1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Statement of aims
The Centre for Rural Research (CRR) has five main aims:
• to supply an independent consultancy service for quality rural research;
• to develop national and international research interests whilst maintaining a local focus on Worcestershire and neighbouring counties;
• to disseminate knowledge in an accessible manner to the wider public including policy-makers, countryside managers, those in education, voluntary organisations and people living and working in the countryside;
• to contribute to the development of geography and rural studies;
• to assist in the strategic delivery of the mission of the University of Worcester in the key areas of ‘research’ and ‘contribution to the region’.

Summary of Position
This report covers the activities of the CRR from 1st September 2008 until 31st August 2009. In summary, this has been a relatively quiet year. Three major projects were undertaken in 2008/9 and one completed after being commissioned in the previous year. CRR’s financial position remains healthy at the end of the period. As always, CRR delivered successfully client contract work whilst the principal researchers (NE and DS) continued to commit themselves fully to teaching and administrative duties. CRR was delighted welcome Alan Dixon on board as a full member of the Research Centre. His activities in the rural geography of developing countries will strengthen considerably CRR’s international dimension.

Work continues to be commissioned by a variety of rural organisations based on CRR’s reputation for quality in research. CRR remains highly active as a University of Worcester research centre, continuing to raise the research profile of the institution. It was identified as a specialist area of research within the Geography Unit of Assessment submission to the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise and its excellence in rural geography identified in the feedback from the Geography Panel. In total, two new research projects were initiated in the period of the report. The year was notable in that it represents the first since 2000 in which no dedicated full-time research assistants were employed. Katie Milburn left in the summer of 2008 to take up a permanent post with a county wildlife trust. CRR staff for 2008/9 therefore comprised academic staff, Peter Carruthers as CRR Senior Research Fellow and two part-time researchers/casuals. CRR continues to make very tangible contributions to raising the profile of the University
of Worcester internationally in the world of research and within the regional community of the West Midlands.

2. CURRENT STAFF
CRR had the following staff profile, as at September 2009.

i) Current Academic Staff
Dr. Nick Evans (NE, Director)
Dr. Heather Barrett (HB)
Dr. Peter Carruthers (PC), seconded from the Commission for Rural Communities
Dr. Alan Dixon (AD)
Dr. Cheryl Jones (CJ)
Dr. David Storey (DS)

ii) Part-time Research Staff
Rona Davis (RD)

iii) Former Research Staff
Full-time Research Assistant: Miss Elizabeth Connolly (EC) (Sept 2004 – Apr 2008)
Full-time Research Assistant: Miss Katie Milburn (KM) (Feb 2007 – July 2008)

iv) Casual Research Staff
Ms Deborah Collins (DC)

v) Line Management
Prof. John Newbury (JN), Head of Institute of Science and the Environment (from Oct 2008)

vi) Administrative / Support
Miss Jo Dyson (JD) mapping and GIS support
Mrs Clare Smith (CS), with Miss Laura Starkie (LS), with assistance from Miss Hannah Downs, Ms Trish Clutterbuck, Mrs Lisa Hopkins and Dr. Anne Sinnott.

vii) Research Associates
Dr. Ian Maddock (IM): river management and conservation research.
Mr David Lovelace (DL): independent consultant, not a member of UoW staff, sub-contracted to assist with specific contract work.

3. POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS
None, but 2008/9 witnessed a highly successful acquisition of PhD studentships under the CRR umbrella. Three new full-time research studentships were awarded to NE for September 2009 start, including one jointly with Prof D. Upton in IHS. CJ obtained a PhD studentship Towards numerical forecasting of atmospheric concentrations of allergenic pollen from trees of the Fagales order in the UK (Joint with NPARU). AD also acquired a fully funded Worcester-Coventry PhD studentship ‘Building resilient institutions for wetland management in Ethiopia’.
4. RECORD OF PUBLICATIONS FOR THE YEAR
Contributions of current members of CRR are shown in bold type.

ia) Publically Released (print or e-versions) Articles in Refereed International Journals


ib) Publically Released (print or e-versions) Articles in Non-Refereed International Journals


ii) Contributions to books


iii) Forthcoming Publications Accepted in the Period 2008/9


iv) Refereeing Activity in the Period 2008/9

In addition to publication, staff again acted as journal referees for international academic journals across and beyond the discipline of Geography.
  o Journal of Rural Studies (twice) [NE];
  o Children’s Geographies [NE]
  o Geographical Journal [NE]
  o Land Use Policy [NE]
  o Finnish Journal of Rural Research and Policy [NE]
  o Geopolitics [DS]
  o Children’s Geographies [DS]
  o Urban Morphology (twice) [HB]

DS was also appointed External Reviewer at Bath Spa University.

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

v) Book Reviews

DS: Review of S. Gupta and T. Omoniyi (eds) Cultures of Economic Migration: International Perspectives, Gender, Place and Culture 16 (1), 2009.


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5. CONFERENCES: ATTENDANCE AND PRESENTATIONS


PC: Convenor of Commission for Rural Communities, Uplands Inquiry Seminar: The State of the Uplands 1.

PC: Convenor of Commission for Rural Communities, Uplands Inquiry Seminar: The State of the Uplands 2.


PC: Convenor of Commission for Rural Communities, Uplands Inquiry Seminar: Managing, Developing and Formulating Policy for the English Uplands.


6. LECTURES AND SIMILAR ACTIVITIES
The 57th Lovatt Lecture in Geography was on a rural topic, *New Technologies In Farming: Remaking Animals, Knowledges And Agricultural Geographies*, delivered by Dr. Lewis Holloway, Department of Geography, University of Hull, March 2009.

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

Media Work
NE contributed to the following:
BBC Farming Today – The geography of endangerment amongst farm livestock breeds, broadcast 16th December 2008
ITN National News – Climate Change Special Report – future agricultural land use. broadcast 18th June 2009
BBC Midlands Today – The geography of endangerment amongst farm livestock breeds, broadcast 2nd August 2009

AD contributed to the production of a short film entitled ‘Striking a balance: sustainable wetland environmental management and livelihood development in Zambia and Malawi’. This film is being distributed widely throughout Africa as a training resource for governments and NGOs. (See [http://www.wetlandaction.org/SAB.html](http://www.wetlandaction.org/SAB.html))

7. DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTANCY UNDERTAKEN
Staff have been engaged on the following funded research projects in the year 2008/9. These are additional to any personal academic research projects undertaken. Full details of these projects are available from the project leaders whose initials appear next to each project. Further, several projects mentioned in last year’s report have been completed to the satisfaction of clients and staff have written up findings for publication in academic journals.

i) Consultancy Projects in 2008/9


*Geographical Endemism as a Definition of Endangerment in Farm Livestock Breeds* (NE) For the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.
ii) Consultancy Portfolio
This sub-section provides a comprehensive listing of completed consultancy research projects undertaken by CRR since its formation in 1996 to date (only current staff indicated in brackets).

1996 **The Geography of Rare Breeds of Domestic Livestock** (NE, RY) Nuffield Foundation.
1997 **Environmental Monitoring and Evaluation of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme** (NE) Report to Countryside Commission. For CCRU, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of H.E.
1997 **SSSI Owner-Occupier Segmentation Project Phase 1** (NE) Report to English Nature. With CCRU.
1998 **SSSI Owner-Occupier Segmentation Project Phase 2** (NE) Report to English Nature. With CCRU.
1998 **Trade and Commerce in Cleobury Mortimer** (HB, DS, RY). Report to Cleobury Mortimer Chamber of Trade, LEADER II.
1998 **Economic Evaluation of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme** (NE) Report to Countryside Commission. For CCRU, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of H.E.
1998 **The Rare Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme**. (RY, NE) for Rare Breeds Survival Trust.
1998 **Obstacles to Affordable Housing in Rural Areas** (RY) Report to Worcestershire Housing Association and the Housing Corporation.
1999 **SSSI Owner-Occupier Segmentation Project Phase 3** (NE) Report to English Nature. With CCRU.
1999 **Deer and Grazing Management Assessment of Little Doward, Crocker’s Ash, Herefordshire** (NE) Report to the Woodland Trust.
1999 **Urban and Rural Interdependency** (DS, RY) Report to Advantage West Midlands.
2001 **Child Care Provision in Bromyard** (HB, DS, RY) Bromyard HOPE group, LEADER II.
2001 **The Economic Impact of Foot and Mouth Disease in Worcestershire** (HB, NE, DS) Report to Worcestershire County Council.
2002 Agricultural Biodiversity Resources of Welsh Domestic Livestock (NE, with RY) Report to Countryside Council for Wales.
2003 The Characterisation of the Severn-Vrynwy Land Management Initiative Project Area (KW, NE). Report to Countryside Agency
2004 The University College Worcester Student Survey (NE) Report to Academic Quality Unit, UCW.
2004 What Kind of and Institution Are We? (NE) Report to Equal Opportunities Department, UCW.
2004 Fish Hill Picnic Place Visitor Survey (EC, NE) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.
2006 Pershore Bridges Picnic Place Visitor Survey (NE, EC, NG, ME) Report to the Countryside Service, Worcestershire County Council.
2007 Access to Foundation Degrees (EC, NE). For Aimhigher West Midlands.

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

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

2007 *The Geographical Distribution of Undergraduate Applicants to the University of Worcester* (EC) GIS analysis for Registry Services, University of Worcester. £500.


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

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

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

2008 *Polytunnels and Rural Communities* (NE, KM, EC) For the Commission for Rural Communities.


2009 *Geographical Endemism as a Definition of Endangerment in Farm Livestock Breeds* (NE) For the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

8. RECORD OF FUNDING APPLICATIONS

*Consultancy conducted outwith CRR*


AD: Collaboration with Professor Adrian Wood (Huddersfield University) on EU Research proposal (Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural resources, Including Energy).

AD: Collaboration with Dr Alec Thornton (ADFA at University of New South Wales) on British Council DeLPHE Proposal.

AD: consultancy work for Wetland Action on their ‘Striking a Balance’ (SAB) project, co-financed by Wetlands International and Self Help Africa.

*Dr. Nick Evans, Director* November 2009