



**RGRG Newsletter** \* [www.dur.ac.uk/geography/rgrg\\_newsletter/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/geography/rgrg_newsletter/) \*Summer 5<sup>th</sup> August 2014  
[Http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Research+and+Higher+Education/ResearchGroups/Rural+Geography+Research+Group.htm](http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Research+and+Higher+Education/ResearchGroups/Rural+Geography+Research+Group.htm)

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11 - Keith Halfacree on the *Colloque* in France

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13 - Charles Howie & Nguyen Van Kien on floating rice in Vietnam



This issue highlights RGRG sessions at the London conference, including a talk about the Royal Welsh Agri-Show (à la Yorkshire Show, the lair of bright red tractors like this. *Photo: Tanner Scholten*).

Keith Halfacree provides photos and thoughts from a lively colloquium in France.

Features include Linda Price's social outreach on farm suicides (Kids whisper about them at school.).

Charles Howie and Nguyen Van Kien promote study areas of traditional floating rice fields in the Mekong Delta to monitor soil health as high yield varieties come to dominance.

**Happy Summer** – Bruce, Editor, *RGRG Newsletter*  
<http://durham.academia.edu/BruceScholten>

Please send reports, photos & especially book news for the next issue to: [bruce.scholten@btopenworld.com](mailto:bruce.scholten@btopenworld.com)

## 1. RGS-IBG annual conference 26-29 Aug. 2014, London.

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) and Imperial College London

➔ <http://www.rgs.org/WhatsOn/ConferencesAndSeminars/Annual+International+Conference/Annual+international+conference.htm>

- RGS-IBG: 1 Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR (Registration & helpdesk)
- Imperial College London: Exhibition Road, London, SW7 2AZ.
- ➔ **AGM Rural Geography Research Group.**

### **VOTE on RGRG issues!**

Thursday 28 August 2014, Plenary & lunch (13:10 to 14:25) RGS-IBG Tea Room

The conference has a theme of 'Geographies of co-production', which welcomes an exploration of the new encounters universities and researchers are having with commercialisation, open innovation, participatory social science, engaged arts, and public engagement, and how these are shaping research and funding agendas, institutional practices, and academic identities.



RGS-IBG Lowther Lodge 2013

(Contact conference organisers to request a change to session or paper details: [AC2014@rgs.org](mailto:AC2014@rgs.org))

In this exploration, delegates are encouraged to reflect on: the challenges and new opportunities that arise when geographers reflect what we think we know against those who start from a different entry point and bring different perspectives to our field of knowledge; the challenges of multi-disciplinarity; how different communities might deploy each other's perspectives to create new understandings; collaborative knowledge making; dynamic locations for knowledge formation, novel forms of exchange and dissemination, and innovative methods for geographical research and teaching. Innovative session formats that encourage greater interaction and discussion are encouraged.

**RURAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP sponsored sessions 26-29 Aug. 2014**

<b>81 Rural animal and plant health: Bridging the gap between research and policy through co-production.</b> Convenors Ruth Little (University of Sheffield), Rhiannon Fisher (Royal Agricultural University) & Caryl Williams (Defra). Chair Ruth Little (Sheffield).	<b>RGRG</b>	<b>Wed 27 Aug</b>	<b>Session 3 Lowther Room</b>
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**Session Abstract:** The session will seek to explore how innovative approaches can help to bridge the gap between research and policy in the broad area of rural animal and plant health. Papers are invited which seek to investigate the role of increased stakeholder participation and engagement through approaches such as Citizen Science and Open Policy Making. Comment will be welcomed on the validity of co-designing government policy and the potential roles of various stakeholders. The session also aims to explore the methods that most effectively lead to comprehensive participation and engagement and will address how such approaches can be best deployed to usefully inform the development of robust policy.

**Using scenarios to examine farmer knowledge networks for bovine TB.**

Damian Maye (Countryside and Community Research Institute), James Kirwan (CCRI), Gareth Enticott (Cardiff University) & Rhiannon Fisher (Royal Agricultural University)

**Understanding and managing honey bee health in the UK: beekeeper knowledge and engagement with science and policy.**

Emily Adams (Lancaster University), Ken Wilson (Lancaster University), Rebecca Ellis (Lancaster University)

**Engaging Stakeholders and Publics in Safeguarding Tree Health: Co-produced knowledge alongside conflicting policy agendas?**

Clive Potter (Imperial College London), Norman Dandy (Forest Research), Damian Maye (Countryside and Community Research Institute)

**Co-producing impact: using open policy making and 'applied evidence' to inform Animal Health and Welfare policy.**

Ruth Little (University of Sheffield), Rhiannon Fisher (Royal Agricultural University) \* Caryl Williams (Defra)

**Bridging the gap: from measuring to going the distance. Reflections on a Research Fellow's journey.**

Maria Paula Escobar Tello (King's College London / Defra)

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<b>37 Co-production, capacity and change: challenges and opportunities for rural communities (1).</b> Convenors Mike Woolvin (Scotland's Rural College), Sarah Skerratt (SRC), Artur Steiner (SRC), Marianna Markantoni (SRC), Sonja Rewhorn (University of Chester). Chair Sarah Skerratt (SRC).	<b>Wed 27 Aug 2014</b>	<b>RGRG</b>	<b>Session 1 Electrical Engineering Building, Room 407b</b>
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**Session Abstract:** Both within the UK and more widely, there is an increasing emphasis in public policy on the ways in which communities of place, interest and identity might be engaged in the coproduction of services as part of ongoing public service reform, and the accompanying discourses of 'localism'. It also often asserted, for example, that the energy of local people can help to build the resilience and capacity of communities, addressing local challenges. Such agendas, however, often neglect to recognise that the capacities of such local, often place-based, communities to engage with these processes can vary. This session proposes to engage with these issues, and will be framed by, but not limited to, questions including: What are the capacities of rural communities to engage with agendas of coproduction, and how/why do these vary between rural communities?; What can research tell us about the challenges inherent in the coproduction of services within rural communities?; What are the opportunities presented by this agenda for those in rural communities and where/how have these agendas been engaged with successfully?; and what is being done to enhance the capacities and empowerment of rural communities to further engage?

**Rural engagement: practitioner experience of rural innovation projects and co-production of services in Wales.**

Stephanie Best (Swansea University)

**Co-producing community action with the support of a development worker - challenges of capacity and buy-in of a rural community development programme.**

Artur Steiner (Scotland's Rural College)

**Concepts of Sustainability and Participation in the West of Ireland: An Exploration into Lay Public Knowledge and Contrasting Visions of Community Resilience in Connemara.**

Lisa Moran (Teagasc)

**From NIMBY to co-producers of energy: an investigation of rural renewable energy development across the East Midlands.**

Jen Dickie (University of Leicester) & Martin Phillips (University of Leicester)

**Securing the Socio-Economic Wellbeing of Rural Communities.**

Jen Cleary (University of South Australia, Australia), Anthony Hogan (University of Canberra, Australia), Kim Houghton (Strategic Economic Solutions), Robert Tanton (University of Canberra, Australia), David Donnelly (Instinct and Reason), Rob Mercer (Instinct and Reason), Dean Carson (Charles Darwin University / Flinders University, Australia) & Doris Carson (University of South Australia, Australia)

**Plenary discussion.**

Ivan Annibal (Rural Services Network) & Fiona Smith (University of Dundee)

*The short plenary discussion will provide the opportunity for a brief 'academic' and a 'practice' perspective on the session's papers to be presented, before opening up the session to wider discussion.*

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<b>75 Co-production, capacity and change: challenges and opportunities for rural communities (2).</b> Convenors Mike Woolvin (Scotland's Rural College), Sarah Skerrat (SCR), Artur Steiner (SRC), Marianna Markantoni (Scotland's Rural College) & Sonja Rewhorn (University of Chester). Chair Sarah Skerratt (SRC)	<b>DARG, RGRG, PERG</b>	<b>Wed 27 Aug 2014</b>	<b>Session 2 EEB-407b Room 407b</b>
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**What happens when people leave? A story of rural depopulation, community capacity and the challenge of co-production.**

Annie McKee (The James Hutton Institute), Elizabeth Dinnie (JHI) & Anke Fischer (JHI)

**Co-production for rural equity - partnerships a route to success by design or by luck?**

Sonja Rewhorn (University of Chester)

**Co-producing networks of health and social care in rural communities.**

Jayne Jeffries (University of Exeter), Catherine Leyshon (Uni-Exeter) & Michael Leyshon (Uni-Exeter)

**Beyond state driven rationales: coproduction of economic resilience in post-socialist agricultural communities.**

Márton Lendvay (Aberystwyth University)

**Plenary discussion.** Jen Cleary (University of South Australia, Australia) & Toby Anstruther (East Neuk Estates Group). The short plenary discussion will provide the opportunity for a brief 'academic' and a 'practice' perspective on the session's papers to be presented, before opening up to wider discussion.

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<b>251 Entrepreneurship in Peri-Urban Regions: Understanding, Empowerment and Marginalization in the Urbanizing Global South (1).</b> Convenor Rohit Madan (Cardiff University). Chair Rohit Madan (Cardiff University).	<b>RGRG DARG PERG</b>	<b>Thur 28 Aug 2014</b>	<b>Session 3 Sherfield Building, Room 10</b>
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*Linked Sessions Entrepreneurship in Peri-Urban Regions: Understanding Empowerment and Marginalization in the Urbanizing Global South (2).*

**Session Abstract:** In the global south urbanization is changing the nature of rural areas, and rural entrepreneurs play an important part in this. Entrepreneurial success requires good roads, labour, communications, technology, skills and (relatively) cheap land, and these are readily available in the peri-urban fringe, where urbanization is most rapid. This is considered "modernization" and "progress" – a neo-liberal mindset within which the private entrepreneur is embedded.

Private entrepreneurship has been traditionally seen as vital in achieving poverty alleviation – there are several examples of this in studies from: China (Lin 2006, Ma 2002), Tanzania (Lanjouw et al 2001), Indonesia (Leinbach 2003), and India (Eapen 2001), amongst many others. Often government policies have tried to increase the proportion of non-cultivation employment in rural areas to achieve this. On the surface entrepreneurship suggests innovation, collaboration and partnerships between the state, civil society and private sector, however, de-regulation gives entrepreneurs increased access over human/natural resources. In the peri-urban fringe therefore the entrepreneur has greater capacity to affect both empowerment and marginalization of rural communities.

This session aims to theorize relationships between rural-entrepreneurship and urbanization, shifting the spotlight away from solely the "urban" or the "rural", but also away from simplistic preconceptions that see urbanization within binary frameworks. It aims to converge strands addressing how entrepreneurship transforms individuals and the community, but also at national/global levels – on how both governance and everyday life are transformed.

The first slot is a paper session that includes presentations of research from Nigeria, India, Zambia and Bolivia which connects urbanization with rural entrepreneurship. The second slot is a panel discussion around the themes highlighted by the papers including:

- How environmental and social justice are linked with entrepreneurship in the global south?
- How entrepreneurship shapes (and is shaped by) multi-level governance and policy?
- How can we theorize agrarian dimensions of entrepreneurship (i.e. food, labour, multifunctionality, etc.)?
- How is entrepreneurship co-produced (through the nature/type of individual - institutional interactions)?
- How can we theorize the relationships between learning/education and entrepreneurship?
- How does entrepreneurship relate to rural-urban linkages and urbanization?
- Typologies and wider discussions / debates around entrepreneurship?

**Financial Inclusion, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment – Their intersection and impact in a Rapidly Urbanizing Context: the case of Zambia.**

Juliana Siwale (University of Lincoln) & Christian Chileshe (Copperbelt University, Zambia)

**Migration as a strategy to diversify household income sources in agricultural communities in Bolivia.**

Johanna Jokinen (Uppsala University, Sweden)

**The Challenge of Entrepreneurship in Nigerian Informal Settlements.**

Kelechi Anyigor (Northumbria University), Bob Giddings (Northumbria) & Lee Pugalis (Northumbria)

**Selling land is beginning of the end for us': understanding rural women's views on the rising occurrence of land sale in western Maharashtra, India.**

Girija Godbole (University of Cambridge)

**Can farmers become entrepreneurs? The case of agri-tourism in peri-urban Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, India.**

Rohit Madan (Cardiff University)

**Discussant: Katherine Gough (Loughborough University)**

<b>286? Entrepreneurship in Peri-Urban Regions: Understanding Empowerment and Marginalization in the Urbanizing Global South (2).</b> Convenor Rohit Madan (Cardiff University). Chair Rohit Madan.	<b>DARG, PERG, RGRG</b>	<b>Thur 28 Aug 2014</b>	<b>Session 4 Sherfield Building, Room 10</b>
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Contact the conference organisers to request a change to session or paper details: AC2014@rgs.org

**Panel Discussion:** Rohit Madan (Cardiff University), Barbara Harriss-White (University of Oxford), Katherine Gough (Loughborough University), Deborah Potts (King's College London), Emily Boyd (University of Reading), Peter North (University of Liverpool), Girija Godbole (University of Cambridge), Entrepreneurship in Peri-Urban Regions: Understanding Empowerment and Marginalization in the Urbanizing Global South – 2 (Panel Discussion).

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<b>166 Students as Co-producers – Exploring Innovative Teaching Approaches within Rural Geography.</b> Convenors Julian Swindell (Royal Agricultural University), Rhiannon Fisher (Royal Agricultural University). Chair Julian Swindell (Royal Agricultural University).	<b>RGRG</b>	<b>Thur 28 Aug 2014</b>	<b>Session 1 Skempton Building SKE-064b</b>
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**Session Abstract:** This session aims to explore any aspects of teaching approaches which place students in the role of co-producers, with specific reference to Rural Geography. This may include engaging students as pedagogic consultants and evaluators or co-designers of curriculum. Additionally it aims to explore approaches which enable students to design and develop their own teaching materials. From the perspective of Rural Geography, attention may also be paid as to whether there is anything about this subject which makes it either especially amenable or especially resistant to such innovations. Such approaches, opportunities and challenges will be discussed and evaluated against a background of increasing consumerism within higher education.

**(Co)Producing audiovisual Rural Geographies.**

Christoph Baumann (Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany)

**Students as co-producers: defining their own terms.**

Julian Swindell (Royal Agricultural University)

**Co-producing teaching and learning material - the use of video.**

Rhiannon Fisher (Royal Agricultural University)

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<b>244 Mapping co-production: unsettling mapping practices (1). Convenors Kim Ward (University of Cardiff), Gareth Enticott (Cardiff University). Chair Kim Ward.</b>	<b>RGRG GIScRG</b>	<b>Thur 28 Aug 2014</b>	<b>Session 3 Sherfield, Pippard Lect- ure Theatre</b>
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Linked Sessions: Mapping co-production: unsettling mapping practices (2).

**Session Abstract:** Historically maps had been portrayed as objective representatives of nature, often viewed as the very embodiment of scientific fact. Epistemological practices and critiques of relations of power were frequently absent to this perceived ontological condition. This dogma was firmly challenged within the social sciences in the 1980's by scholars who claimed that maps and mapping practices were in themselves expressions of power, expressions which created rather than revealed knowledge. Increasingly scholars have sought to question the process of knowledge production within mapping practices. This session invites papers which further unsettle the ontological and epistemological construction of maps of the environment and nature and further explore the co-production of maps.

An increasing emphasis on public participation in some divisions of science, the mass collaboration platforms of social media, and the growing collection of big data sets from which mapping practices can draw from lead us to ask: are new forms of expertise being inscribed, or are old knowledge hierarchies being reinforced in the production of maps of nature and the environment? We invite papers that seek to explore the coproduction of maps within these emerging contexts.

Topics might include but are not limited to:

- \*Participatory mapping practices and the environment
- \*How other visual and representational modes of knowing and praxis can ontologically and epistemologically inform/unsettle maps of the environment
- \*Practices of digital mapping and the use/role of social media in mapping practices
- \*Papers examining 'lay' mapping practices
- \* How are maps brought into being through practice? How does the constant, co-constitutive production of a map occur? Including the making and remaking of maps.
- \*The (re)reconstruction of nature and/or the environment in response to the coproduction of maps

**The 'biological atlas' as (im)mutable assemblage**

Chris Perkins (University of Manchester)

Biological recording of species in the UK still revolves around the figure of the map and mapping is a central but often unquestioned set of practices for many different groups involved in the production and consumption of scientific knowledge about species. Bird atlases, mammal atlases, botanical atlases and insect atlases rely strongly upon grid-based and static displays, even though technologies exist to animate changing rhythms and durations of species relationships to the natural and cultural environment. They continue as an ongoing and influential genre of mapping, underpinning policy work around biodiversity conservation, and landscape management. They play an influential role charting the mutable fortunes of nature in the face of ongoing human impacts, from anthropogenic climate change, to changing farming practice and urbanization, appearing to offer hard data upon which policy rests.

Meanwhile emerging work from critical scholars has focused attention onto non-human animal geographies and hybrid co-construction of places, identities, technologies, representation and affects. And the affordances offered by mapping have been rethought, to imagine much more diverse encounters between maps and those who deploy or change them.

This paper focuses upon the possible dialogues between these apparently distinct and different discursive fields. It explores the fixative power of this genre of mapping but argues that different modes, methods and moments enrolled into the performance of these maps reveal a much richer account of different organisms relationships to space, than might at first sight emerge from tetrad, or kilometer square distributions. A focus on the assemblage of forces, things, feelings, possibilities, graphics, human and non-human animals reveals the tensions in a contingent, situated and partial narrative, at once immutable and mutable.

**Mapping the perceptions of people about forest landscapes.**

Hagit Zimroni (Israel Institute of Technology, Israel), Daniel Orenstein (Technion, Israel), Efrate Eizenberg (Technion, Israel).

**Mixed methods mapping for a new era in agri-environment decision making.**

Beth Brockett (Lancaster University), Alan Blackburn (Lancaster University), Richard Bardgett (University of Manchester), Alison Browne (University of Manchester), Nigel Watson (Lancaster University), Andy Beanland (Lancaster University).

**Maps, Mapping and the Governance of Animal Disease.**

Gareth Enticott (Cardiff University), Vaughan Higgins (Charles Sturt University, Australia),

**Discussant Rob Kitchin (National University of Ireland, Maynooth).**

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<p><b>279 Mapping co-production: unsettling mapping practices (2).</b>          Convenors Kim Ward (University of Cardiff) &amp; Gareth Enticott (Cardiff).          Chair Gareth Enticott (Cardiff).</p>	<p><b>RGRG GIScRG</b></p>	<p><b>Thur 28 Aug 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Session 4 Sherfield SHE- PIPPARD</b></p>
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- \*The (re)reconstruction of nature and/or the environment in response to the coproduction of maps

**Participatory Mapping in Timor Leste: Investigating Coastal Adaptation to Environmental Change.**

Vanessa Burns (University of Oxford)

**Co-producing a map of Liverpool's local food.**

Chris Speed (University of Edinburgh), Michelle Bastian (University of Edinburgh) & Alex Hale (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland)

**Mapping TB: Coproduction, maps and mapping practices of Bovine Tuberculosis.**

Kim Ward (University of Cardiff) & Gareth Enticott (Cardiff University)

**Discussant Rob Kitchin (National University of Ireland, Maynooth)**

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	<p>➔ <b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)</b>  <b>Rural Geography Research Group.</b>                  Convenor &amp; Chair Keith Halfacree.                  * <i>Have your say on rural research.</i>                  * <i>Learn about RGRG offices open 2015.</i></p>	<p>RGRG</p> 	<p>Thur 28 Aug 2014</p>	<p>RGS-IBG Tea Room. Plenary &amp; Lunch 13:10 to 14:25</p>
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*Photo: Dutch Belted, Great Yorkshire Show (BAS 2014)*

<p><b>304 New and Emerging Rural Researchers (1): Rural Development and Change.</b> Convenors Andrew Grayson (University of Sheffield) &amp; Michaela Kennard (University of Greenwich).                  Chair Andrew Grayson (University of Sheffield).</p>	<p>RGRG</p>	<p>Fri 29 Aug 2014</p>	<p>Session 1 Sir Alex Fleming BldgRoom SAF 122</p>
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*Linked Session: New and Emerging Rural Researchers (2): Rural Production and Agriculture*

**Session abstract:** This session looks to explore new and emerging ideas across rural geography by discussing the work of early career researchers. It is hoped to prompt lively discussion as research ideas and results are presented in a friendly and constructive forum. This session is always well attended, conducted in a friendly, welcoming and constructive manner, and is widely appreciated by all those attending.

**The critical analysis of the effectiveness of rural proofing; past, present future.**

Sonja Rewhorn (University of Chester)

**Impacts of Next Generation Broadband (NGB) on Small/Medium size enterprises (SMEs) in the North of Scotland.**

Megan Palmer-Abbs (University of Aberdeen)

**Rural Gentrification and Community Change in the Northern Fuji-Submontane Area.**

Ryo Iizuka (Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan)



Photo RWAS 2014

**The Royal Welsh Agricultural Show: A lens for rural change?**

Greg Philip Thomas (Aberystwyth University)

**Editor:** Abstract included in full for the interest of those fascinated with rural journalism.

**Paper Abstract:** The Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (RWAS) which has been held annually since 1904 is a highly significant event for the rural community of Wales and beyond. The event attracts approximately 240,000 people over 4 days and is the largest and most prestigious event of its kind in Europe. Despite this the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and agricultural shows in general have received very little attention in the academic literature. Throughout its history the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society has published what is today known as the Journal of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society. Each journal issue (initially published triannually before becoming an annual publication in 1987) provides a detailed report on the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, informs members of the activities of the Society and gives other information about Welsh agriculture and rural life. The information contained in these publications gives a unique insight into the changing nature of the agricultural show in Wales, which in turn can be used to examine wider rural change. Through analysing the Journals of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, this study investigates the changes that have occurred throughout the show history in terms of its classes, sponsors, exhibits and trade stands. The changing nature of the published articles is also analysed to establish the changing importance of certain events to the Society. It is thought that these changes seen at the Royal Welsh Show as demonstrated in the journals of the Society will reflect wider rural change patterns.

**Eigg: The challenges of pursuing economic, environmental and socio-cultural sustainability simultaneously through in-bound tourism.**

Rachel Creaney (James Hutton Institute)

**Extractive Geographies-Immersive Lives: Phenomenological Explorations of the Lead Mining Landscape in the Southern Peak District, England.**

George S. Jaramillo (University of Edinburgh)

**'Integrating corpus linguistic method in understanding 'rural idyll' in a Taiwan TV series'**

Kuan-ming Su (National Taiwan University, Taiwan) & Ho-chia Chueh (National Taiwan University, Taiwan)

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Photo: Horse prep, Great Yorkshire Show

(BAS 8.7.14)

<b>337 New and Emerging Rural Researchers (2): Rural Production and Agriculture.</b> Convenors Andrew Grayson (University of Sheffield) & Michaela Kennard (University of Greenwich). Chair Michaela Kennard (Uni-Greenwich).	<b>RGRG</b>	<b>Fri 29 Aug 2014</b>	<b>Sir Alex. Fleming Building, SAF-122</b>
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**Chianti Experiences. Turning a post-rural region into a listening territory.**

Chiara Certomà (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, Italy)

**Unpacking a Policy Hegemony: the Varied Economic Capacities of Rural Communities in England.**

Andrew Grayson (University of Sheffield) & Madeleine Gustavsson (University of Liverpool)

**Farmers' experiences of flooding and attitudes towards climate change – initial findings.**

Alice Hamilton-Webb (Royal Agricultural University)

**Social Media, Reconnection and Alternative Food Networks.**

Elizabeth Bos (Coventry University) & Luke Owen (Coventry)

**An Interdisciplinary Socio-cultural GIS for Fisheries and Coastal Zone Planning and Governance.**

Melanie Baker (University of Greenwich)

**Developing inshore fishing knowledge systems of biodiversity and habitats: socio ecological resilience beyond marine conservation zones.**

Jeremy Evans (University of Brighton)



Yorkshire Show cow barn (BAS 8.7.14)

<b>372 Author meets interlocutors - Barbara Pini's 'Reshaping Gender and Class in Rural Spaces'.</b> Convenors Linda Price (Queen's University Belfast) & Laura Price (Royal Holloway, University of London). Chair(s)	<b>RGRG GFGRG</b>	<b>Fri 29 Aug 2014</b>	<b>Sir Alex. Fleming Building SAF-122</b>
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Research Groups Gender and Feminist Geographies Research Group & Rural Geography Research Group

**Session Abstract:** In the session Professor Barbara Pini will discuss her recent book *Reshaping Gender and Class in Rural Spaces* along with contemporary work on methods, men and masculinity.

'Reshaping Gender and Class in Rural Spaces'

Barbara Pini (Griffith University, Australia)

Jo Little (University of Exeter)

Peter Hopkins (Newcastle University)

**➔ COMPLETE INFO ON THE RGS-IBG 27-29 AUGUST 2014 LONDON MEET:**

<http://www.rgs.org/WhatsOn/ConferencesAndSeminars/Annual+International+Conference/Annual+international+conference.htm>

### 3. Colloque International de Géographie Rurale 2014 / International Conference of Rural Geography Nantes, France, 2-6 June 2014. By Keith Halfacree (right)



RGRG members attended this conference in northwest France. With approximately 80 presentations from at least a dozen, mostly European countries' delegates, and supported by the RGRG and its equivalents from France, Germany, Spain and Italy, it was a notably international gathering. Paper presentations were in English or French, supported by some first-class simultaneous translation. Besides the use of lecture halls in the Université de Nantes, main sessions in the Hôtel de Région were held in the Amphitheatre – pictured below – usually echoing to Regional Council debates. We also managed to fit in an afternoon field trip on Tuesday and a day-long excursion on Thursday, all on rural themes within the Pays de la Loire area. As you can see, cattle and beverage tasting made their usual welcome appearance.



All of us who attended the conference found it a great success – academically, socially and in introducing us to Nantes and its environs. The mixture of paper sessions, field trips and time for ourselves was pitched just right. As some readers will know, it has long been a wish of mine that European Rural Geography can converge in regular meetings in the highly successful manner of the European Society for Rural Sociology. As with Geography in general, rural geography across Europe is a disparate sub-discipline, with both strong national traditions and great strengths and wide interests. Intellectual cross-fertilizations that meetings such as this encourage are thus both to be welcomed and are increasingly timely. They certainly help us to maintain touch with rural colleagues across Europe in a collegiate and enquiring manner; potential often missed within the melee of conferences now occurring annually.

Two final observations. First, a country and venue is needed to host the next conference if Nantes is not to prove a one-off. At a meeting during the conference there was near-unanimity that making this a regular (3- or 4-yearly) event is the way forward. So, should RGRG grasp the nettle here?

Second, organising such an event is, of course, no small task. Thus, I end by extending great thanks and appreciation from all the RGRG members who went to Nantes to all those involved with the organisation and management of the event. However, Dr Yvon Le Caro, of Université Rennes 2, merits special mention for his dedication and commitment in successfully bringing it all together so well!

- Dr. Keith Halfacree, Swansea University

#### 4. Farm suicide study at QUB: 'Working with the Humanities'

By Linda Price

*Editor: The UK foot and mouth disease (FMD) epizootic of 2001 led to the slaughter and burning of thousands of cattle. It also revealed that farmers are more prone to suicide than the general population.*

*A new collaborative project at QUB addresses such issues and you could participate. (Photo: BBC Feb. 23, 2003)*



**Along with Dominique Jeanerod from Modern Languages, I have been awarded one of the Institute Research Fellowships at the Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities here at Queen's University Belfast for 2014-15.**

We are keen to spread the news to fellow rural geographers. The priority theme for the coming year is 'Creativity in Imagined and Material Worlds'. Here's the link: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/InstituteforCollaborativeResearchintheHumanities/>

I will be working with the Institute Director Prof. John Thompson on moving forward the priority theme this year, along with a number of funded research groups and my own programme of research. I am keen that, as Geographers, we might see the benefit of engagement with the Humanities and consider Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funding, such as the 'Connecting Communities' theme, and draw on 'Digital Humanities'.

**My own research will be putting together a research consortium to look at expressions of connection/ belonging/ rootedness in the land.** My work on male farming suicide shows that this is rising. Therefore, I shall be looking at what we can learn from connections to the land in, for example, literature, art, and music, while working with community organisations to see what we can learn. How for example can we reach out to farming men? For example could we work with activist theatre companies to go to where farming men are, such as livestock shows and cattle markets?

Thus, links between ruralities, humanities, lived realities and interventions might be made. I'd be keen to hear from academics interested in being part of the research consortium both in the UK and abroad. **RGRG**

*Editor: Linda Price co-convenes RGS-IBG event 372 'Reshaping Gender & Class in Rural Spaces', Fri 29 Aug in SAF-122. See above!*

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## 5. Sustaining the last traditional floating rice in the Mekong Delta: Why it matters

**Charles Howie, Visiting Fellow**, Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, and Adviser, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, An Giang University, Vietnam: [chowie@rau.ac.uk](mailto:chowie@rau.ac.uk)

**Nguyen Van Kien, Director**, Research Centre for Rural Dev't, An Giang University: [kienanu@gmail.com](mailto:kienanu@gmail.com)  
(Currency exchange for VND Vietnam dong: Currently 1GBP=36,000VND and 1USD=21,000VND)



From People's Committee of Vinh Phuoc commune to Floating rice field (GPS plot by Pham Duy Tien)

**Editor:** As high yield variety (HYV) rice replaces traditional floating varieties, scholars at An Giang University note strong reasons to retain floating rice areas: 1. Education, 2. Agri-cultural tourism, 3. Baseline for measuring soil changes related to dike building, and 4. Biological assets unknown as the climate changes.

**AN GIANG PROVINCE, at the back of the Mekong Delta, had less than 60 hectares of traditional floating rice left in 2013, down from 1,000 hectares in 2004, out of a total agricultural area of 280,000 hectares.** A century ago floating rice varieties were the only ones available and covered much of the delta. In the late 1960s Green Revolution (GR) varieties of rice, short duration, higher yields, but requiring artificial chemical inputs, arrived in Vietnam and farmers built low walls, or dikes, to create water-controlled compartments, transforming the land surface (Howie 2011).



(Above: floating & normal rice)

Initially one crop of GR rice per year was grown, but by raising the wall height, two crops could be harvested between one flood seasons and the next. Now, with dikes high enough to exclude all waters, three crops per year is widespread. GR varieties produce up to 7 t/h, whereas traditional varieties, like *bong sen* rice, require no artificial inputs, take 6 months to mature and yield only 2 t/h. Outcomes of the GR revolution include: positive national food security; securing Vietnam's position as the world's number two exporter of rice; but low farm gate prices and low profits for farmers. Vietnam's focus has been on quantity, rather than quality: in 1970 one hectare yielded 2t, by 2013 it potentially produced about 20 tonnes. Farmers and government have responded to internal and external economic drivers, but these policies have diminished the floating rice system to just two small areas left in this province, possibly the last throughout this part of the delta. Two areas for questions arise: is there a case for maintaining this traditional system: and if so, how can it be done?

Immediate reasons include the maintenance of a national tradition and as an educational and tourism resource, but other less eye-catching reasons may also be important: as a bench mark for determining changes in soil fertility across the delta; and the possible presence of so-far unrecognised biota with value in a changed climate. The UK's Rothamsted Research Station was founded in 1843 by landowners, farmers and scientists to study and record the effects of new fertilisers, today it's records are a world-class resource for judging the effects of modern agriculture on soil. Agriculture in Vietnam is also becoming highly

dependent on chemicals, so the country may in the future benefit from having land unaffected by chemicals as a baseline for measuring change to the soil, but only if action happens now. In 2011 [UNESCO](#) called for Vietnam to set up biosphere reserves in the Mekong Delta, but this has not happened yet. These two traditional rice areas have the potential to meet these aspirations, otherwise for economic reasons farmers may build dikes.



**The challenge is to improve livelihoods while maintaining this unique and valuable environment.** An Giang University staff work closely with stakeholders, at commune and district levels and with international agencies. The district has altered its plans, the area is no longer zoned for high dikes. Work goes on to raise consumer awareness of the value of chemical-free rice and this year farmers sold milled rice for 26,000 VND<sup>i</sup>, up from 6,000VND for unmilled rice in 2013. Buyers came from the cities, suggesting richer wealthier consumers recognised a benefit in this crop. One stakeholder meeting brought together the commune leader, the Farmers Union agricultural tourism official, a high-value hotel chain interested in developing tourism and a specialist rice processing and export company. Between rice crops low value cassava is grown, not a high value crop, but not requiring a large labour input in a sparsely populated area. Work to improve the quality of cassava and rice is going on at the delta's principal agricultural research station. Formerly Vietnam had numerous varieties in farmers' fields, but with 'progress', the range of genotypes in farmers' fields is shrinking. However, Vietnam has a 'Fort Knox' of genotypes in cold store. Improvement of livelihoods also requires better living conditions if families are to reside in this harsh environment, including houses secure above flood levels, year-round access to fresh water, electricity and reliable roads for access in the dry season—necessary for education, health and marketing. Visible progress has been made, more is needed. **RGRG**

► Howie, Charles (2011) *Co-operation and contestation: farmer-state relations in agricultural transformation, An Giang Province, Vietnam*. Royal Holloway,

Doctoral Thesis: <http://pure.rhul.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/cooperation-and-contestation-farmerstate-relations-in-agricultural-transformation-an-giang-province-vietnam%28e6c9661e-dfe5-49f0-95ac-eb7335b4def%29.html>

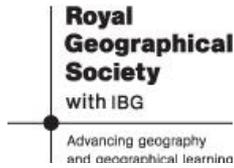
## ***Enjoy Summer 2014!***



*Lorenzo at The Great Yorkshire Show (BAS 8.7.14)*

**RGRG Newsletter invites your contribution to the Winter 2014 edition.  
Deadline is 25<sup>th</sup> November.**

**With subject line 'RGRG News' please email reports & photos from RGRG events, awards, books & features to Editor: [bruce.scholten@btopenworld.com](mailto:bruce.scholten@btopenworld.com)**



*Thanks! to Steven Allan, Web Coordinator at Durham University Geography Dept.*

