

WISERD NEWS

Wales Institute of Social & Economic
Research, Data & Methods



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An Introduction

by the WISERD Director



Professor Ian Rees Jones
WISERD Director

After many months of hard work by everyone involved, it is a great pleasure to begin this newsletter with news of the success of our Large Centre bid to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The competition for this funding was fierce and as one of four UK research centres, WISERD will be part of an overall ESRC investment of £29 million in a series of new centres and investments. Our new flagship centre, WISERD/Civil Society, has received funding in excess of £7 million and will undertake a five year innovative and far-reaching research programme of policy relevant research addressing Civil Society in Wales, the UK and Internationally.

The Centre will formally start in October 2014 so the next six months will involve a great deal of preparatory work as we begin to set up the various research projects contained within the Centre's programme of work. We will be providing further details on the research programme in future newsletters, as it evolves.

In the meantime this month's WISERD news offers a great illustration of the diversity and depth of the activities that are already going on across the WISERD Universities. These include the exciting potential avenues for research that will gradually become available through the new Administrative Data Research Centre.

We have also just started to make progress on a fascinating new study on the lives of people with dementia. The evaluative and analytical skills of WISERD researchers are coming increasingly to the fore in our educational research and work on European Social Fund Leavers Survey.

We have also been busy putting together a number of symposia and seminars, a key series being one addressing Wales and the recession. This series attempts to take a 'political economy' approach to understanding the impact of the global recession on Wales at local levels. Drawing upon economics, social policy, geography, sociology and political science, it will attempt to explore and explain how political institutions, the political environment, and the economic system influence each other in the specific case of Wales over the last five years.

In addition to this series there is important news about the WISERD conference this summer and a fascinating new book by Cardiff cultural geographer, Jon Anderson. The range of research being undertaken and the variety of ways in which it is being disseminated is very encouraging and, with the new centre coming on stream in the autumn, I am very hopeful that we can explore further ideas and opportunities in the future.



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WISERD receives £7 million for Civil Society research



WISERD has received major funding in excess of £7 million following a successful bid to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

As one of four UK research centres, WISERD will be part of an overall ESRC investment of £29 million in a series of new centres and investments which will focus on a range of subjects addressing the ESRC's priorities of: economic performance and sustainable growth, influencing behaviour and informing interventions, and a vibrant and fair society; which includes a focus on civil society.

This new flagship centre, WISERD/Civil Society, will undertake a five year innovative and far-reaching research programme of policy relevant research addressing Civil Society in Wales, the UK and Internationally.

WISERD Director Professor Ian Rees Jones said: "As part of WISERD, this new centre (WISERD/Civil Society) is built around longstanding partnerships between academics, policy makers and civil society organisations."

"WISERD/Civil Society research will aim to inform our understanding of the changing nature of civil society in the context of devolved government and processes of profound social and economic change. Furthermore, because of its size and devolved government, Wales offers a unique context for studying these issues. Viewing Wales as a 'laboratory for social science', the centre will build on existing networks of researchers who have a wide range of expertise and skills."

"This new centre will bring together our partner institutions with researchers from the Universities of Edinburgh, Sheffield and Ulster. This is indeed a unique and exciting opportunity to undertake collaborative and multidisciplinary research that is focused on contemporary features of civil society," he concluded.

The Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts MP said of the ESRC announcement: "Investment in these research priorities is key to driving innovation and growth, helping to influence and shape policy and deliver a better society for us all."

The centre will launch in Autumn 2014. Further details on the research areas covered by the new centre will be presented at the WISERD 2014 Annual Conference at Aberystwyth University on 3rd and 4th July 2014.

For more information please email: wiserd@cardiff.ac.uk



WISERD to share in ESRC's £64m Big Data funding investment



WISERD, in partnership with the Health Informatics Group at Swansea University, is among five grant recipients in the first phase of a £64 million funding investment by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to support the development of a UK-wide network of innovative Administrative Data Research Centres (ADRC's) to strengthen the UK's competitive advantage in Big Data.

The announcement of the new Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN), which will form the core of the ESRC Big Data family, was made in October 2013 by Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science. During the Mountbatten Memorial Lecture at The Royal Institution in London, Mr Willetts said: "Every day the world creates 2.5 quintillion bytes of data – equivalent to over 150,000 iPads worth of information. The power of computing in analysis of massive and mixed datasets will transform science and industry in the UK and through the creation of the Big Data Network and the ADRCs; we hope to be well placed to take competitive advantage of this great technology."

The ADRN, which came into being on October 1 2013 and will run for an initial period of five years, is a partnership between Government departments, research funders, national statistical authorities and the research community, which will reach across the UK to facilitate research based upon linked, routinely collected administrative data.

The ADRN will be led by the University of Essex; with ADRC's based at the Universities of Edinburgh, Southampton, Swansea, and Queens University Belfast. Collectively, these centres will benefit from a grants package totalling approximately £34 million.

Professor Paul Boyle, Chief Executive of the ESRC, said: "We are delighted to have played a leading role in the development of the national ADRN, which will strengthen the UK's advantage in Big Data. The core aim, of the ADRN is to facilitate linkage of routinely collected administrative data, thereby stimulating opportunities for innovative research and policy-making."

"There will be benefits for researchers, government, local communities and the public – indeed; there is the potential for a revolution in our ability to answer a host of questions that were previously intractable."

ADRC Wales will be led by Swansea University, in partnership with WISERD, under the direction of Professor David Ford, College of Medicine at Swansea University.

Commenting on the announcement, Professor David Ford said: "ADRC Wales is a truly exciting development. Our prior expertise in the safe handling and linking of large, complex and sensitive data will serve us well as ADRC Wales embarks on its work with the Welsh and UK Governments to unlock new data, and supporting the researchers of the UK."

ADRC Wales is a powerful new centre specialising in making UK-wide administrative data safely available for research. The Centre has a strong team, with a wealth of experience in data linkage and in economic and social research; and will work closely with The Farr Institute at Swansea University, massively increasing the opportunities for research that benefits people and society.

The main aim of the ADRC Wales is to create a world-class administrative data research centre that is widely known for its ability to access, link and make safe use of data for high quality research.

The Centre's work will be underpinned by a robust governance framework. This means that the centre will follow all the rules, laws and regulations that govern data usage, and set many new standards, so that its work is always ethical and respects the rights and privacy of individuals and organisations.



Improving the experience of Dementia and Enhancing Active life

Living well with dementia (IDEAL) project



Professor Linda Clare at Bangor University has been awarded a large grant by the Economic and Social Research Council and the National Institute for Health Research to undertake a five-year longitudinal cohort study of the experiences of 1,500 people with dementia and their family carers throughout the UK.

The study title is: 'Improving the experience of Dementia and Enhancing Active life: Living well with dementia (IDEAL)'. IDEAL started in January 2014 and is led by the Research in Ageing and Cognitive Health (REACH) group at Bangor University. Project partners include: Alzheimer's Society, Brunel University, Innovations in Dementia CIC, Kings College London, London School of Economics, the North Wales clinical trials unit (NORTH), Sussex University, The Research Institute for the Care of Older People (RICE), the UK research networks, and WISERD at Cardiff University.

The WISERD lead is Professor Ian Rees Jones and he will be taking a key role in managing the qualitative component of the study as well as leading on the integration of different data and methods. He will be supported by a researcher based in Cardiff who will start work in 2015 and an ESRC PhD studentship.

The aims of the study are to investigate how social and psychological circumstances and resources affect the possibility of living well with dementia and to identify what can be done by individuals, communities, health and social care practitioners, care providers and policy makers to improve the likelihood of living well with dementia.

The team are interested in people with dementia and their carer(s) and how capitals, assets and resources, and

adaptation in response to dementia related and other challenges, influence their ability to live well. They are also interested in what people with dementia and their carers believe can help or hinder the possibility of living well, and what factors are particularly important to them to be able to live well with dementia.

The study design is a mixed method longitudinal cohort study with assessments at baseline, 12 months and 24 months. The team have set a target of 1,500 participants with recruitment being carried out by research network staff in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland through Memory Clinics and other specialist clinics.

Further information about the study is available from the IDEAL Project Manager, Dr Sharon Nelis: s.nelis@bangor.ac.uk

NHS

National Institute for Health Research

E · S · R · C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL



Evaluation of Foundation Phase Flexibility Pilots



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

A new research project, evaluating the Foundation Phase Flexibility Pilots, is underway with Professor Chris Taylor as lead researcher.

In line with the Welsh Government's commitment to Early Years development, the Foundation Phase is the statutory curriculum for all 3 to 7 year old children in Wales in both maintained and non-maintained settings.

The Foundation Phase is based on the principle that early years' provision should offer a sound foundation for future learning through a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Children are given opportunities to explore and discover by taking part in practical activities that are relevant to their developmental stage. The Foundation Phase places great emphasis on children learning by doing.

As part of the Foundation Phase, free part-time (minimum 10 hours) Foundation Phase nursery education places are available for all children in Wales from the term following their third birthday. However, the Welsh Government has noted concerns amongst parents and carers about the way the free entitlement is currently allocated and the lack of flexibility.

"This lack of flexibility in provision can prevent some parents from accessing this early years provision or limits their opportunities in accessing the labour market and undertaking paid employment," said Professor Taylor. "Consequently, the Welsh Government has encouraged a number of local authorities to work with providers to try and experiment with the way in which the free entitlement can be used."

The Foundation Phase Flexibility Pilots include a cross section of different types of schools and settings, including non-maintained settings, Welsh medium settings through Mudiad Meithrin, play groups, private day-care providers, nursery schools, infant schools and primary schools. The pilots are taking place across three local authorities in different parts of Wales.

Professor Chris Taylor will lead a team to evaluate how the pilots are being implemented and evaluate the effect increased flexibility has on families. The findings from this evaluation will be used to inform guidance to local authorities on how to increase flexibility in an effective way.

"Supporting children in their early years is seen as central to reforms to improve educational standards and raise the educational achievement of children in Wales, particularly amongst children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds," Professor Taylor commented. "The distinct and novel approach of the Welsh Government has led to major policies such as Flying Start, the creation of a Children's Commissioner, and the development of numerous childcare strategies.

Of most significance, however, was the introduction of the Foundation Phase – a flagship policy of early years education for 3- to 7-year old children that has combined the previous early years childcare provision (for three to four year olds) with early years education (of four to seven years olds)."

"Despite the potential success of the Foundation Phase there continues to be widespread concern about the educational achievement of children in Wales and significant attention given to early years childcare and education. Building a Brighter Future outlines numerous proposals for children from birth to 7 years of age, and their families, including the aim to 'improve the quality [...and] flexibility, accessibility and affordability of early education and childcare' and for the Foundation Phase 'to be leading the way internationally in terms of the number of free hours of early education provided, flexibility of the offer, the quality of the curriculum and outcomes for our children.' These Foundation Phase Flexibility Pilots provide a key step in achieving these goals."

The evaluation will consist of reviews of the flexibility proposals; measures to assess demand and monitor attendance; and administrative data. A process evaluation involving consultation with pilot local authorities and visits to case study providers alongside surveys and interviews with parents and carers will also take place.

The evaluation will run from February 2014 to January 2015 when a final evaluation report will be submitted to the Welsh Government.

For more information contact Professor Chris Taylor on 029 208 76938 or email TaylorCM@cardiff.ac.uk.



Supporting the Welsh Workforce: Findings from the 2012 ESF Leavers Survey



The two ESF Operational Programmes (referred to as the Convergence and Competitiveness Programmes) benefiting Wales for the programming period 2007 – 2013 are together providing a little over £1.4 billion of investment, with approximately 85% of this channelled through the West Wales and the Valleys Convergence Programme. The interventions that are supported by the Programmes are wide-ranging, though all relate to investment in human capital. At the time of writing it is forecasted that approved projects will reach over 600,000 participants by the end of this programming period.

The 2012 European Social Fund (ESF) Leavers Survey was commissioned by the Welsh European Funding Office and conducted by an inter-disciplinary research team headed by WISERD.

The aim of the 2012 ESF Leavers Survey is to assist in assessing the effectiveness of labour market interventions delivered under the ESF Convergence and Competitiveness Programmes. The interventions covered by the ESF survey fall under two broad categories; those aimed at improving participation in the labour market which primarily support those not in work and those aimed at improving progression in employment which primarily support those in work.

Why do people undertake ESF supported training?

Almost half of respondents (47%) participating in projects aimed at improving participation in the labour market stated that they undertook the course to help them find work. Among those who are already in work and taking part in interventions aimed at supporting progression in employment, greater emphasis is placed upon the development of both broader and more specialist skills.

What skills do people gain from ESF supported training?

The most commonly cited skills acquired by participants on ESF training courses were job specific skills (69%). Other commonly cited skills include key skills such as organisational skills (68%), communication skills (68%), team working

skills (66%), and problem solving skills (64%). Respondents report that they felt more confident about their capabilities (85%) and that they were feeling better about themselves generally (83%). Approximately three quarters of respondents (74%) report that they felt more enthusiastic about learning as a result of participating in ESF.

Do ESF participants think that their training helped?

The ESF survey included a number of questions that asked respondents about their perceived benefits of participating in ESF.

- Among previously unemployed participants in projects aimed at improving participation in the labour market who had found work by the time of the survey, 18% felt ESF had been vital in them gaining their current job.
- Among participants in projects aimed at improving participation in the labour market who had not gained employment by the time of the survey, 24% believed they have more chance of finding a job in the future.
- Among participants in projects aimed at improving progression in employment, approximately 10% report experiencing an improvement in their jobs that could be directly attributed to their participation in ESF.
- Approximately three quarters (76%) of participants in interventions aimed at improving participation in the labour market and 86% of participants undertaking interventions aimed at improving progression in employment said that, with the value of hindsight, they would do the course again.

Is participation in ESF associated with higher rates of transition in to work?

To estimate the effect of ESF interventions, the employment transitions made by ESF participants who were not in work prior to ESF been compared, over a period of 12 months, to those experienced by people in similar circumstances, people from a large, nationally representative survey of individuals within the UK called the Annual Population Survey (APS).

Among participants in ESF Redundancy Training projects, 78% are observed to gain work over a period of 12 months. Among the unemployed in the APS who have recently been made redundant, 67% are observed to gain employment. Participation in Redundancy Training is therefore associated with higher rates of transition in to employment. Participation of the unemployed in other types of ESF projects is also associated with higher rates of transition into employment (43% gain work) compared to similar unemployed respondents from the APS (35% gain work).

It is important to treat the results derived from these techniques with caution. The effects associated with participation in ESF interventions could also be partly caused by 'selection effects', with the most employable choosing to participate on these interventions.

Conclusions

The 2012 ESF Leavers Survey highlights the strong satisfaction of ESF participants with the support which they have received and the conviction of participants that the provision has enhanced a wide range of skills (above all occupational skills). In difficult economic times the softer outcomes

of ESF provision should also not be discounted with respondents reporting increased levels of well-being as a result of their participation in ESF. However, comparisons of the labour market outcomes of respondents from ESF projects aimed at improving participation in the labour market with those of otherwise comparable people within the wider population suggest that the impact of ESF interventions on the unemployed is relatively modest.

Information

The commissioning and management of the ESF Leavers Surveys is led by the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Branch of WEFO. Queries regarding the monitoring and evaluation of ESF in Wales can be addressed to the RME team at WEFO:

RME.Mailbox@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Full results from the 2012 ESF Leavers Survey are published via the website of the Welsh European Funding Office at:
<http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/publications/publications/monitoringevaluation/programmevaluations/esfleaverssurvey2012/>



WISERD 2014 Annual Conference



**MedRus Conference Centre
at Aberystwyth University
Thursday 3rd July 2014, 10.30am – 6pm
Friday 4th July 2014, 8.30am – 3.45pm**

Join Wales' largest social science conference!

Bookings are now open for the WISERD 2014 Annual Conference. The event follows four successful conferences, held in the Universities of Cardiff, Swansea, Bangor and South Wales. Bringing practitioners, policy makers and social scientists together, WISERD conferences have become established as one of the most important events in the social science calendar.

This two-day event will take place on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th July 2014 at the MedRus Conference Centre at Aberystwyth University. This annual event showcases policy relevant research in Wales and attracts colleagues from academic, policy, public, private and third sectors concerned with social, economic and political issues.

We welcome academics and non-academics from a diverse range of disciplines and areas of interest to share their research. This year over 70 papers will be presented and we welcome two keynote speakers from leading figures in academia and politics.



#WISERD2014

Programme

Themes covered at the conference this year include:

- Culture, Values and Creative Industries
- Civil Society
- Economic Life
- Health, Environment and Wellbeing
- Transitions in Education, Childhood and the Labour Market
- Social Care across the Life-course
- Open Sessions

Additional sessions:

- Introduction to WISERD/Civil Society
- Writing for Publication, Wales DTC Session*
- Administrative Data Research Network launch event

*The workshop entitled 'Writing for Publication: audiences, processes and purposes' (led by Professor David James, Director of the ESRC Wales Doctoral Training Centre) is free to all Doctoral students attending the conference and is aimed at those who are new, or relatively new, to writing for publication. The DTC is also running a 'collaboration short essay competition' with a £200 prize for the winning entry. Details on how to submit an essay are available on the Wales DTC website. www.walesdttc.ac.uk

Keynote Speakers

We are delighted to confirm this year's Keynote Speakers:

Professor Bob Jessop, Lancaster University

Crisis construals and crisis management: interpretive power, interpretive authority, and learning in, through, and from crisis

Professor Karel Williams, Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, University of Manchester

Social license: fixing the foundational economy

Accommodation

Aberystwyth University are offering overnight bed and breakfast accommodation for either Wednesday 2nd and / or Thursday 3rd July at the Aberystwyth University Halls of Residence (available to book until 31st May 2014), priced at £34.00 per night (incl VAT).

Fees

The conference will run over two days:

Thursday 3rd July

10.30am - 6.00pm
(followed by an optional conference dinner at 7.00pm)

Friday 4th July

8.30am - 3.45pm

See rates below.

	Full Rate per day	Early Bird Rate per day
WISERD Associates & Speakers	£100.00	£70.00
HEI / Public Sector /Charities	£100.00	£70.00
Post Graduate students	£30.00	£30.00
Conference Dinner	£40.00	£40.00

Further Information

For more information on the conference programme and booking visit the WISERD Annual Conference pages:

www.wiserd.ac.uk/conference2014



Aberystwyth's Literary Cartographers:

exploring the relationship between literature & place.

A must-see for anyone with an interest in Welsh literature and local geography!

An exclusive look at Dr Jon Anderson's forthcoming book: *Page and Place: Ongoing Compositions of Plot*, on Wednesday 2nd July 2014 at a pre-conference event*.

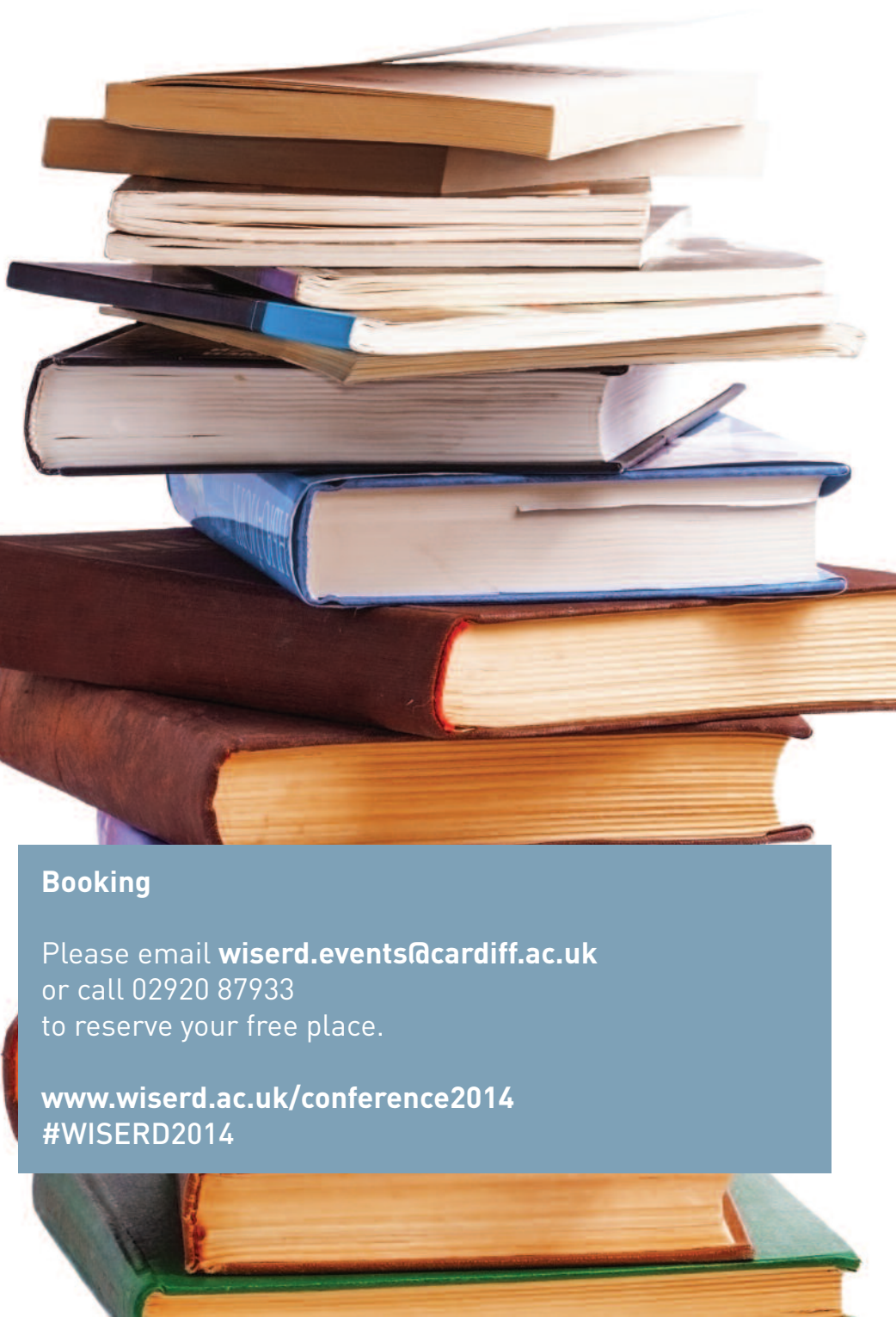
The event '**Aberystwyth's Literary Cartographers**: *exploring the relationship between literature and place*' coincides with the forthcoming publication of this WISERD affiliated book: ***Page and Place: Ongoing Compositions of Plot***.

The event will explore the relationship between literature and geography, focusing on some of Ceredigion's best contemporary writers.

Dr Jon Anderson will deliver a talk on the relationship between literature and geography, exploring how geographies of fiction co-produce the places in which we live our lives. This will be followed by an exclusive video from Richard Collins, author of 'The Land as Viewed from the Sea', who will discuss his interests in local places and how they have played out in his writings, before giving some brief readings of sections from his novel.

Commencing with a drinks reception and concluding with a discussion and Q&A session, this pre-conference event will take place in Aberystwyth Arts Centre on Wednesday 2 July at 5.30pm—7.00pm.

*As part of the WISERD Annual Conference.



Booking

Please email wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk
or call 02920 87933
to reserve your free place.

www.wiserd.ac.uk/conference2014
#WISERD2014

WISERD Wales & Recession Seminar Series

March – December 2014

WISERD has launched a seminar series aiming to examine the impact of the recession on social and economic life in Wales; and to take stock of the policy responses in Wales in the context of a Westminster government committed to austerity measures.

2008 marked the beginning of the deepest and longest recession of modern times. While its causes are to be found in centres of economic and political gravity beyond Wales, its effects on the Welsh economy and on the lives of the people of Wales have been profound and far reaching. Guest speakers will deliver talks on an array of topics including: poverty, housing and homelessness, health and wellbeing and policy responses.

Booking

To reserve your place please email wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk.

Seminars will begin with a drinks reception at 5.30pm, followed by a presentation at 5.45pm, with time for Q&A before a 6.30pm finish.

Seminars

**Wales & Recession:
Global challenges & local
responses**
20 March 2014

Gareth Rees & Ian Rees Jones
This seminar will provide an overview of the 2008 recession and its political context and begin to explore some of the regional differences between England and Wales.

**Wales & Recession:
Income, Poverty, Unemployment
& Working Lives**
29 April 2014

Ross McKay
This seminar considers the shift from a sellers' to a buyers' market for labour and from conditions of full employment to low opportunity. It does so in the context of growing inequality between both people and places that develops over time.

**Wales & Recession:
Neighbourhood, Place & the
Changing High Street**
27 May 2014 **POSTPONED**

Scott Orford & Alain Chiaradia
This seminar will explore the effects of the recession on the material landscape of Wales and the changing high street.

**Wales & Recession:
Tackling Poverty**
19 June 2014

Michael Trickey,
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
JRF has been monitoring/analysing poverty in the UK for some years and in Wales for about the last 8 years, along with work on minimum income standards. This seminar will look at the data and accompanying analysis and tie it up with material from the Welsh Government.

**Wales & Recession:
Health and Well-being**
10 July 2014 **POSTPONED**

Eva Elliott & Gareth Williams
This seminar will focus on the effects of the recession on well-being and health.

**Wales & Recession:
Rural communities**
11 September 2014

Mike Woods & Jesse Heley
This seminar will discuss the effects of the recession on rural life and communities.

**Wales & Recession:
Housing and Homelessness**
9 October 2014

Peter Mackie & Shelter Cymru
This seminar will explore the effects of the recession on the housing market and, in particular, on homelessness.

**Wales & Recession:
Exploring the Welsh Government
Policy Responses**
13 November 2014

Steve Martin
This seminar will focus on debating and assessing the effectiveness of Welsh Government policy responses to the recession.

**Wales & Recession:
A new economy?**
11 December 2014

Karel Williams, Manchester University
This final session will explore the longer term implications of the recession for the Welsh Economy.



WISERD & Welsh Government Evidence Symposia:

Exploring the evidence base on key policy themes

The overall aim of this project, funded by the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Welsh Government, was to promote more effective knowledge exchange between academic social scientists, policy makers and professional practitioners in Wales – and within the Welsh Government, in particular - on a number of important policy questions. This, in turn, was intended to provide a means of improving the quality of policy development in Wales, particularly in the context of devolution since 1999.

The project ran between 2012 and 2013 and was based on a partnership between WISERD and the Welsh Government. As part of the project, a series of four Evidence Symposia were developed, each of which focused on a key policy theme of policy, practitioner and academic interest for which there was an existing body of substantial and robust social science evidence. Each event brought together leading researchers with senior policy-makers and professional practitioners, to assess critically the available research evidence; and to identify and evaluate the policy implications of the research.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



The themes and dates of the Symposia were as follows:

- **Wellbeing in Wales**
29 June 2012,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park, Cardiff
- **The Impact of Early Interventions on Children's Life Chances**
27 February 2013,
Cardiff University
- **Poverty and Economic Inequalities in Wales**
20 June 2013,
Parc Thistle, Cardiff
- **Health Inequalities in Wales**
12 September 2013,
Cardiff University

Invitations to participate in a Symposium were deliberately limited to a small number (usually under 30), to encourage discussion (under the Chatham House rule). Invitees included researchers, policy-makers and professional practitioners. In order to facilitate effective discussion and debate, evidence review papers and/or other materials were commissioned and circulated prior to each Symposium. Accordingly, presentations were short, maximising the opportunity for discussion. Reports were produced following each Symposium. These summarised the discussion and highlighted the evidence gaps identified, listing recommendations for follow-up action. Copies of meeting reports, evidence reviews and other materials for each of the Symposia are available to download from the WISERD website at:

www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/current-projects/welsh-government-evidence-symposia/

The Symposia proved popular with attendees, receiving consistently positive feedback and requests for future events to be organised. A key finding of the project was that events such as the Evidence Symposia provide an effective method for engaging policy-makers and professional practitioners with research. Moreover, there is a significant appetite for such engagement amongst the policy community in Wales, perhaps reflecting the significant growth in policy development responsibilities that has occurred since devolution in 1999. The format was also deemed to be effective, leading to sustained discussion and longer-term engagement between participants. The possibility of developing further events in future has been discussed.

For further information on the series or any of the Symposia listed above; or to suggest a theme for a future event, please contact WISERD Director of Operations, Victoria Macfarlane:

macfarlanev@cf.ac.uk

WISERD Education Website

WISERDEducation has launched a new website:

www.wiserd.ac.uk/wiserd-education

The new website features a simple design with clean layout of page content and a consistent site-wide navigation system. Users can find out about the latest research developments with links to the WISERDEducation blog and take part in the WISERDEducation Quiz to reveal the latest research findings.

WISERDEducation is a three year £1 million project examining 1,200 pupils aged 5-17 years in 24 schools across Wales, and the new website has been designed to best reflect the aims and objectives of this invaluable research.



Communicating Research with Professor Huw Beynon

I have just published an article in the *Journal of Historical Sociology* that is framed around interviews I conducted thirty four years ago. I had kept the tapes of these interviews as well as the transcripts, and listening again to extracts from them helped me enormously in thinking my way through the article. In this I was inspired, in part, by Mike Savage's *Ideology and Social Change in Britain since 1940*, which made considerable use of interviews and researcher reports from the sixties and seventies, many of them held in the ESRC archives but others in the archives of the Sociological Review and elsewhere. It occurred to me that many more materials are held in the offices and filing cabinets of researchers – particularly those of a certain age – and that this raised interesting questions about the use as well as the storage, dissemination and discussion of existing research materials.

I faced this issue personally when I moved office and found myself surrounded by boxes all filled with materials from previous projects. At the same time many of my books were falling out of print, and it occurred to me that I may be able to deal with these problems through my website. As things moved along I began to see how new and more creative ways of disseminating research and engaging with different audiences could be developed through the web.

The books for which I held copyright were scanned and links to these were put on my website alongside photographs of their covers. To these I added other out- of-

print materials as well as conference papers, book chapters, and the beginnings of some field notes and unpublished drafts. Rather than simply list these (by date is the most normal) I thought it would help users if I categorised them, and found this quite a helpful process and something to build on.

Having experienced the significance of listening to the early interviews I felt that the web page needed to have a multimedia dimension. One of my books, *Born to Work*, was based on my collaboration with the photographer Nick Hedges in the seventies and Dewi Parry, Web and Technical Officer from the School of Social Sciences,

created a film version, based on the images with my narration heard through the sounds of the factory.

It was at this point that I began to see the full potential of the project, that needed a personal website. Dewi Parry recommended building the site though *WordPress*, a self-contained system that has an intuitive interface, which made it ideal for incorporating the full range of materials alongside blogs and collaborative spaces. The site can be fully customised, and with the hundreds of plugins (like social media sharing and Search Engine Optimisation plugins for example), it's easy to extend its functionality. While its early days I'm now convinced that this offers a significant development in the ways in which we optimise the use of individual research archives and engage creatively with new audiences.

<http://huwbeynon.com/>
Twitter: @proffhuwbeynon

Events & Activity

WISERD Blogs

There are now several WISERD blogs providing updates on the latest research activity, project developments, key findings, funding and events:

WISERD Blog

<http://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/wiserd/>

WISERD Education Blog

<http://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/wiserdeducation/>

WISERD DataPortal Blog

<http://dataportal-development.blogspot.co.uk/>

All Wales Academic Social Care Research Collaboration (ASCC) Blog

<http://asccyrmru.blogspot.co.uk/>



WISERD Wales & Recession Seminar Series: Income, Poverty, Unemployment & Working Lives

29 April 2014, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
Ross McKay

This seminar considers the shift from a sellers' to a buyers' market for labour and from conditions of full employment to low opportunity. It does so in the context of growing inequality between both people and places that develops over time.

WISERD Wales & Recession Seminar Series: Tackling Poverty

19 June 2014, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
Michael Trickey,
Joseph Rowntree Foundation

JRF has been monitoring/analysing poverty in the UK for some years and in Wales for about the last 8 years, along with work on minimum income standards. This seminar will look at the data and accompanying analysis and tie it up with material from the Welsh Government.

WISERD Podcast Series



Podcast #5 - Labour Market Implications of Changes in the Public Sector: Inequality and Work Quality

The fifth podcast of the WISERD Research Podcast Series is now online:

www.wiserd.ac.uk/news/podcasts/

Professor David Blackaby discusses his findings on regional variations in public-private sector wage differences.

WISERD 2014 Annual Conference

Thursday 3rd & Friday 4th July 2014

MedRus Conference Centre, Aberystwyth University

The WISERD 2014 Annual Conference follows four successful conferences, held in the Universities of Cardiff, Swansea, Bangor and South Wales. Bringing practitioners, policy makers and social scientists together, WISERD conferences have become established as one of the most important events in the social science calendar.

This annual event showcases policy relevant research in Wales and attracts colleagues from academic, policy, public, private and third sectors.



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