



RGRG Newsletter Winter 15 December 2010

Happy Holidays,

Mother Nature has responded to Climate Gate with a rousing two week spate of snow in Durham and much of the UK. So pour a cuppa and warm yourself in anticipation of the next snow and next year's New and Emerging Rural Researchers sessions at RGS-IBG 2011.

Looking back are reports from last autumn's RGS-IBG annual meeting in London, 1-3 September 2010. Below are reports from Geoff Wilson on the Rural Community Resilience series.

Upcoming, Charles Howie and Bruce Scholten will recap their Development in the Rural South session. This was a 'sparky' and well worth-attending session, according to Lucy Jarosz, who travelled from UW Seattle, to speak on African land grabs in the context of the global shift of over 100m people into food poverty since 2007.

Upcoming also is a PowerPoint from Nigel Walford's Anglo-French-Irish meeting in summer 2010. Watch this space. Please email any rural research news on events, jobs, books, etc., to me.

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Proposals for RGRG sponsored sessions at the 2011 Annual International Conference of the RGS-IBG New and Emerging Rural Researchers

Convenors: Stacey Coppock (University of Nottingham); Daniel Keech (University of Southampton) and Kevin Cahill (University of Exeter)

The New and Emerging Researchers sessions at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference offer an exciting opportunity for postgraduates and early career researchers to present their research proposals and research results in a friendly forum. Sessions last year were very well attended and papers were themed around rural economies; food, farming and tourism; transport; and rural community change - abstracts are welcomed from any area of rural research for the 2011 Conference.

Please send abstracts up to a maximum of 250 words and proposed titles (clearly stating name, institution, and contact details) to Stacey Coppock (lgxsc4@nottingham.ac.uk), Daniel Keech (mdk1g09@soton.ac.uk) and Kevin Cahill (ros@globalnet.co.uk).

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IBG/RGS session 2010: Rural Community Resilience

The session on 'Rural community resilience' at the IBG/RGS Conference 2010 was convened by Geoff Wilson (University of Plymouth, UK) and Guy Robinson (University of South Australia, Australia). The session was comprised of two blocks with seven papers altogether. Session 1 focused on issues of *understanding rural community resilience* and included an introductory paper by Geoff Wilson (University of Plymouth, UK) on 'Conceptualising rural community resilience at the intersection between economic, social and environmental capital'. This was followed by Guy Robinson's (University of South Australia, Australia) case study of 'Resilience, capacity, vulnerability and risk: assessing the resilience of rural communities in South Australia' and Lois Mansfield and Adrian Banford's (University of Cumbria, UK) discussion of 'Upland agriculture, a community with resilience: case studies from Cumbria, England'. Julie Newton and Alex Franklin (Cardiff University, UK) concluded the first block by presenting a paper on 'Sustaining resilience: nurturing local food networks through community action'.

Session 2 focused on *how rural community resilience can be implemented* and included a paper by Susanne Stenbacka (Uppsala University, Sweden) on 'The role and meaning of the rural when the world is approaching: immigrants' experiences and practices in a global society'. This was followed by Annie McKee's (Perth College, UK) discussion of 'The crofter and the laird: the role of private landownership in facilitating sustainable rural communities in upland Scotland', and Richard Spalding's (University of West of England, UK) case study of resilience 'Bowling together using heritage-led regeneration projects to build rural community resilience: the story of Winterbourne Medieval Barn, South Gloucestershire, UK'.

The concluding discussion highlighted commonalities between issues, processes and conflict surrounding rural community resilience across different case studies. It also emphasised that the notion of community resilience is becoming increasingly prominent in debates about future development pathways of rural communities, especially in light of dramatic changes faced by many rural communities linked to deepening globalisation, climate change, continuing population pressures (both in terms of additional people on the planet and with regard to population compositions of rural settlements), and pressures for increased agricultural production (neo-productivism). It was argued that more work is needed that provides a better understanding of economic, social and environmental capitals and how these capitals interlink with notions of community resilience.

Geoff Wilson (University of Plymouth)

Geographies of transition: the role of food

Co-sponsored by PERG (TBC)

Convenors: Geoff Wilson (Plymouth, UK), Colin Sage (Cork, Ireland)

There has been much debate within human geography in recent years regarding transitional processes in society, with a specific focus on relocalisation (Rigg, 2006; Parnwell, 2007; Hopkins, 2008), the possible de-linking of communities from globalisation processes and the global capitalist system (Aggarwal, 2006; Bardhan,

2006; Wilson, 2010), and the search for 'alternative' development pathways such as the Transition Town movement (Bailey et al., 2010; North, 2010). One of the features common to such initiatives – whether rural or urban in location – is the growing and/or alternative provisioning of food for local consumption. Food offers a practical expression of desiring greater autonomy, provides an anchor into the locality, and the basis to connect with others in the creation of community. At the same time, urban and regional planning and city authorities have begun to engage with food as a means to address social justice, diet and health, environmental improvements and public procurement with regional economic benefits (APA 2007, Pothukuchi 2009, Morgan & Sonnino 2010). Do these two approaches – one very definitely bottom-up, the other more top-down – offer grounds for mutual engagement and opportunities for scaling-up with the prospects for constructing a genuinely different kind of food system? What are the prospects for encouraging urban agriculture initiatives that would improve access by inner-city neighbourhoods to fresh local food? And how might these be embedded within efforts to re-connect the rural hinterland in order to strengthen prospects for sustainable regional food security? We invite papers that offer reflections on the role of food within geographies of transition, and encourage contributions from a variety of geographical vantage points.

Notes:

- Preferred session format is 2 sessions with 4 papers each and question session at end of each session.
- Convenors are proposing that this is a joint session with PERG, but this co-sponsorship has yet to be agreed.

Professor Geoff Wilson (geoff.wilson@plymouth.ac.uk) and Dr Colin Sage (c.sage@ucc.ie)

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Rural Mobilities: Engaging with Rurality (Whilst) On the Move...

Convenors: Rosie Emeny (University of Sheffield), Keri Jenner, (University of Exeter)

Mobility studies have proliferated in the last decade, and although developed predominantly outside of the geographic discipline, geographers have recently found great purchase in theorising mobile encounters with space through the mobilities literature. As a concept, mobility offers a way to conceptualise movements within space: this session aims to explore research engaging with movements in rural contexts. Thus what are the movements happening in rural areas? How are these rural mobilities framed, negotiated, imagined and materialised? What's more as researchers how can we empirically engage with mobile ruralities as they emerge, are produced, are reflected in representation and are reproduced through non-representational practices? How are intersections of the human and non-human integral in the performance of rural mobilities? And crucially, (how) is it possible to engage with specific mobile practices in such a way that their essences and meanings are not lost through subsequent analysis and dissemination? By focusing on rural mobilities the session intends to bring together researchers working on both imaginative and practised rural mobilities to generate debate and critique through papers which consider, for example, movements of self, communities and concepts in relation to rural spaces, places and theorisations. We invite papers that are conceptual, methodological and empirical. Furthermore, given the broad scope of what 'mobilities' represents, it is hoped that this session will provide an opportunity for critical discussion to develop across the various strands of geographical work interconnected with this theme.

Papers could address one or more of the following themes:

- The mobility of rural discourse
- Moving in and through in rural spaces; e.g. walking, driving, canoeing, cycling etc
- Migrating to, from and within in rural spaces
- Travelling in rural spaces; touristic engagements, mundane movements, leisure mobilities
- Reflections on the technologies and materialities of mobilities
- Negotiating the human and/or the non-human dimensions of rural mobilities
- Researching rural mobilities – methodological insights
- Geographic scale and rural mobilities

Following the conference outline, the session organisers want to encourage submissions for creative and innovative paper formats. In the spirit of mobility, we would welcome papers that think beyond the confines of the paper-presentation convention and instead engage creatively with the session audience– either through movement, sound, audio-visual technologies, dance and any other creative suggestions welcome – papers of pictures, papers of sounds, papers of film *et al.* We are particularly interested in abstract submissions that might engage the session audience as participants in the dissemination of work within this theme too.

Rosie Emeny (r.emeny@sheffield.ac.uk) and Keri Jenner (kaj204@exeter.ac.uk).

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Emerging geographies of animal-technology co-productions

Co-sponsored by SCSG (TBC)

Convenors: Lewis Holloway (University of Hull), Chris Bear (University of Aberystwyth), Carol Morris (University of Nottingham), Katy Wilkinson (University of Hull)

Engagements with technologies have complex effects on animals. Animals' bodies and identities have become increasingly articulated by the technologised environments into which they are placed, and around whom they are constructed. Their bodies, for example, may be probed, mapped, envisioned, modified in the present or across generations, mined for data or used to produce corporeal goods. Their behaviours and subjectivities are produced or constrained. But at the same time, through co-productions of the animal and the technological, animals have complex effects on technologies. These are designed around or accommodate understandings of, variously, animals' bodies, subjectivities, needs, welfare and so on. Indeed, in some instances the animal and the technological may be so bound up with each other that differentiating between them becomes problematic.

This session aims to examine such animal-technology co-productions and hybridities. It responds to agendas in geography and across the social sciences which emphasise the relational enactment of humans and nonhumans, and which seek to theorise and explore the social, political and ethical implications of our relationships with nonhuman others. The session aims to explore the specifics of different animal-technology co-productions, focusing on their associated knowledge-practices, the enactments of specific animal-technology relationships in particular places, and the simultaneous co-constitution of the humans who are inevitably and complexly tangled up in these relations.

We seek papers that from a range of perspectives address the issues of animal-technology co-productions. Papers may address one or more of the following questions:

- How is the animal and the technological enacted, envisioned and imagined in particular animal-technology co-productions?
- How are the boundaries between the animal and the technological negotiated, policed, disputed and muddled in contemporary animal-technology co-productions?
- How can the roles of humans be conceptualised vis-à-vis animal-technology co-productions?
- What knowledges can be produced about animals in their co-productions with technologies? And what knowledges are produced about technologies as they are co-produced with animals?
- What conceptual resources are needed for making sense of animal-technology co-productions?
- How can the emerging biopolitics of animal-technology co-productions be framed to articulate effectively the power relations of interventions into the 'life itself' of animals in their relationships with technologies?
- What ethical frameworks are necessary or can be constructed in exploring, legitimising or disputing particular animal-technology co-productions?
- How are particular sites and spaces implicated in the articulation of animal-technology co-productions, and how do the co-productions of the animal and the technological also produce particular places and spatialities?

Notes:

- Convenors are proposing that this is a joint session with the Social and Cultural Study Group, but this co-sponsorship has yet to be agreed.

Lewis Holloway (l.holloway@hull.ac.uk); Chris Bear (ckb@aber.ac.uk); Carol Morris (carol.morris@nottingham.ac.uk) and Katy Wilkinson (katy.wilkinson@hull.ac.uk)

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Imaginative Geographies and Environment: Where Land and Water Meet

Co-sponsors: Coastal and Marine Working Group

Convenors: Dr Tim Acott & Dr Julie Urquhart – University of Greenwich; Dr Owain Jones – Countryside and Community Research Institute

Boundaries and edges are powerful concepts in geography, their interpretation and understanding reflect physical presence and academic musing. Marginal locations where land and water meet are sites of active environmental processes that give rise to cultural expression. Here is a landscape of rhythms, tides, ebbs and flows that feed the imagination, linking past and present through heritage, tradition, beliefs and ritual. Sites of beauty, bleakness, wildness and wilderness inhabit littoral, lacustrine and riparian margins where people and nature blend in an endless performance of place making. From the controlled engineering of flood defences to wild open expanses of mud flats and flood plains the margins of land and water continue to challenge us to come to terms with this ever changing, dynamic environment. Our relationship to nature along this physical margin exposes a myriad of relational associations that challenge the limits of techno engineering while providing sites of aesthetic appreciation stimulating writers and poets to reflect on diverse themes of life, love, longing and death. Some individuals and communities tied to seafaring ways of life understand the otherworldly lure of life beyond the margin. This session will focus on both the way that people perceive land-water

margins and how the physicality of that environment (such as tides, flooding, drought etc.) is reflected in cultural expression. The session convenors are seeking papers that explore these issues in coastal, lake, riparian and wetland environments and invite papers on the following themes:

- Entanglements of people and nature at the land–water interface
- Co-construction of places at the waters' edge
- Imagination and geography where land and waters meet
- Wildness at the land-water boundary
- Rhythms of nature, the land–water interface
- Influence of natural processes on society at a liminal boundary
- Local indigenous knowledge and littoral, lacustrine and riparian environments

Julie Urquhart (J.Urquhart@gre.ac.uk)

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Imagined Ruralities

Convenors: Susanne Seymour (Nottingham), Dan Keech (Southampton), Charles Watkins (Nottingham)

Imaginative geographies are powerful not only in creating compelling ideals but also in shaping the world and human identities of nation, locality and self. This session seeks to examine the different ways in which the rural has been a site of individual and social geographical imagination and the effects of such imaginings for people and places.

It builds on a considerable body of work in rural geography which has considered rural imaginaries, for example in terms of migration and lived experience, gender identities, commodification, tourism, economic diversification, preservation and alternative lifestyles, to pose a series of questions about 'imagined ruralities'.

Firstly, how are rural areas currently being imagined? How do past imaginings affect the present? How do these imaginings vary across cultural boundaries and between social groups? What is beyond a rural imaginary? Has the imaginative impulse moved from the rural?

Secondly, what are the imaginative forms being deployed and by whom? How are they produced? What is the role of rural utopian and dystopian thinking?

Thirdly, what are the implications of rural imaginings for individuals, social groupings and places beyond and within 'the rural'? How are such imaginings remaking rural areas, facilitating certain developments and restraining others? How do they challenge definitions of place? How are they influencing the performance of individual and collective identities?

This is a broad call which welcome[d] papers from a spectrum of rural imaginings, in forms as diverse as novels and poetry, TV and new electronic media, to maps and policy documents.

Dr Susanne Seymour (Susanne.Seymour@nottingham.ac.uk), Dan Keech (mdk1g09@soton.ac.uk) and Professor Charles Watkins (Charles.Watkins@nottingham.ac.uk)

END IBG/RGS session 2010: Rural Community Resilience

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Watch for pix from RGS-IBG 2010 & updates for 2011