding bodies are placing greater emphasis on "How Science Works" and new topics looking at topical applications of Biology in a broader perspective. We are developing these ideas around the theme of "Science in the Wider World" and so will include studies on topics to do with conservation, human influences on energy flow, climate change. We will continue to use many of our traditional sites and will be able to utilise the research based and practical understanding of those sites gained over the last 60 years. This background will help us to develop "How Science Works" ideas as a progressive strand within the courses.

The largest changes are the loss of coursework from the **AQA** and **OCR** specifications with both of these boards replacing coursework with board marked practical skill assessments similar to those used at GCSE. Following discussions with examiners and moderators we understand that there will be a choice of tasks and that the subject of at least one task may be ecologically based. We are confident that our approach to carrying out fieldwork really helps students to develop their scientific skills in particular in terms of developing real investigations and also in the presentation and statistical analysis of data. All of which will contribute greatly to help students with their PSA, ISA or EMPA.

### Summaries of changes for each Awarding Body

**Edexcel** has retained a teacher marked coursework component but the content of the specification as a whole is now based on the SNAB model, with a choice of a contextual or concept based delivery. We have been running an increasing number of SNAB style courses recently and feel well placed to transfer that style to the running of the new Edexcel courses. Our Basic five day course will build on the content of **AS Unit 2 – Topic 4: Biodiversity and natural resources** or can deliver much of the content of **Unit 4 – The natural environment and species survival**. The approach we will use will stress the application of ecological principles to questions of real life interest and help make students aware of their "*responsibilities as stewards of the environment*".

**AQA - Unit 4 - Populations and environment** and **OCR A2 Module 3 – Ecosystems and Sustainability** have more ecology than was present in the old specifications. We cover a substantial amount of that content on our Basic five day courses. The course covers the biological knowledge and understanding needed for those units. In addition we hope the courses will inspire students about the environment and show them how important ecology is in helping people to understand some of the major issues of importance in the world today.

The timing and nature of the ISA's mean that it is very unlikely that students will be able to undertake these tasks whilst on your field course. The PSA marks for the assessment for AQA can be gained from any practical work and fieldwork obviously provides opportunities for students to gain these marks.

**WJEC** - retains a more traditional feel and we don't envisage having to make major changes to the courses we offer. We will be changing the emphasis to include more ideas about "How Science Works" and trying to make the content seem more relevant to the current concerns about climate change and other broader environmental issues.

**AS courses** – traditionally most of our biologists have come at A2, but we will be developing courses over the next few months that look at issues to do with Biodiversity. These will be short courses or day courses that will cover ideas about identification, classification and biodiversity. We hope to use them as a development of ideas about 'How Science Works' and will link the work to real long-term studies and data sets which we hold at Malham Tarn. These short experiences will provide a context and framework that will help students prepare for the more detailed ecology contained within the A2 units.

### Contact:

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