



ANNUAL REPORT 2007/8

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Statement of aims

The Centre for Rural Research (CRR) has five main aims:

- to supply an independent consultancy service for quality rural research;
- to develop national and international research interests whilst maintaining a local focus on Worcestershire and neighbouring counties;
- to disseminate knowledge in an accessible manner to the wider public including policy-makers, countryside managers, those in education, voluntary organisations and people living and working in the countryside;
- to contribute to the development of geography and rural studies;
- to assist in the strategic delivery of the mission of the University of Worcester in the key areas of 'research' and 'contribution to the region'.

Summary of Position

This report covers the activities of the CRR from 1st September 2007 until 31st August 2008. A Senior Fellow [Peter Carruthers (PC)] was appointed on secondment from the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) in April 2008 and he continues to act as an expert advisor for that organisation. Cheryl Jones rejoined the CRR team following her stint as Director of the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark. Two full-time project-based Research Assistants (Elizabeth Connolly and Katie Milburn) left to take up employment elsewhere. The financial resource base of CRR remained healthy at the end of the period. CRR continued to deliver successfully client contract work and completed one major project in the form of *'Polytunnels and Rural Communities'*, completed a rapid overview of *'Hill Farming Rural Communities'* and made a significant contribution to a project on *'Rural Identity and Land'* run by the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. All three pieces of work were undertaken for the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), with whom a good working relationship was established. There were other projects undertaken either as preliminary work to gain future contracts or carrying forward from the previous reporting period. Additionally, some unsuccessful tenders, involving the expenditure of effort not seen on paper, were made within the reporting period. All this activity amounted to a busy year for CRR and its staff.

Work continues to be commissioned by a variety of rural organisations based on CRR's reputation for quality in research. CRR remains highly active as a University of Worcester research centre, continuing to raise the research profile of the institution. It was identified as a specialist area of research within the Geography Unit of Assessment

submission to the latest Research Assessment Exercise (one of only two units immediately identified for submission across the entire institution). In total, two new research projects were initiated in the period of the report, a significant original contribution made to another managed from another university, with four others from the previous year also completed.

It is necessary to report upon issues remaining from both the 5-year Research Review event of March 2007 and the 2006/7 Annual Report. Taking the Review first, a synopsis of how the outstanding points have been taken forward is as follows:

1. CRR has revamped its website within the University webpages during summer and autumn 2007.
2. Progress has been made on understanding the process of full economic costing (FEC). A *Heads of Research Centre Working Group*, convened by the Registrar, has been helpful in this respect.
3. Research Students – the Director was successful in bidding for a University Research Studentship on GM in agriculture but it was disappointing that the student decided to withdraw in Summer 2008.
4. Masters courses – are under discussion in the Institute.
5. KTPS and Business Partnerships Office – an unsuccessful bid for funding was made relating to a project on red deer.

As far as the Report on the previous period is concerned, the follow-up actions can be reported as thus.

1. CRR has successfully cemented a fruitful relationship with the Commission for Rural Communities.
2. A new (2007) academic post in Human Geography has the potential to enhance CRR's activities.
3. New computers for research staff have been secured.
4. Financial procedures continue to be discussed and developed.
5. The website has been updated.

In the coming year, PC will be making an important contribution to CRR. It was pleasing that, after their experience of working with us, our research assistants are highly successful in the employment market. Overall, CRR continues to make very tangible contributions to raising the profile of the University of Worcester in internationally in the world of research and within the regional community of the West Midlands.

2. CURRENT STAFF

CRR had the following staff profile, as at September 2008.

i) Current Academic Staff

Dr. Nick Evans (NE, Director)
Dr. Heather Barrett (HB)
Dr. David Storey (DS)
Dr. Peter Carruthers (PC)
Dr. Cheryl Jones (CJ)

ii) Former Research Staff

Full-time Research Assistant: Miss Elizabeth Connolly (EC) (Sept 2004 – Apr 2008)

Full-time Research Assistant: Miss Katie Milburn (KM) (Feb 2007 – July 2008)

iii) Casual Research Staff

Ms Deborah Collins (DC)

iv) Line Management

Dr. John Fagg (JF), Head of Department of ASGA (until August 2008).

v) Administrative / Support

Mrs Clare Smith (CS), with Miss Laura Starkie (LS), with assistance from Ms Trish Clutterbuck, Mrs Lisa Hopkins and Dr. Anne Sinnott.

vi) Research Associates

Dr. Ian Maddock (IM): river management and conservation research.

Mr David Lovelace (DL): independent consultant, not a member of UoW staff, sub-contracted to assist with specific contract work.

Dr. Richard Yarwood (RY): University of Plymouth (former UCW staff).

3. POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

(p/t): David Maund (DM) PhD (supervisor DS) *Moving-on from a rural parish: A multi-disciplinary longitudinal study of demographic change and migration in an area of the English-Welsh borderland*. Successful completion in 2008.

Elizabeth Connolly (EC) gained her MSc in *GIS and Human Geography* at the University of Leicester in January 2008.

Mrs Jayne Thatcher was engaged on an MPhil/PhD studentship entitled *Hybridity and Husbandry: revealing discourses of genetic modification amongst farmers* from September 2007 (supervisor NE) but withdrew summer 2008.

4. RECORD OF PUBLICATIONS FOR THE YEAR

i) Publically released (print or e-versions) articles in Refereed International Journals

Price, L. and Evans, N. (forthcoming) From farming stress to distress. *Journal of Rural Studies*, (2008), doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2008.03.008.

Storey, D. (2007) Europe's shifting borders: rhetoric and reality, *Chimera* 22, 12-20.

ii) Contributions to books

Evans, N. and Yarwood, R. (2008) Farm Animals and Rural Sustainability. In Robinson, G. (ed.) *Sustainable Rural Systems: Sustainable agriculture and rural communities*. Ashgate, Chapter 4, pp.83-98.

Jones C. (2008) History of Geoparks. In Burek, C. and Prosser, C. (eds) *The History of Geoconservation*. London, Geological Society, Special Publication volume 300, pp.273-277.

Storey, D. (2008) Territory, space and society, in P. Daniels, M. Bradshaw, D. Shaw and J. Sidaway (eds) *An Introduction to Human Geography. Issues for the 21st Century* (3rd edition), Harlow: Prentice Hall, pp.399-416.

iii) Forthcoming Publications Accepted in the Period 2006/7

Barton, A. and Storey, D. A trip in the countryside, in R. Yarwood and R. Mawby (eds) *Constable Countryside? Policing, Governance and Rurality*, Aldershot: Ashgate. (due 2009).

Evans, N. (2009) Contextualising Agricultural Change: Farm Adjustment in the Welsh Marches. In Ramsay, D., Robinson, G. and Winchell, D. (Eds.) *The Global Rural*. Eastern Washington University Press, Spokane, USA. Forthcoming.

Evans, N. (forthcoming) Adjustment strategies revisited: Agricultural change in the Welsh Marches, *Journal of Rural Studies* (2008), doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2008.10.002

Holmes, M. and Storey, D. Mercenaries or nationalists? National identity and the Republic of Ireland football team, in P. Gilchrist and R. Holden (eds) *The Politics of Sport: Community, Mobility, Identity*, London: Routledge (due 2009).

Holmes, M. and Storey, D. Transferring national allegiance: cultural affinity or flag of convenience? *Sport in Society* (due 2009).

Storey, D. Contemporary approaches to rural development: Lauding the local, in G. Halseth *et al* (eds) *Space to Place: The Next Rural Economies*, Aldershot: Ashgate, (due 2009).

Storey, D. Heritage and place promotion. *Geography Review* (due 2009).

Storey, D. (forthcoming) Political Geography, in Kitchin, R. and Thrift, N. (eds) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Oxford: Elsevier.

Storey, D. Land, territory and identity, in I. Convery and T. Dutson (eds) *Sense of Place*, Basingstoke: Palgrave (due 2009).

Storey, D. Using the past: heritage and the commodification of rural places, in D. Ramsey *et al* (eds), *The Global Rural*, Spokane: Eastern Washington University Press (due 2009).

Storey, D. (forthcoming) Rural economic development, in Kitchin, R. and Thrift, N. (eds) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Oxford: Elsevier.

Storey, D. (forthcoming) Territory, space and society, in P. Daniels, M. Bradshaw, D. Shaw and J. Sidaway (eds) *An Introduction to Human Geography. Issues for the 21st Century* (3rd edition), Harlow: Prentice Hall.

iv) Refereeing Activity in the Period 2007/8

In addition to publication, NE again acted as a journal referee this year for international academic journals across and beyond the discipline of Geography.

- Journal of Rural Studies (four times);
- International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability
- Geographical Journal
- Land Use Policy (twice)
- Children's Geographies

Similarly, DS acted as a referee for:

- Journal of Rural Studies,
- Crime Prevention and Community Safety
- Children's Geographies

DS was also an External Reviewer for the Research Fellowship Scheme, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland.

NE refereed a project proposal submitted to the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*.

The growth in this activity is again a mark of the increasing external, and indeed international, esteem in which CRR's academic staff are held.

v) Book Reviews

DS: Review of G. Robinson (ed.) Sustainable Rural Systems. Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Communities, *Irish Geography* (forthcoming).

DS: Review of S. Buzar Energy Poverty in Eastern Europe. Hidden Geographies of Deprivation, *Geografiska Annaler B* (forthcoming).

DS: Review of B.A. Brower and B.R. Johnston (eds) Disappearing Peoples? Indigenous Groups and Ethnic Minorities in South and Central Asia, *Journal of International Development* (in press).

DS: Review of S. Gupta and T. Omoniyi (eds) Cultures of Economic Migration: International Perspectives, *Gender, Place and Culture* (in press).

DS: Review of P. Getimis and G. Kafkalas (eds) Overcoming Fragmentation in Southeast Europe. Spatial Development Trends and Integration Potential, *Geography* 93 (2), 2008.

DS: Review of C. Hartman and G.D. Squires (eds) There is no such thing as a Natural Disaster. Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina, *Geography* 93 (2), 2008

DS: Review of A. Church and T. Coles (eds) *Tourism, Power and Space*, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 5 (3), 2007.

DS: Review of N. Kabeer (ed) *Inclusive Citizenship. Meanings and Expressions*, *Progress in Development Studies* 7 (3), 2007.

NE: Review of Rural Geography by Michael Woods, *Global Built Environment Review*, 6, 2008, forthcoming.

NE: Review of Food for the Future by Jose Bove and Francois Dufour, *Geography*, forthcoming.

5. CONFERENCES: ATTENDANCE AND PRESENTATIONS

Storey, D. *Contemporary approaches to rural development: Lauding the local*. Invited participant to Space to Place: The Next Rural Economies workshop, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, Canada, May 2008.

Storey, D. *Ireland's Call: Allegiances, Acrimony and Anthems*. Presented paper to Political Studies Association Sport and Politics Study Group Annual Conference, Liverpool, February 2008.

Evans, N. *'From rural stress to distress'*. Presentation to the Worcestershire Rural Theology Association, Worcester, November 2007.

Evans, N. Address to the Annual General Meeting of Worcestershire CPRE, Worcester, June 2008.

DS attended Conference of Irish Geographers, Liverpool, May 2008.

DS participated in a series of seminars organised by the Sport, Heritage and History Research Network (based at De Montfort University) held at De Montfort University, All England Lawn Tennis Club, Wimbledon and Liverpool FC

6. LECTURES AND SIMILAR ACTIVITIES

DS attended Worcestershire County Council Rural Action Plan meeting.

NE was invited to become a member of the European Rural Group of the West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum hosted by Advantage West Midlands, attending two meetings in Birmingham.

CRR hosted and sponsored the Worcester Diocese *Rural Children Rural Church* event, University of Worcester, October 2007.

CRR hosts regular meetings of the Chaplaincy for Agricultural and Rural Life (CARL) of Worcester Diocese.

7. DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTANCY UNDERTAKEN

Staff have been engaged on the following funded research projects in the year 2007/8. These are **additional to** any personal academic research projects undertaken. Full details of these projects are available from the project leaders whose initials appear next to each project. Further, several projects mentioned in last year's report have been completed to the satisfaction of clients and staff have written up findings for publication in academic journals.

i) Consultancy Projects in 2007/8

St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve Visitor Survey (KM, EC, DC, NE) For the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

A Second Evidence Base for West Midlands Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NE, KM, EC) For the West Midlands AONB consortium.

The National Stepometer Campaign (KM, EC) Department of Sport and Exercise Science, University of Worcester.

Hartlebury Common Visitor Survey: a second look (KM, DC, ME, NE, EC) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

Land and identity (DS) Section of wider project *Rural People and the Land – the Case for Connections*. Commissioned by Commission for Rural Communities (sub-contracted by University of Aberystwyth).

Social and Community Impacts of Changes in the Hill Farming Economy (DS, EC, KM, NE) For the Commission for Rural Communities.

Polytunnels and Rural Communities (NE, KM, EC) For the Commission for Rural Communities.

ii) Consultancy Portfolio

This sub-section provides a comprehensive listing of completed consultancy research projects undertaken by CRR since its formation in 1996 to date (only current staff indicated in brackets).

1996 The Geography of Rare Breeds of Domestic Livestock (NE, RY) Nuffield Foundation.

1997 Environmental Monitoring and Evaluation of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (NE) Report to Countryside Commission. For CCRU, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of H.E.

1997 SSSI Owner-Occupier Segmentation Project Phase 1 (NE) Report to English Nature. With CCRU.

1997 The CAP Beef Regime in England and its Impact on Nature Conservation (NE) Report to English Nature. With CCRU.

1998 SSSI Owner-Occupier Segmentation Project Phase 2 (NE) Report to English Nature. With CCRU.

1998 Trade and Commerce in Cleobury Mortimer (HB, DS, RY). Report to Cleobury Mortimer Chamber of Trade, LEADER II.

1998 Fear of Crime in Rural Areas (RY) Royal Geographical Society, with West Mercia Constabulary and Inkberrow Parish Council.

1998 Economic Evaluation of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (NE) Report to Countryside Commission. For CCRU, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of H.E.

1998 The Rare Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme. (RY, NE) for Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

1998 Obstacles to Affordable Housing in Rural Areas (RY) Report to Worcestershire Housing Association and the Housing Corporation.

1999 SSSI Owner-Occupier Segmentation Project Phase 3 (NE) Report to English Nature. With CCRU.

1999 Deer and Grazing Management Assessment of Little Doward, Crocker's Ash, Herefordshire (NE) Report to the Woodland Trust.

1999 Urban and Rural Interdependency (DS, RY) Report to Advantage West Midlands.

2000 Evaluation of the Edinburgh Questionnaire Amongst Post-natal Women in Herefordshire (RY, HB) Report to Herefordshire Health Authority.

2000 A Visitor Survey of Hartlebury Common (NE, RY) Report to The Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2000 A Visitor Survey of Blackstone Meadows Country Park and Blackstone Picnic Place (RY, NE) Report to The Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2001 The Herefordshire Farming Study (NE, DL) Report to Herefordshire Partnership.

2001 Child Care Provision in Bromyard (HB, DS, RY) Bromyard HOPE group, LEADER II.

2001 Rural Deprivation Hotspots (DS) Report to Worcestershire County Council.

2001 The Economic Impact of Foot and Mouth Disease in Worcestershire (HB, NE, DS) Report to Worcestershire County Council.

2002 Leominster Young Persons Drug Outreach Project: an Evaluation (DS) Report to Drug Services Hereford (DASH).

2002 Recycling Feasibility Study for Worcestershire Lifestyles (NE) Report to Worcestershire Lifestyles.

2002 Agricultural Biodiversity Resources of Welsh Domestic Livestock (NE, with RY) Report to Countryside Council for Wales.

2002 Sustainable Landscapes in Shropshire: A Farm Study for Shropshire (NE, DS, DL) Report to Shropshire County Council and partners.

2002 Analysis of Consultation Data for Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (NE). Report to Malvern Hills AONB Partnership

2003 The Characterisation of the Severn-Vrynwy Land Management Initiative Project Area (KW, NE). Report to Countryside Agency

2003 Waseley Hills Country Park Visitor Survey (NE). Report to The Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2003 Herefordshire Farming Study – post-FMD Follow-up (NE). Report to The Herefordshire Partnership.

2003 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the West Midlands – a Statistical Digest (NE, DS, CJ, PA). Report to Countryside Agency.

2004 The University College Worcester Student Survey (NE) Report to Academic Quality Unit, UCW.

2004 Cleobury Mortimer and Hinterland: Survey of Environmental Issues (DS, HB, CJ) Report to Cleobury Mortimer Partnership Forum and South Shropshire District Council.

2004 What Kind of and Institution Are We? (NE) Report to Equal Opportunities Department, UCW.

2004 Blackstone Riverside Park Visitor Survey (EC, NE) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2004 Fish Hill Picnic Place Visitor Survey (EC, NE) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2004 A Recreational Strategy for the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark (EC, NE, JRH) Report to Countryside Agency.

2004 The Geotouristic Potential of the Abberley Hills (EC, JRH, NE) Report to the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Trust.

2005 The Liveability of Public Parks in the South West Midlands (EC, NE) Report to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

2006 A Methodology for Assessing the State of the Malvern Hills AONB Landscape (NE, EC) Report to the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership.

2006 Pershore Bridges Picnic Place Visitor Survey (NE, EC, NG, ME) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2006 Worcester Woods Country Park: Perspectives of Under-represented Societal Groups (DS, EC) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2006 Under-represented Groups and use of Rights of Way in Worcestershire (DS, EC, NE) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2007 Access to Foundation Degrees (EC, NE). For Aimhigher West Midlands.

2007 Hartlebury Common Visitor Survey: a second look (KM, DC, ME, NE, EC) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2007 Worcestershire: A Place to Live and Work. Work-life Balance Issues in Rural Areas. Report for by Adjust the Balance/Learning and Skills Council.

2007 St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve Visitor Survey (KM, EC, DC, NE) In progress for the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2007 The State of the Malvern Hills AONB (NE, EC) Report to the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership, £6000

2007 A Second Evidence Base for West Midlands Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In progress for the West Midlands AONB consortium.(NE, KM, EC)

2007 The National Stepometer Campaign (KM, EC) Data input and analysis for Dr. D. Peters and H. Jarrett, Department of Sport and Exercise Science, University of Worcester.

2007 The Geographical Distribution of Undergraduate Applicants to the University of Worcester (EC) GIS analysis for Registry Services, University of Worcester.

2008 St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve Visitor Survey (KM, EC, DC, NE) For the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.

2008 A Second Evidence Base for West Midlands Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NE, KM, EC) For the West Midlands AONB consortium. £15,000

2008 Land and identity (DS) Section of wider project *Rural People and the Land – the Case for Connections*. Commissioned by Commission for Rural Communities (sub-contracted by University of Aberystwyth).

2008 Social and Community Impacts of Changes in the Hill Farming Economy (DS, EC, KM, NE) For the Commission for Rural Communities.

2008 Poly tunnels and Rural Communities (NE, KM, EC) For the Commission for Rural Communities.

8. RECORD OF FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Discussions for project work are currently ongoing with:

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust on *Developing an Index of Geographical Endemism as an Alternative Indicator of the Risk Factor to British Domestic Livestock*.

Funding Applications Awaiting Decision:

Feasibility Study Of Community Engagement In The Geopark Area, application to Natural England (CJ)

CRR's unsuccessful tenders were:

Rural People and the Land – the Case for Connections. Commission for Rural Communities (another contractor more competitive)

Service needs and delivery following major life events in rural areas. Commission for Rural Communities (large number of bids by other contractors)

Dr. Nick Evans, Director

October 2008