

CONTENTS

1. Calendar of Forthcoming Rural Conferences and Events
2. RGRG Undergraduate Dissertation prize
3. Recent Conference Reports
4. Forthcoming Conferences and Events
5. Calls for Papers
6. New publications
7. New grants awarded
8. Vacancies on the RGRG Committee Membership
9. Items for the Next Newsletter
10. Electronic communications

1. CALENDAR OF FORTHCOMING RURAL CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Date	Event	Contact
21 May, 2003	RESSG workshop: 'Young Rural Researchers' Meeting' University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham.	Henry Buller hbuller@glos.ac.uk
23-27 June, 2003	International Rural Network Conference and Exchange of Experience, The Arkleton centre and UHI Millennium Institute, Inverness 'Taking Charge: Rural Community Empowerment in Rural Development, Rural Health and Rural Education'	takingcharge@abdn.ac.uk
3-10 July, 2003	IGU Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems XI Annual Conference, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Univesidade Federal de Minas Gerais and Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Brazil 'The Regional Dimension and Contemporary Challenges to Rural Sustainability'	Ana Maria Bicalho Csrs2003@eagle.ufrj.br
14-19 July, 2003	RGRG Fifth British-American-Canadian Rural Conference, University of Exeter and University of Plymouth 'Contrasting Ruralities: Changing Rural Economies, Societies and Landscapes' http://www.geog.plym.ac.uk/ruralgeography/	Stephen Essex sessex@plymouth.ac.uk Richard Yarwood ryarwood@plymouth.ac.uk Andrew Gilg a.w.gilg@exeter.ac.uk
18-22 August, 2003	20th Conference of the European Society for Rural Sociology, Geographies of work and employment in rural Europe', Sligo, Ireland	Caitríona Ní Laoire caitriona.nilaoire@may.ie and Judit Timar timarj@rkk.hu
3-5 September, 2003	RGS-IBG Annual Conference, London 'Geography Serving Society and Environment' PERG/RGRG Sustainable development and the governing of rural and urban areas RGRG/MRG Rural Development in Upland Landscapes: Environment, People, Constraints and Opportunities RGRG/BSG People and soil: understanding soil within its social context RGRG/PGF New and Emerging Researchers in Rural Geography	Charles Watkins charles.watkins@nottingham.ac.uk
16-18 September, 2003	RESSG annual conference: 'Cultural Turns, Rural Turns: critical (re)appraisals', University of Newcastle.	Katy Bennett: katy.bennett@ncl.ac.uk
15-20 August, 2004	RGS-IBG Annual conference held in conjunction with the World International Geographic Union (IGU) conference, Glasgow	g.robinson@kingston.ac.uk K.H.Halfacree@swansea.ac.uk
2005	RGRG British-Spanish Rural Conference, UK venue	

2. RGRG UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION PRIZE, 2002

First place:

Kezia Mary Barker, University of Edinburgh. Dissertation entitled 'Nature, Culture and Heritage in the Scottish Highlands: National Park, Gaelic Landscape?'

Second place:

Jonathan Mitchell, University College, London. Dissertation entitled 'Giving the People What They Want: Public Perceptions of a Contingent Valuation Exercise in Dartmoor National Park'

Third place:

Steven Emery, University of Lancaster. Dissertation entitled 'A Novel Technique for Capturing the Total Economic Value of a Recreational Site: The example of Grizedale Forest'

Dr Carol Morris, University of Gloucestershire.

3. RECENT CONFERENCE REPORTS

3.1 RGS-IBG Environment and Society Forum on Sustainable Futures for the British Uplands, RGS London, 20 November, 2002

This one-day conference, held on 20 November, 2002, was organised by Dr Martin Price, Chair of the RGS-IBG Mountain Research Group, for the RGS-IBG's Environment and Society Forum. It was chaired by Sir Martin Holdgate, President of the Freshwater Biological Association, former Director General of IUCN-The World Conservation Union, and a resident of Cumbria. The conference drew attention to the key issues to be considered in the British Uplands, whose people and environment face diverse and interacting forces of economic, societal and environmental change, as revealed particularly by the foot and mouth disease epidemic in 2001. Recognising that many of these forces originate outside the UK, the conference was also a contribution to the International Year of Mountains, 2002, whose objectives were to "promote the conservation and sustainable development of mountain regions, thereby ensuring the well-being of mountain and lowland communities". Eight papers from practitioners, politicians and academics were presented at the conference, which also included a panel discussion.

The British uplands are now recognised as multi-functional landscapes, whose communities and economies are subject to many external forces. They are important not only for supporting local economies, but also for providing public goods such as biodiversity and landscape conservation, recreational opportunities, and flood control. While the foot and mouth outbreak devastated farming and tourism, its occurrence demonstrated the interdependence between these activities, and that recreation and tourism provide far more employment and income than the 'traditional' activities for agriculture, forestry and field sports. Recognising that the value of public goods now outweighs production from agriculture and forestry, new approaches to ensure sustainable futures in the British uplands are needed, with a balance between local needs and national benefits.

Both European and British government policies affecting the uplands remain strongly sectoral, with the consequent duplications or contradictions between the mandates and actions of different agencies. These frameworks need to be reconsidered: inter-sectoral approaches are necessary, requiring 'joined-up' policies delivered with increased flexibility and imagination. Possibly, a 'lead agency' to coordinate on upland issues could be designated. Integrated national strategies and guidelines are also needed for the development of renewable energy sources and water resource management to recognise the diverse environmental, economic and societal implications. There is also a need for subsidiarity to allow decisions that affect a particular area to be made regionally or locally.

Institutions to achieve sustainable futures for the uplands will have to accommodate changes in societies, ecosystems and climates. A number of structures and supporting mechanisms were proposed during the conference. The experience of FMD has re-emphasised the need for new, joined up systems for rural support, recognising the interdependence of off-farm and on-farm activities, and their implications for the provision of public goods. Payments might come through one Rural Support Agency, rather than a number of agencies. Agency officials need to better understand the complex issues of upland life and work to realistic timescales; for instance, taking into account the relatively short upland growing season. An integral element of rural support should be improved arrangements for advice and technical support to farmers and small rural businesses, including advice and training in the preparation and implementation of farm and business plans, and the provision of business support. Capacity building is a key element of developing sustainability. The funds necessary to provide all such support to upland areas must be based on economic valuation systems that place due weight on their environmental assets including intangibles such as landscape quality, value as wilderness or as a distinctive landscape as well as the provision of recreation. At the same time, long-term sustainability requires independence from such financial support through the effective use of the market. In particular, innovative approaches are needed to the development and marketing of distinctive local products, which may be based on traditional products or new ideas.

A sustainable future for any part of the British uplands must be founded on a sustainable and adaptable framework for the people who live there. Yet the uplands are also deeply valued by many who only visit them occasionally, and who do so largely because of their intangible qualities, especially their apparent wildness, natural beauty, and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Planning for sustainability has to address these intangibles as well as more down-to-earth dimensions of employment, services and economic opportunities.

Based on a fuller summary of the outcomes of the conference by Dr Martin Price and Sir Martin Holdgate available on the RGS-IBG web site at <http://www.rgs.org/templ.php?page=8publcon>

3.2 RGRG Postgraduate Conference 'Vital Ruralities', Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle, 20 – 21 November, 2002

Over the 20-21 November 2002, the Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University hosted a postgraduate conference of the Rural Geography Research Group (RGRG). The event provided an opportunity for postgraduates researching issues of the rural environment to meet and discuss shared and divergent themes of their research. Fifteen delegates from eleven institutions presented papers, with an audience of more than 35 participating in lively discussion and debate.

The conference opened with a lunch based around local produce, with the theme of '*Food and Farming*' continuing into the first paper session. Jane Ricketts Hein (Coventry) opened with a paper exploring the concept of 'local' in terms of government support for local food supplies, and offered insights on possible future scenarios for local food marketing. Bruce Scholten (Durham) offered transatlantic comparisons in a discussion of Farmer's markets in Newcastle and Seattle. Further international studies were presented by Charles Howie (Royal Holloway/Cirencester) reporting on the diversity of farmers' decision-making strategies in the Mekhong Delta, and Sawako Sgehito (Newcastle) outlining issues of direct support payment to farmers in Upland Japan.

The second paper session centred on the theme of '*Sustainable Development*'. Kostas Baginetas (Nottingham) discussed the possibility of developing sustainability indicators for multidisciplinary use. Carol Kambites (Gloucestershire) concentrated on more theoretical issues by considering the use and definitions of 'sustainability' within local government. Alison Scott (Durham) concluded the session by considering how rural

regeneration may be better implemented to provide social, economic and community development in the county of Durham. The third session on the theme of '*Analysing Rural Institutions*' started with a paper from Nicola Thompson (Leeds) addressing the importance of Scottish devolution in the creation of National Parks in Scotland. Sarah King (Durham), using the National Trust as a case study, considered the issue of 'whiteness' and marginalised groups in rural areas. The day's papers were brought to a close with Andrew Cattermole (Newcastle) looking at the success of the National Trust's recent projects in enabling rural development in the North East of England. The first day was concluded with a lively and entertaining panel discussion from Dr Rob Fish (Nottingham), Dr Katy Bennett (Newcastle) and Dr Andrew Donaldson (Hull), who answered questions from the floor regarding their reflections on the PhD process. The day's formal activities were followed by an evening meal on the Quayside, which gave opportunity to reflect informally on the day's discussions.

The second day opened with three concurrent workshop sessions aimed at the various stages of PhD research: 'Looking at Literature' (Mark Riley, Nottingham) 'Methods & Data collection' (Charles Howie, Royal Holloway) and 'Writing Up' (Dr Susanne Seymour, Nottingham). The sessions offered practical advice, and were reported back to all attendees in a broader discussion session. The final paper session dealt with 'Rural Policies and Interventions'. Craig Elliot (Newcastle) reported on the 'Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development' on Europeanisation and administrative reform in Hungary and Slovenia. Geoff Whitman (Newcastle) provided a theoretical outline of different approaches to understanding power in upland policy networks. Miriam Renner (Newcastle) also explored networks, assessing at how different actors translate stewardship in the countryside. Matthew Kempson (Nottingham) concluded the paper session by reporting on research into the role of state intervention in the post-war preservation, management and use of landed estates in England.

Keynote speaker Professor Neil Ward (Leeds) concluded the conference with a paper entitled '*Rural Social Science & Public Policy: Some Lessons from Foot and Mouth*', which successfully linked many of the themes of the conference, and stimulated a detailed concluding discussion. The conference highlighted the depth and diversity of current research into rural issues, and provided a good forum for new researchers to share and reflect on these issues. The conference convenors Miriam Renner and Mark Riley (RGRG post-graduate representatives) wish to thank all delegates and speakers for participating in what was a most successful event and one, which we hope, will provide the stimulus for similar activities in the future.

Mark Riley, University of Nottingham and Miriam Renner, University of Newcastle.

3.3 AAG Conference Report on rural session 'Countrysides of the Future', New Orleans, 4 - 8 March, 2003

A suitably diverse combination of papers from researchers in Britain and North America provided an interesting platform for presentations and discussions on the broad topic of 'rural futures' at this year's Annual Conference of the Association of American Geographers in New Orleans (March 4th-8th 2003). The session was divided into two modules.

In the first module, chaired by Lisa Harrington (Kansas State University), Robert Fish (University of Nottingham) opened proceedings with an analysis of the Tomorrow Project, a quasi-government initiative attempting to think through the challenges facing the British countryside over the next 20 years. Through critical analysis of the methodology employed by the project to imagine the future, he argued for approaches to scenario building that leap beyond ideas deemed simply acceptable to contemporary policy discourse on rural areas. Such a leap would mean playing down current emphasises on consensus building between different stakeholder groups, creating multiple and open narratives of the future, complementing the pragmatic tone of much policy work with more imaginative discourse on tomorrow's countrysides. Fish's paper was followed in a related conceptual vein by Keith Halfacree's (University of Wales

Swansea) discussion of the British New Labour government's rural policy, with special reference to the 2000 English Rural White Paper and the 2001 revision of Planning Policy Guidance 7. Whilst both indicate at first sight a new rurality for the 21st century, there are clear similarities with the 'productivist' vision of the countryside that was put in place by an 'Old' Labour government in the 1940s. Next up were Christopher Merrett and Norman Walzer (Western Illinois University), who cast discussions of sustainable rural futures around the possibilities opened up by what they termed New Generation Cooperatives (NGCs) currently operating in North America. In countering recent constructions of rural America as a 'failed frontier', where social and economic decline is not only rife but inevitable, Merrett and Walzer explained how these co-operatives have enabled local communities and farmers to fight the discontents of globalisation by, for instance, reappropriating the processing of raw materials regionally. Co-operatives thereby encourage local economic development, by keeping income within the community and creating employment.

Robert Fish chaired the second module. First, Michael Troughton (University Of Western Ontario) also drew upon the idea of the 'frontier' as a way of thinking about sustainable rural futures, although his prognosis was less optimistic than that of Merrett and Walzer. Reviewing rural change in North America, Troughton argued that the 'frontier model' of the 19th and early 20th centuries exacerbated processes of decline in rural areas. As such, rural futures depend on countering and departing from this frontier discourse. For Troughton, rural futures that can challenge a trajectory of decline in North America depend on effectively reworking policy and practice, couched clearly in terms of the distinctive needs of rural societies and landscapes. An environment struggling with change was also the message of Richard Lonsdale and John Clark Archer (University of Nebraska), in an analysis of the geodemographics of the Great Plains. This vast agrarian landscape battles to keep its population compared to the metropolitan centre on the regional periphery, where growth is the indicative trend. Through an analysis of census and other demographic data over the last 20 years, migration was cited as a key element of these transformations, underpinned by largely negative ideas associated with Great Plains life. Extrapolation of current trends provided a range of possible futures, both positive and negative, for the Great Plains landscape. From a very different perspective, Darren Smith (Brighton University) discussed the important and progressive role being played by lesbian households within processes of rural regeneration within Britain's Upper Calder Valley, West Yorkshire. Specific features of rural locations were shown to appeal to different types of lesbian household, with place-specific discourses of rurality also being increasingly manipulated and circulated by institutional actors. The module ended with two highly inter-related papers by researchers at the Université de Montréal. First, Soumaja Frej, Mélanie Doyon, Denis Granjon and Christopher Bryant argued that the local management of rural change, involving issues such as long term planning and constructing new futures, faces particularly difficult challenges when tourism and related activities are involved. This is not least because some of the population segments implicated in this issue are not resident in the locality. Sustainable community development, in particular, must deal with the needs of both residents and non-local visitors and users. Second, Doyon, Frej, Granjon and Bryant, considered these challenges further with special reference to the many demands emanating from the metropolitan zone: residential development, open space, access to 'nature', contact with 'authentic' rural activities and spaces, as well as traditional rural activities. In the context of the example of Montréal, these rural spaces are seen to be truly multifunctional, but in a very problematic way.

To end, we would like to thank all those involved with the session, plus our co-convenor, Leslie Duram (Southern Illinois University), for all her organisational help prior to the conference. And to those who do come to New Orleans at Mardi Gras – keep wearing the beads, and tasting the Hurricanes!

Robert Fish (Nottingham University) & Keith Halfacree (University of Wales Swansea)

3.4 Rio Earth Summit +10: Lessons for Agriculture and Rural Development, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, 19 March, 2003.

The seminar *Earth Summit +10* organised by the MSc students at the Royal Agricultural College on March 19 in aid of FARM-Africa was a great success. A group of distinguished speakers came and presented their views on Agriculture and Rural Development and the lessons learned in the 10 years following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 as well as looking towards future prospects.

Sean Rickard, former NFU chief economist and now lecturer at Cranfield University, stressed the need for free trade and a level playing field for agriculture on a global scale emphasising the need for the removal of trade distorting subsidies. NFU President, Ben Gill argued that a level playing field cannot exist because of the many different ways that agriculture is funded by governments globally. He also advocated the shift of subsidies from production to environment. Sir Crispin Tickell, the former member of the UN security council, spoke about the environmental consequences of a war calling the environment “a casualty of war”. He went on to talk about the 2002 Johannesburg conference, which was supposed to be the follow up to Rio as “a disaster averted but an opportunity lost” with no concrete agreements or policies reached. Howard Lee, the Policy Director for Forum for the Future, talked about internalising the external costs and benefits of agriculture. Howard argued that farmers should be more accountable for the pollution they cause but also benefit from the good they do for the environment and countryside. International consultant Dr Mary Hobley spoke about the importance of government and policy and how it needs systems for listening to the people on the ground. Mary noted that even in the UK there were problems in this area taking the example of the UK Government decisions on Iraq. Tracy Worcester from the International Society for Ecology and Culture finished the day with an impassioned plea to rebuild local sourcing and consumption of food as opposed to global food chain dominance of food supply. Tracy also talked about the unnecessary miles that our food travels to the table to the point where a typical Sunday lunch is travelling 49,000 miles around the globe to get to our table. During the day valuable funds were raised for FARM-Africa. Change was the underlying message.

Andrew Betts and Caroline Mountain, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester.

4. FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

4.1 International Rural Network Conference and Exchange of Experience: *Taking Charge: Rural Community Empowerment in Rural Development, Rural Health and Rural Education*, Inverness, Scottish Highlands, UK, 23-27 June 2003.

This Conference and exchange of experience is organised by the Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research at the University of Aberdeen and the UHI Millennium Institute based in Inverness, on behalf of the International Rural Network.

Building on previous events in Queensland, Australia and Vancouver Island, Canada the 5-day Conference aims to bring together practitioners from rural communities with rural policy makers and scholars. The emphasis of the event is on sharing practical experiences and highlighting the way in which communities have exerted power over education, health, welfare, environment, quality of life, governance, and economic development to provide positive outcomes for the people living in them. In keeping with the aims of the Conference, the agenda is being developed from the bottom up. Suggestions for workshops and presentations are being sought from participants and these can be forwarded to the co-ordinators via the Conference website, details of which are provided below.

The Conference will be based in Inverness in the Scottish Highlands, an area which experiences various challenges due to its rural and peripheral nature. It is however extremely fortunate to have a number of long established support organisations and there will be an opportunity to visit a broad range of local community based initiatives as part of the Conference.

If you would like to Register to attend the Conference or have suggestions for workshop topics please go to the website at <http://workforce.cup.edu/wyman> Alternatively, you can send an email to takingcharge@abdn.ac.uk or send a fax to Rhys Evans at +44 (0) 1224 273902.

4.2 IGU Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems XI Annual Conference, *The Regional Dimension and Contemporary Challenges to Rural Sustainability*, Brazil, 3-10 July, 2003

The CSRS XI Annual Conference in Brazil will be hosted by the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and the partner institutions the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais and the Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora. The CSRS annual conferences are organised around themes which explore and develop the long-term research tasks of the commission: interpreting 'rural sustainability', regulation of rural sustainability, sustainability & the rural business enterprise, sustainability in the interaction between rural & urban systems, rural community dynamics & sustainability and land use cover & change. The 2003 conference themes will focus on rethinking sustainability in terms of bridging the divide between the natural and social sciences and in terms of recovering the regional dimension so as to go beyond restricted local development and case studies:

- Rethinking sustainability to bridge the social and ecological divide
- Recovering the regional dimension for spatial sustainability
- Research methods for overcoming the gap between local and global scales
- Politics and alternative networks for community empowerment and social equity
- Sustainability and diversity in rural-urban systems

The conference will start in Rio de Janeiro, will move through the countryside of the industrial Southeast and will end in Belo Horizonte. Paper presentations will be interspersed with technical visits to a variety of different cases of sustainable rural development. The technical visits are meant to provide an overview of the environmental and social problems of this region of old settlement and to examine firsthand different ways in which farmers and craft workers are trying to build sustainable rural livelihoods. The number of participants is limited to 70 due to the mobile nature of the conference. The deadline for abstracts was 28 February, 2003. The fees were registration US\$160, conference trip US\$340 plus accommodation.

For further information, please contact Ana Maria Bicalho (Csr2003@eagle.ufrj.br).

4.3 RGS-IBG Rural Geography Research Group (with the American Association of Geographers and the Canadian Association of Geographers) Fifth British-American-Canadian Conference on Rural Geography: *Contrasting Ruralities: Changing Rural Economies, Societies and Landscapes*, University of Exeter and University of Plymouth, 14-19 July, 2003.

The conference is the fifth in a highly successful series of British-American-Canadian Rural Geography symposia. The continuation of these meetings reflects and affects the development of international research ideas and synergies between geographers in these three countries. The conference will be held on the campuses of both the University of Exeter and the University of Plymouth between Monday, 14th July, 2003 and Saturday, 19th July, 2003. There are about 50 delegates presently registered for

the conference and presenting papers: 19 from Canada, 15 from the United States and 17 from the United Kingdom.

A summary of the conference sessions are given below:

MONDAY, 14 JULY, 2003

University of Exeter

11.30 am	Opening of conference
12.00 - 1.00 pm	Conceptualising Rural Space
2.00 – 5.00 pm	Agricultural Restructuring

TUESDAY, 15 JULY, 2003

University of Exeter

8.30 – 10.30 am	Countryside, Development and Alternative Futures
11.00 – 1.00 pm	Social Inclusion and Exclusion
2.00 – 3.30 pm	Environmental Values
4.00 – 6.00 pm	Agri-cultures

WEDNESDAY, 16 JULY, 2003

Field excursion in Devon and transfer to the University of Plymouth.

THURSDAY, 17 JULY, 2003

University of Plymouth

8.30 – 10.30 am	Agro-Food Networks
11.00 – 12.30 pm	Agri-Environment Schemes
1.30 – 3.00 pm	Environment and People
3.30 – 5.30 pm	Revitalisation of Rural Towns

FRIDAY, 18 JULY, 2003

Field excursion to Cornwall.

SATURDAY, 19 JULY, 2003

University of Plymouth

8.30 – 10.00 am	Population Change
10.30 – 1.00 pm	Tourism

Close of conference.

Full details of the programme can be viewed at:
www.geog.plym.ac.uk/ruralgeography/program.htm.

Stephen Essex, Richard Yarwood, Andrew Gilg, Jo Little and Michael Winter.

4.4 20th Conference of the European Society for Rural Sociology, Geographies of work and employment in rural Europe', Sligo, Ireland, 18-22nd August 2003

Rural restructuring processes mean that the economic, social and environmental contexts in which people in rural Europe work are constantly shifting, at all scales, from the domestic through the local to the international. These changes are occurring in the context of changing policy and political frameworks, such as for example, reform of the CAP, and the forthcoming expansion of the EU, with implications for rural economies in both the west and the east. This working group emphasises the importance of critical approaches to these changing realities.

In this context, this working group will focus on critical approaches to geographies of work and employment in contemporary rural Europe. Themes which may be addressed include:

- uneven development and implications for rural labour markets

- neo-liberal transition and rural employment restructuring
- work and rural identities
- the politics of rural and regional policy
- gender, power and rural development
- gender and rural diversification
- new patterns of work in the rural domestic sphere
- critical perspectives on 'post-productivism'
- rural unemployment
- legal and illegal migration of agricultural labour
- work and rural welfare.

Contributions from feminist and other critical perspectives will be welcome. One aim is to facilitate a greater understanding of the governance, inequalities and lived experiences of working in rural Europe, at different geographical scales including the home, the workplace, the local, regional, national and international. It is hoped that the session will enable connections to be made across both disciplinary and spatial boundaries.

Further details on the Conference are available at www.itsligo.ie/rural.

Caitriona Ní Laoire, NIRSA, NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland. Email: caitrona.nilaoire@may.ie and Judit Timar, Center for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 5601 Bekescsaba, Pf. 185. Hungary. Email: timarj@rkk.hu

4.5 Rural Sessions at the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) Annual Conference, London, 3-5th September 2003

Full details available at www.rgs.org/ACLondon2003. The AGM of the RGRG is likely to be held on 2 September, 2003.

Joint Session of the Planning and Environment Research Group and Rural Geography Research Group: Sustainable development and the governing of rural and urban areas

Processes of governing both urban and rural areas have been subject to significant changes and challenges in recent years. A widely recognised driver of change has been the growth of neo-liberalism in many Western democracies. A lesser, albeit related, influence has come from discourses of 'sustainable development' emerging from global UN conferences since the 1980s. Both have influenced a shift in the role of the state from provider to 'enabler' and, to a lesser degree, from regulator to 'moderator'. Both have posed questions regarding established notions of democracy, adversarial politics and the roles of non-state actors, and helped stimulate debates over deliberative and inclusionary processes.

This session will identify and explore some of the key areas of current work, both theoretical and empirical, dealing with the multi-dimensional arenas of governance and sustainable development and engaging with issues of power and authority. While these issues have often been dealt with separately in rural and urban studies, this session seeks to examine common trends and key differences in the discourses and practices of sustainable development and governance in rural and urban contexts. A wide variety of theoretical perspectives are welcomed in the exploration of major themes which include:

- 1) How far discourses of sustainable development have impacted on wider rural and urban governance. This could encompass changing rural and urban policy, regulatory processes, institutional changes and relations between state and non-state actors at a variety of scales.
- 2) How 'sustainable development' is produced in the different places, modes and scales of governance. For example, how are ideas of 'urban' and 'rural' places affecting

the implementation of sustainable development and how are these categories being reworked through these processes?

3) How the different components of sustainable development (broadly speaking the environmental, social and economic aspects) are being mobilised in relation to one another. What is the fate of environmental concerns vis-à-vis economic and social imperatives, and how far are 'green-washing' and 'ecological imperialism' apparent? Does some economic development proceed with no attention to wider sustainable development discourses?

4) What are the issues posed by the use of deliberative and inclusionary processes in rural and urban areas? How do these challenge established notions of 'expertise' and authority in the governing of urban and rural areas? What is the significance of recent changes in rural and urban populations in relation to these participatory processes?

5) At the everyday level, how are people engaging with sustainable lifestyles and what strategies are deployed for 'governing the self'? What are the appropriate methodologies for studying these engagements? In particular what are the contributions of social-scientific / quantitative approaches on the one hand and a cultural / qualitative approaches on the other?

Convenors:

Stewart Barr (S.W.Barr@exeter.ac.uk), Andrew Gilg (A.W.Gilg@exeter.ac.uk), Sue Percy (percys@sbu.ac.uk), and Susanne Seymour (susanne.seymour@nottingham.ac.uk).

Updates on the session outlines can be found at the Exeter Environmental Behaviour Research Group website at www.ex.ac.uk/ebrg

Joint Session of the Rural Geography Research Group/Mountains Research Group: Rural Development in Upland Landscapes: Environment, People, Constraints and Opportunities

This set of three sessions uses upland landscapes as a focus for exploring interrelationships between human action (society, culture, economics, politics and policy, etc.) and biophysical environments (forests, agricultural land, moorland, 'unmanaged' and 'protected' ecosystems etc.) in upland areas. It builds on a series of four sessions at the 2002 RGS-IBG Annual Conference in Belfast, titled "Upland Landscapes". We welcome contributions from researchers dealing with upland landscapes with regard to any of the themes above (or others). In particular, we challenge you to look to your own work to identify the ways in which research and/or policy are challenged, compromised or empowered by the intersection of multiple influences which do not fit easily within a single academic or policy discipline. We also challenge to think of ways in which interdisciplinary working might offer greater opportunities for understanding the production of mountain landscapes, and therefore, their utilisation, preservation, regulation, and regeneration. Specific topics of papers may include (but not be limited to) the particular opportunities and challenges facing the rural development of upland landscapes in terms of: environmental issues; the economic development of communities and land; social and cultural capacity building; the regulation of, and financial instruments related to, upland environments and activities; and cross-border collaboration in development and management. We also welcome critical reflections upon the practice of research and policy making in these areas.

Convenors: *Dr. Rhys Evans (rhys.evans@abdn.ac.uk) and Dr. Martin Price (Martin.Price@perth.uhi.ac.uk)*

Joint Session of the Rural Geography Study Group and the Biogeography Study Group: People and soil: understanding soil within its social context

This session will cover a wide variety of themes centred on the general subject of soils and the key role that they play in economies and environmental stability. The aim is to

bring together researchers from within the discipline of geography and related subjects who have been studying soils from a variety of different perspectives and approaches.

Papers dealing with soil degradation, soil conservation and soil restoration are welcome. Particular reference will be given to the consequences of modern farming practices on soils and soil quality, the impact of agricultural policies on the soil resource, the appearance and evolution of alternative types of farming such as organic farming. Papers examining broader issues regarding the history and culture of soils and people's perceptions and understandings concerning soils are also welcome.

Convenors:

Kostas Baginetas (RGRG) lgxkb@nottingham.ac.uk; Richard Field (BRG) richard.field@nottingham.ac.uk and Charles Watkins (RGRG) charles.watkins@nottingham.ac.uk.

Joint Session of the Rural Geography Study Group and the Postgraduate Forum: New and Emerging Researchers in Rural Geography

Convenors:

[Miriam.Renner](mailto:Miriam.Renner@m.e.renner@ncl.ac.uk) (m.e.renner@ncl.ac.uk) and [Mark Riley](mailto:lgxmnr@nottingham.ac.uk) (lgxmnr@nottingham.ac.uk)

4.6 RGRG Sessions at the IGU Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems, Glasgow, 15-20 August, 2004

The RGRG is organising two sessions with the IGU Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems in August, 2004. There are no formal calls for papers yet, but these are the preliminary details of the themes of the sessions.

Sustainable Rural Systems

Economy, society and environment comprise the three main dimensions of sustainable development, but too often they are considered separately. This Conference Session will include papers relating to the interaction of the three dimensions in the context of rural systems, and thereby embracing a wide range of topics. These will include globalisation and re-regulation in sustainable food production; conservation and sustainability; the development of sustainable rural communities; sustainable rural-urban interactions; and examinations of sustainability relating to issues of social welfare, exclusion, employment and provision of rural services. There will be opportunities for papers to address the basis for both sustainable and unsustainable development upon these topics, the remedial policies being pursued, and evaluations of these policies. Both general and case studies from a variety of rural systems in both developed and developing countries will be represented.

Convenor: Professor Guy Robinson, School of Earth Sciences and Geography, Kingston University, Penryhn Rd, Kingston, KT1 2EE. g.robinson@kingston.ac.uk

Critical Reflections on Theory in Rural Geography

In a review paper in 1980, Paul Cloke described rural geography as having a 'Cinderella complex', feeling dowdy and unloved since it had fallen from its erstwhile central place within the discipline of geography. However, as perhaps Cloke anticipated, Cinderella did eventually go to the ball and she eventually lived happily ever after. Is this the story of rural geography over the past quarter century? More specifically, has the marriage of rural geography to Prince Theory been a successful one? The aim of this session is to explore critically and reflectively the place of 'theory' within rural studies today. How has theoretical insight been deployed within rural geography? Where has this been successful and where has it been more

problematic? What is the legacy of such pivotal theory-led movements as postmodernism and the cultural turn to rural geography?

Convenor: Dr Keith Halfacree, Department of Geography, University of Wales, Swansea, Swansea SA2 8PP, UK (K.H.Halfacree@swansea.ac.uk).

4.7 Future Rural Economy and Society Study Group Events

21st May 2003

RESSG workshop: 'Young Rural Researchers' Meeting' at University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham.

Further details from Henry Buller: hbuller@glos.ac.uk

16th to 18th September 2003

RESSG annual conference: 'Cultural Turns, Rural Turns: critical (re)appraisals' at University of Newcastle.

Further details from Katy Bennett: katy.bennett@ncl.ac.uk

5. Call for papers for publication

Cinematic Countrysides

Edited by Robert Fish, University of Nottingham, UK

There is an extensive literature on cinema and the city, most notably Clarke's "The Cinematic City". The proposed volume will operate as a counterpoint to this body of work, and begin to foster a literature on (what is often constituted as) the city's other: the rural. As Robert Allen has repeatedly stressed, cinema as a site of both representation and consumption has never been simply an urban phenomenon. The book will seek to explore common distinctions made between the urban and the rural, in which the former has been equated with dynamism, difference and the future, and the latter with inertia, homogeneity and the past. The volume will, for instance, examine and problematise constructions of the rural that have present this as an idyll consigned to a mythic golden age (e.g. Brigadoon), or inversely as a degenerate backwater (e.g. Texas Chainsaw Massacre). It will involve a comparative analysis of different countrysides, considering the various ways in which countrysides have been imagined in different national, regional and historical contexts. However, unlike much of the work on cinema and the city, the volume will go beyond questions of representation and critic-driven analyses of the formal and the textual, to investigate the contexts of production and consumption in which they take shape and assert influence.

For example, articles might cover:

- The geographical organisation of cultural industries and the production of cinematic countrysides
- The marketing of rural places to cultural industries through regional film commissions, etc.
- The technical and creative practices involved in the production of cinematic countrysides
- The cultural histories within which particular representations of the countryside are produced
- The countryside as imagined by outsiders (whether from the city, other countries, other times.)
- Genre and the countryside (horror and the countryside; comedy and the countryside; the thriller and the countryside; the road movie etc.)
- The cultural politics of cinematic representations of the countryside (identifications and antagonisms of gender, class and ethnicity etc.)
- Relationships between nation, regionality and rurality in cinematic representations
- The intertextual relations of rural films (including relationships between films and textual reworkings within publicity, marketing literature)

- Rural exhibition and display practices; travelling cinema
- Cinematic countrysides and audience identifications; readings of the rural audience
- Social and material transformation of rural areas through cinematic representation (such as tourism - New Zealand after Lord of the Rings, etc. - and migration)

Schedule for Completion

Proposals Due by 1 May, 2003. Selection of proposals by 1 July 2003. Manuscripts due by 1 February 2004. Requests for revisions will be made by 1 May 2004. Final Versions due by 1 July 2004. Submission to press 1 September 2004.

Dr Robert Fish, Lecturer in Human Geography, School of Geography, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 1LP. Tel: + 44 (0) 115 951 5455; Fax: + 44 (0) 115 951 5249; Email: robert.fish@nottingham.ac.uk

6. New publications

The Sustainability of Rural Systems Geographical Interpretations

A Study Initiated by the International Geographical Union's Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems

edited by

Ian R. Bowler, *Dept. of Geography, University of Leicester, UK*, **Christopher R. Bryant** *Dépt. de Géographie, Université de Montréal, Canada* and **Chris Cocklin** *Dept. of Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University, Clayton, Australia*

Economy, society, and environment comprise the three main dimensions of sustainable development but too often they are considered separately. This book, by comparison, examines the interaction of the three dimensions in the context of rural systems, embracing a wide range of topics, including globalisation and reregulation in sustainable food production, conservation and sustainability, the development of sustainable rural communities, and sustainable rural-urban interaction. An international team of geographers, drawn from the International Geographical Union's Commission on *The Sustainability of Rural Systems*, summarises the basis of unsustainable rural development in these topics, the remedial policies being pursued, and their own evaluations of the policies. Rather than deal just with generalisations, their analyses are illustrated by detailed case studies drawn from a variety of rural systems in both developed and developing countries.

Audience: Advanced-level students of geography, teachers and researchers in rural economy, society and environment, and policy makers and agency workers in rural development programmes.

Contents and Contributors

Preface. List of Contributors. **1.** Introduction; *C. Cocklin, et al.* **2.** Developing indicators of 'sustainability'; *W. Smith.* **3.** Nature, society and sustainability; *G.M. Robinson.* **4.** The 'wild', the market and the native: indigenous issues in wildlife utilisation and management; *M. Langton.* **5.** Globalisation, food regimes and rural networks; *R. Le Heron.* **6.** Restructuring, regulation and sustainability; *N. Lewis, et al.* **7.** Enterprises and commodity chains; *M. Troughton.* **8.** Conservation and sustainability; *M. Tilzey.* **9.** Sustainable farming systems; *I. Bowler.* **10.** Planning for sustainable rural land use systems; *H. van Lier.* **11.** Rural population and services; *A. Joseph.* **12.** Sustainable rural communities and rural development; *R. Epps.* **13.** Urban and rural interactions and rural community renewal; *C. Bryant.* **14.** Conclusion; *C. Bryant, et al.* Index.

March 2002, 296 pp.

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7. Grant awards

Title: Relocalisation and alternative food networks: a comparison of two regions.
Recipients: Brian Ilbery/Moya Kneafsey (Coventry University) and Andrew Gilg/Jo Little (University of Exeter).
Value: £172,979
Duration: Two years (1 March 2003 to 28 February 2005).

8. VACANCIES ON THE RGRG COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FROM AUGUST, 2003

A number of RGRG Committee positions will be open for election in August, 2003. These are the established positions of **Chair, Website Officer and two postgraduate representatives**. Anyone interested in any of these posts can contact the Secretary (a.hughes@kingston.ac.uk) for further details. If you wish to stand for election you should inform the Secretary **before the start of the AGM at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference in London (3-5 September, 2003)**. Your nomination should be proposed and seconded by members of the RGRG.

The present membership of the RGRG Committee is as follows:

Chair Prof Charles Watkins, University of Nottingham. (2003).
Secretary Dr Annie Hughes, Kingston University. (2005).
Treasurer Dr Richard Yarwood, University of Plymouth. (2004).
Ordinary Members
Membership and Prizes Officer Dr Carol Morris, University of Gloucs. (2005).
Newsletter Editor Dr Stephen Essex, University of Plymouth. (2005).
Website Officer Dr Martin Phillips, University of Leicester. (2003).
Dr Keith Halfacree, University of Wales, Swansea. (2004).
Dr Darren Smith, University of Brighton. (2005).
Dr Nigel Walford, Kingston University. (2004).
Postgraduate Members
Miriam Renner, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. (2003).
Mark Riley, University of Nottingham. (2003).

9. Items for Autumn 2003 Newsletter

Articles, letters and comments and other items for inclusion in the Autumn Newsletter should be sent to: Stephen Essex, RGRG Newsletter Editor, Department of Geography, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, PL4 8AA by 30 September 2003; Tel. +44 (0)1752 233080; Fax: +44 (0)1752 233054; e-mail: s.essex@plymouth.ac.uk.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The RGRG, like many other research groups, is making increasing use of electronic means of communication.

Update your email address!

Email is increasingly used to distribute the bi-annual Newsletter and urgent items of news throughout the year. Although email addresses are now available for about half of RGRG members, several appear to be out-of-date. If you have changed your email over the past few months or have recently gone 'on-line', please send your new address to Dr Stephen Essex, Department of Geography, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA email: sessex@plymouth.ac.uk

The **RGRG Web site** (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/rgsg>) has been up and running for a few years. If you have any items that you wish to have posted on the RGRG web site, please contact Dr Martin Phillips (University of Leicester) preferably by email: mpp2@le.ac.uk.