2015 is the International Year of Soils. So what? It has frequently been said that soils are the thin skin on the land surface upon which terrestrial life depends and which acts as a buffer between the atmosphere, the hydrosphere and the biosphere, as well as representing a significant reservoir of biological diversity and source of multiple key ecosystem functions.

In this talk, Prof David Hopkins will illustrate the diversity of soils and their roles in ecosystem processes based on first hand experience. He will show how they are being affected by environmental change or management, or use by humans in a diverse range of soils from the polar deserts of Antarctica and the Arctic, the temperate and tropical regions.

The emphasis will be on decomposition processes and soil organisms because these soil properties integrate across a range of soil conditions, and importantly drive key soil fertility properties and buffer environmental change.

About Prof David Hopkins
David Hopkins is a Professor of Soil Science and Dean of Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University at Cirencester in the UK.

He was previously Professor and Head of Life Sciences at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh and before that Director of Science at the Scottish Crop Research Institute.

His research interests cover soil management, and carbon and nutrient cycling in soils in both agricultural and natural ecosystems and he has significant fieldwork experience in both cold (polar) and hot deserts having undertaken multiple fieldwork seasons in both the Arctic and Antarctica.

Prof Hopkins has been the President of the British Society of Soil Science and convenes the UK heads of soils science group. He serves on the UK Government panel for environmental safety of genetically-modified organisms and is the Chair of the Royal Society’s Committee on Antarctic Research.

The Hector and Andrew Stewart Memorial Lecture
The Hector and Andrew Stewart Memorial Lectureship is in the memory of the late Mr Hector J. Stewart, MLC and of the late Mr Andrew Stewart, a member of the academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture at UWA from 1937 to 1959.

The inaugural Hector and Andrew Stewart memorial lecture was 47 years ago in 1966 by Professor T.J. Robinson on “Sheep Fertility Research – Its Potential for Western Australia”. The lecture series is held every two years.

Event Details
Date: Thursday, 19 March 2015
Time: 5pm - 6pm
Venue: MCS Lecture Theatre, Bayliss Building, UWA
Parking: P43, Fairway entrance 4
Cost: Free but RSVP essential via www.ioa.uwa.edu.au/events/register