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Abstract: Although the notion of rural crime has an idyllic aura to it, crime occurs in a changing social landscape and is affected by demographic changes, changing crime trends and by the introduction of new policing practices. Similarly, exactly what constitutes rural crime is also open to debate and changes over time. Likewise, we only have a fuzzy notion of the stereotypical rural criminal and find it difficult to acknowledge the existence of a rural criminal underclass. As a result crime in a rural context is more difficult to police than crime in an urban landscape because it requires a different set of skills and practices than policing the urban landscape. The closure of rural police stations and the reallocation of scarce policing resources to urban hotspots has inevitably led to a deskilling of the archetypal 'Country Bobby'. Consequentially, this quasi-longitudinal case study examines changes in policing practices in a [fictionalized] sub-division in rural Scotland over a forty year period. This enables consideration of the changing rural landscape of crime and from this mapping process implications and conclusions in relation to good practice on rural policing to emerge.

POLICING THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF RURAL CRIME: A CASE STUDY FROM SCOTLAND

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POLICING THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF RURAL CRIME: A CASE FROM SCOTLAND

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH FOCI

It is widely accepted in Criminology that the study of crime has an urban bias. According to Dingwall & Moody (1999) criminologists suffer from 'mean streets myopia" whereby they concentrate the criminological gaze upon urban criminality, whilst ignoring rural criminality. Moody (1999) and Donnermeyer (2007) argue that criminologists have long neglected rural criminality and as a result it is difficult to convince them that rural crime is real crime. One reason for this myopia is that the semiotics of rural crime is not as publicly visible as that of urban crime. Therefore, visually one cannot see evidence of marauding street gangs, deprivation, ghettoes, graffiti, burned out motor cars, boarded up shops and all the other visual cues we have come to associate with our urbancentric notions of criminality. This visual confirmation is important particularly in rural areas. This myopia is further exacerbated by the very nature of rurality and its connectedness to the romanticism of the rural idyll (Mingay, 1989). Studies of rural crime in Scotland are rare. Nevertheless, there is a growing body of academic research into the problem and significantly studies into rural crime and criminality in a Scottish context are expanding and it is now becoming widely accepted that rural crime is a hidden and pernicious problem. The following section explores the nature of rural crime in Scotland.

In this study rural crime is presented from the geographic perspective of 'systems theory' in that rural crime is but part of a wider criminal system. Thus in the rural criminal eco-system a variety of connected and unconnected criminal players prey on

rural communities targeting particular vulnerable areas whilst simultaneously exploiting unused areas of land or buildings. As will be seen in the case study around which this paper is constructed the police may be partly to blame for creating the rural criminal landscape (or playscape) in which various criminal typologies compete to extract value from the environment. This quasi-longitudinal [1] study also examines the social organization of rural crime in juxtaposition to changing policing practices.

This paper comprises of 6 further sections. The following section discusses research into rural crime in Scotland. Thereafter, we discuss policing in rural Scotland and present the case study proper. The next section considers the consequences of the changing demographics of policing. We then seek to understand the nature of rural crime before positing implications and opportunities for action. The final section concludes with a call for action in relation to re-professionalising rural policing as a specialism.

RURAL CRIME IN SCOTLAND

The following is a list of academic studies into crime in rural Scotland. For example: –

- The George Street Research Report (1997);
- Anderson (1997), (1999);
- The Scottish Executive Central Research Unit (1997);
- The Scottish Executive Crime Prevention Unit (1997);
- The Scottish Office Research Report No 8 (1998);
- Smyth (undated);
- Smith (2004);

- Donnelly (2005) “Policing the Scottish Community”; and
- McVie (2008).

However, few of these relate specifically to the policing of rural crime and criminality. Instead they focus upon the generic crimes committed in rural contexts. Nevertheless, a study into rural disadvantage in Scotland commissioned by the Joseph Rowentree Foundation (1994) revealed that such disadvantage is widespread and that there is a gap between their standard of living and objective measurements of poverty. Rural deprivation provides fertile ground for rural crime and illegal rural enterprise to flourish but as Donnermeyer (2007: 11) has noted there is more to rural crime than theories of social disorganization.

A seminal study in relation to crime in rural Scotland was conducted by the company George Street Research in Scotland during 1997 (George Street Research, 1997). This report began to identify the scale of this emerging problem. There is a growing body of academic studies conducted in Britain, America and Australia which relate specifically to rural crime. These include Barclay (2001); Donnermeyer (undated) and Donnermeyer & Barclay (2005). Studies of rural criminality in a wider British context include those of Dingwall & Moody (1999); Sugden (1999); Yarwood & Gardner (2005); and Marshall & Johnson (2005). However, the findings and conclusions of such studies are often inaccessible to practitioners and police officers working in rural areas. This paper seeks to relate their findings to everyday policing practices. The main points to be drawn from these studies are that:-

- There is a perception that rural crime is committed by marauding urban criminals (akin to an alien conspiracy theory);

- Vandalism, theft of plant, tools, equipment, and the theft of livestock are the main crimes committed.
- Crime in rural areas is often under reported by farmers and rural dwellers because it is considered trivial and because of fear of reprisals.
- There is an ingrained culture of silence within rural communities.

However, the main issue to be overcome is the collective refusal of Criminologists to accept that there is a criminal rural underclass and in particular that rogue farmers and entrepreneurs are often complicit in committing rural crime. In the areas surrounding our towns and cities there is little doubt that a core group of urban criminals are responsible for committing the majority of rural crimes. However, we have to accept that there are also criminals who live and operate in the countryside including 1) Urban criminals who have relocated to rural areas; 2) Rogue farmers and entrepreneurs; and 3) An underclass who live in the countryside and turn to crime to feed their drug and alcohol dependency issues.

To date what has been missing from the study of rural criminality from a Scottish context is an analysis of the situation which takes cognizance of the role the police play in interdicting rural crime as well as the changing nature of criminal landscape *per se*. This is what Yarwood (2008) refers to as the changing geographies of rural policing. This study addresses these oversights.

POLICING RURAL SCOTLAND

In halcyon days gone by the ‘Country’ or ‘Village Bobby’ became a Scottish Institution who stood alongside the Dominie [Headmaster] and the Minister as revered figures in the

community. The Bobby was feared and revered in equal measure. Mawby (2004) articulated similar sentiments in his study relating to the myth and realities of rural policing in England. Indeed, Mawby talks of a halcyon period in rural England epitomized by community policing when the police operated on a local level and were well known to the communities they policed.

The archetypal 'Country Bobby'

This issue of presence is central to understanding the changing geography of policing. If you talk to the older generation they will narrate [often apocryphal and hagiographic] stories of getting a 'clip round the ear' or a 'kick up the backside' from the Bobby for stealing apples or some other minor infraction of the law. Such stories are significant because they broadcast a collective emotive memory of belongingness and of the policeman as being a valued member of local society. These '*stories of presence'* also paint a picture of a society where real crime was rare [2]. The author's father told such stories. As a genre the 'Country Bobby' was usually 'of country folk' who shared a cultural heritage with the people of the area. In stories told of them we hear of kindly men, irascible men and of the occasional legend among men who dispensed a form of rough justice to those who deserved it. In this manner fights and the inevitable squabbles of rural life were sorted without recourse to the law [3]. These men cultivated intelligence networks and gathered community intelligence and often remained in post for up to ten years. Many were older in service and welcomed the different pace of policing. They became part of village life and were accepted in the communities. Many appeared to others to be lazy, but this often belied their capacity for problem solving and

peacekeeping. The stories told of them live on in living memory as a testament to changing times.

In former times the 'Country Bobby' who often lived in the Police Station House with his family and was on call 24 hours a day was a familiar sight in the villages and in the farming community. Country bobbies issued pig licences, dealt with the issue of firearm certificates, attended sheep dippings' and dealt with the miscellany of petty crimes from theft to breach of the peace. As a result these officers had a continuing dialogue with farmers, water bailiffs and gamekeepers. Many of these officers were there by choice and engaged in country pursuits such as hunting, fishing and shooting themselves. They had encyclopedic knowledge of poaching legislation and other rural crimes. They were in effect skilled 'Rural Beat Officers' [RBO's]. This is significant because rural policing is a craft based skill.

We now turn to consider how changes in policing practices may have exacerbated the rural crime problem. The narrative concentrates upon policing practices and identifies issues which will be discussed in the final section which identifies possible solutions. The remainder of this section is based upon the observations of the author as a rural police officer over a twenty year period between 1984 and 2005. This enables an exploration of how policing methods and practices have changed considerably over that period of time and how crime has expanded to fill the void left by the retreat of the police from the rural landscape. A number of significant cumulative changes are identified which together demonstrate a changing geography of policing and perhaps gave rise to the growth in rural criminality. The changes are also potential opportunities for policing innovations. Case study methodology (Yin, 1985) is used.

Case Study: The Pathead Sub-Division

This study is based upon a policing sub-division which has been given the pseudonym of Pathead. The sub-division consists of two urban towns and 23 villages split into two areas each under the responsibility of an Inspector based in each of the respective urban centres. In the early 1960s there were a total of twelve police stations across the rural area. Of these there were eleven single stations manned 24 hours per day with a Constable in residence. The twelfth was busy rural station with a Sergeant and eight Constables. This equates to 21 dedicated officers policing and constantly present in the rural area. This pattern of manning was fairly common across Scotland.

It is helpful to consider a number of [demographic] changes in the manner in which the service was delivered.

Demographic change 1 – The Closure of Rural Police Stations and the Strategic Withdrawal of the Police from the Countryside.

In the division during the past decade there has been an obvious decline in the presence of Rural Beat Officers. This pattern of strategic withdrawal had begun prior to 1984 and its roots can be traced back to the 1960s. In 1964, six of the rural stations were closed on the grounds of efficiency and the majority of officers reallocated to other rural stations. Some stations became two man stations whilst the station with five officers increased to a compliment of nine officers. Circa 1986 a further period of public consultation saw the number of rural police stations dwindle further as four other single stations were closed

for operational reasons. This left four rural stations. Again the displaced officers were retained in the rural area with three of the stations having two officers and the fourth had its compliment raised to ten men. The rural officers were generally left to their own devices to police the rural area as they saw fit. This pattern of strategic withdrawal (or consolidation) of services to the rural community was common place across Scotland during this period on grounds of efficiency and cost saving. It was seen as a rationalization process brought about by an increasing desire for professionalization and a growth of crime in urban areas.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a discernable rise in the levels of organized urban crime brought about by the advent of drug culture and increasing numbers of drug users – addicts. This put pressure on scarce policing resources and staffing and increasingly rural officers were used to fill in for staff shortages in the urban crime hotspots. As officers were transferred from rural stations they were often not replaced leading to a dwindling of numbers in real terms. This also led to a deskilling of the rural officer. In the late 1990s a Command decision was taken not to continue with single manned stations for Health and Safety reasons albeit a new rural police station was built in one village to replace the existing dilapidated station. The officers were transferred to other duties and as we entered the millennium there were only three dedicated rural police stations. One station had a Sergeant and nine officers, the second had three officers and the third was reduced to one officer who was transferred to the urban sub-divisional office and attended calls to the rural villages as an when the need arose.

This process of strategic withdrawal continues into the present day in that in 2006 the busy rural station which had expanded to a total of ten officers was subject to further restructuring. It now has a Community Sergeant and five Community Beat Officers [CBO's] who now cover the whole of the rural area of the sub-division. This decision can be justified under the logic of Intelligence Led Policing [ILP]. The title of Community Beat Officer may retain a tenuous link with the community but it is hard to argue that in 1960 there were nineteen dedicated officers policing a rural beat and now in 2008 there are only eight.

Demographic change 2 – The Deskilling of the Rural Beat Officers.

The idyllic notion of the Country Bobby paints an idyllic picture of rural policing but this was not always the case because it was a constant struggle for Command to fill vacancies in rural beats because rural policing is not seen as a policing specialism. It had no recognized career path despite being a practice which requires specialized knowledge. Policing rural beats and interdicting rural crime requires a different set of skills and patience than urban based thief taking and drug enforcement. The omnipresence of the Country Bobby meant that they developed an encyclopedic knowledge of their beat. They attended all crimes and occurrences in their beats and learned to identify the patterns of criminality from theft to poaching. As a result they developed an ability to understand and detect rural crime and criminals.

Now, due to staff shortages rural crimes are often dealt with by officers with an urban criminal mindset and patterns and connections are not always made. Urban officers often have no knowledge or interest in rural crime or affairs. They invariably have

considerable workloads relating to the investigation of urban crime. Investigating rural crime can be more time consuming and the distances one has to travel between reports can be considerable. As a consequence ownership is often a problem.

Also rural crime patterns often transcend beat, divisional and force areas making them difficult to identify and deal with. Animal Health Officers now deal with the licensing issues formerly dealt with by the police and specialized police firearms enquiry officers deal with the firearms enquiries. The direct contact between the farming community and the Beat Officers has been broken. Poaching legislation is no longer taught at the Scottish Police College because it is not considered to be of interest to the average police officer. Rural officers who held this knowledge have long since retired. It is a vicious circle because the less such crimes are recorded the less serious such crime is regarded. Police officers with little or no interest in rural policing can still find themselves posted to rural stations where they bide their time waiting for a more lucrative posting.

These demographic changes have occurred at a time when the rural population is in many parts of Scotland has been increasing. Our villages are growing considerably as property prices drive many city and town dwellers into the counties where housing prices are more reasonable and quality of life issues are paramount. Villages are no longer the idyllic places they once were and in many villages under age drinking and alcohol related youth crime is now part of village life with the anti-social behaviour that entails. This fact was appreciated by the authors of the Nacro Report (1997) aptly entitled ‘Hanging around the Bus Stop’. Having discussed the changing nature of policing practices it is necessary to discuss a number of structural defects in the policing system:-

Structural defect 1 – Multi Agency Myopia.

Another issue of concern is the fact that much rural crime is not dealt with by the Police service and as such is not considered to be real crime. Rural crime is dealt with by a variety of Agencies. For instance:-

- Animal Health Officers (employed by local councils).
- Animal Cruelty Officers (SSPCA).
- Government Vets.
- DEFRA

to name but a few. At present there is no unifying framework to bring these agencies together. Any such contact is on an adhoc basis unless a rural crisis is identified. As a result the sharing of intelligence and best practice on rural crime is hampered. This suggests that there is a lack of inter agency liaison. There is also a general lack of knowledge of each others powers. A multi agency rural intelligence unit would be a considerable innovation as would the implementation of Rural Crime Teams as occurs in Australia. This lack of focus is an example of legislative and institutional myopia.

Structural defect 2 – Lack of a proper crime recording system

At present there is no officially recognized or standardized crime recording system or program which 'flags up' rural crimes, beat by beat or area by area. At present analysts can extract this information from the existing Crime file system but this in not done as a matter of routine therefore rural crime remains hidden from view. It is therefore difficult to accurately assess the true nature and extent of what constitutes rural crime. All thefts

are recorded as thefts whether they are at farms or commercial premises. It is therefore likely that emerging crime patterns are not easily detected. It is necessary to read every crime file individually to establish if there is an element of rurality to the criminality. This situation is clearly inefficient and time consuming. Rural crime therefore remains a hidden deniable crime.

Structural defect 3 – Intelligence Led Policing, the National Intelligence Model and the submission of routine intelligence.

Likewise there is no universal rural crime label on the Scottish Intelligence Database [SID] to identify rural crime. This makes it a time consuming process to search the database to establish patterns of rural criminality. Rural crime is generally treated as petty crime and as such has a low priority (level one) in terms of the National Intelligence Model [NIM]. Much rural crime is unreported and the profile of rural criminals differs from that of their urban counterparts therefore when a rural criminal is charged with a crime it is not always considered worthy of submitting an intelligence log. Also the sporadic nature of rural criminality conspires against a genuine intelligence picture being built up in relation to rural crime and criminality because convictions are often several years apart and occur across divisional and force boundaries. Due to the nature of the 5 x 5 Intelligence system the nominal record if it is created in the first place will more than likely be weeded from the system by the time the second conviction occurs. Gathering intelligence on rural crime and criminality would require a different narrative based recording system because the snippets, stories and vignettes of intelligence which make up the intelligence picture occur at a slower pace and remain valid for a longer period of

time. The constituent elements are spread across different agencies and therefore remain elusive. As a consequence police intelligence gathering in relation to rural criminality is often poor.

Structural defect 4 – The Lack of Cohesiveness in relation to Farm Watch Schemes

The innovative Farm Watch schemes of yesteryear are now few and far between and lack an element of cohesiveness. At present there is no national database for the dissemination of intelligence and crime prevention information to farmers. All such activities are dealt with on an adhoc basis. It is the individual responsibility of each division and force. This is clearly ineffective and inefficient and the establishment of a multi agency national intelligence unit based within an organization such as the National Farmers Union would be a significant innovation. Farm Watch can be such an effective crime fighting tool.

UNDERSTANDING RURAL CRIME

It is now necessary to consider what constitutes rural crime and to consider the changing landscape of rural crime in relation to the case study. At present there is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes rural crime.

Understanding the disparate nature of rural crime

Indeed rural crime is not a homogenous entity. It can relate to crimes committed:-

- Against the Farming Community by marauding Urban Criminals;
- By elements of the Criminal Community who have taken up residence in the rural community (Hyder, 1999 - Greenbelt Bandits).

- By rogue elements within the farming community (Smith, 2004);
- In a village context - these crimes are of an urban nature but committed in villages.
- Wildlife crime is a separate specialism worthy of consideration.

The disparate nature of these crime types mitigate against any individual officer building up a specialism in relation to rural crime. We will now examine these crime types from a policing perspective. See table 1 – A Typology of Rural Crimes:-

Insert table 1 here.

In table 1 above we gain an understanding of the diversity of rural crime and how attempts to classify it can be frustrating. For example farm crime is often predatory in nature and conducted by urban or rural criminals preying on the farming community or on agri-businesses. From this perspective it is difficult to categorise commercial crime in a rural environment as rural crime. Much farm crime is either organised or semi organised and committed by outsiders. However farm crime can also be committed by farmers themselves which perhaps makes it necessary to have a different classification. Although vandalism and fire-raising are predatory they are often situation specific and context bound. As a consequence are difficult to detect because they are often motiveless. However, vandalism and fire-raising may be part of the modus operandi of a criminal gang. Wildlife crime is also predatory but can be carried out by organised gangs of urban criminals or by individuals who have no apparent connection to the underworld. Wildlife theft is such an example. The category referred to as illegal rural enterprise crime is the most pervasive and hidden and can be regarded as entrepreneurial criminality. It involves

complicity on the part of the rural farming community because it entails insider knowledge. The common denominator in such crimes is the generation of money / pluriactivity in relation to the alternative incomes. It is all about making alternative use of rural places and spaces to extract value from the environment (Anderson, 1995). Such activities often involve the symbiotic relationship between criminal and legal networks. From a policing perspective such activities are notoriously difficult to investigate. As a consequence they are often not investigated. Village policing is merely a scaled down version of urban policing but with nuanced differences which are not discussed herein.

The differential modus operandi of urban and rural criminals

This section continues the urban marauders versus indigenous rural rogues argument but places it in the context of rurality *per se*. We will discuss - Urban Marauder theory; Greenbelt Bandits; Settled Urban Criminals; The Rural Criminal Underclass; Travelling Criminals; and Illegal Rural Enterprise. The activities of many of these criminal types are discernable within the Pathead sub-division.

Urban Marauders:

A considerable level of urban crime is committed by organised urban criminal gangs who target rural farms to commit thefts of power tools or plant as well as to commit break-ins to rural houses and commercial break-ins to agri-businesses. Rural targets are often easy targets and thieves are able to operate without constant police surveillance. Urban criminal gangs also use the countryside as a place where they can stash stolen property or drugs in safe houses or in ‘hides’ dug into the ground. Obviously areas nearest to urban

conurbations are more likely to be a target for such criminal activity. Such criminals are vulnerable in that they have to travel to and from such crimes. These criminals may have an interest in poaching as a commercial activity or be active in relation to the racing of greyhounds or whippets. They may be into dog fighting and badger baiting and use the rural area as a playscape.

Greenbelt bandits:

The phenomenon of the Greenbelt bandit was posited by crime writer and journalist Ken Hyder (Hyder, 1999) to refer to the phenomenon of organized criminal gangs relocating to countryside where they operated with apparent impunity from police activity.

Settled Urban Criminals:

Up to ten formerly active urban criminals have relocated to the rural hinterland where they rented derelict or empty farm houses. Over time there is a danger that these individuals will cease to be visible on the urban crime scene and as such will not generate much intelligence activity. During this time they will cease to gather convictions and will eventually fall off the intelligence map. These individuals form part of a peri-urban criminal eco-system in that it is suspected that they operated as drug safe houses or as runners for the urban criminals. They operate for long periods of time before suspicion of drug activity fell upon them. The rural environment is an ideal one to conduct criminal conspiracies in. This is a process which Brock & Walker (2005) picked up on in their study. The cleverness of the criminal strategy is that the individuals were not major players and their reallocation did not raise any alarms. They may be rural sleepers

involved in the drug trade, or they may not be. Over time they will become legitimised by the lack of criminal convictions and the dearth of intelligence upon them.

Rural Criminal Underclass:

This category of criminal consists of rural thieves raised in the countryside who possess a different level of social and criminal capital to the urban thief. Such individuals will have networks embedded in rurality and generally target rural premises.

Travelling Criminals:

This is a pernicious and under researched criminal grouping consisting of the Travelling fraternity. As a result of human rights legislation and political correctness it has become easier to ignore this minority group a number of whom carry out organized theft. This seasonal type crime is prevalent across Scotland and manifests itself in thefts of diesel, fuel, caravans, trailers, plant and in other crimes such as distraction type thefts and the theft of metal for scrap. Such crimes cross force areas and are difficult to detect or gather intelligence upon. There is clearly a need for a serious study of this phenomenon.

Illegal Rural Enterprise Crime:

This is an activity engaged in by Rogue Farmers (Smith, 2004) who operate with apparent impunity because they are often not known to the police. They will be known to other agencies dealing with rural illegality. As can be seen from an examination of table 1

the activities which such rogues can be involved in is extremely diverse and potentially very lucrative. However they do not broadcast a criminal persona and are therefore not regarded as being a menace to society. Their entrepreneurial activities may not even be regarded by those who engage in them as being criminal. Rogue farmers will have links into the urban criminal fraternity and will be adept at exploiting these. See Smith (2004) (2008) and McElwee, Smith & Somerville (2008) for a fuller discussion of this emerging, criminal typology.

Whilst there is no specific direct correlation between the withdrawal of the police from the rural area and the movement of urban criminals into the rural community one cannot help but wonder that they may be connected. Obviously, each of these different types of criminal activity requires different policing strategies and at present they all capitalise upon the lack of a visible police presence and ultimately deterrence. However, it is necessary to reiterate that the issue of rural crime is not merely a policing issue but an inter-agency one. We now turn to consider opportunities for innovation and implications which can be drawn from the research.

OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPLICATIONS

This section considers opportunities for new policing innovations and implications which can be drawn from the study.

- A common definition of what constitutes rural crime must to be drafted.
- This would permit a National dissemination of measurable rural crime statistics which would allow analysts to plot emerging and local crime trends across counties. This role is pivotal because much of the Intelligence and Crime Reduction advice is generic across the counties. The dissemination of such information must come from a single point to avoid waste and duplication of efforts.
- The recruitment of a National Rural Crime Coordinator / Liaison Officer to cover the eight Scottish Police Forces would be a valuable first step in the professionalisation of rural policing in Scotland. This would provide a focal point for rural crime matters. This could be run in tandem with the Scottish Business Crime Centre. The national coordinator could establish links with the farming press and NFU.
- The next logical development would be to implement the recruitment of eight Local Rural Crime Coordinators to cover each force. These would act as a local link feeding into the National Coordinator. This could be linked into the Wildlife Crime Officers. The role would be to conduct proactive Intelligence gathering and to liaise between all the relevant agencies. These officers could liaise with farmers and attend the weekly Marts in their area to demonstrate a police presence in the farming community.
- A monthly meeting of these officers would go a long way to improving the flow of intelligence on rural crime and would lead to a reappraisal of the scale of rural

criminality and perhaps lead to a reprioritisation of resources under the National Intelligence Model.

- Monthly meetings between all agencies policing the rural area would add another dimension to the developing model. This is in keeping with the PRIME (Problem Resolution in Multi-agency Environments) methodology. This approach is effective in rural areas and brings together all the relevant agencies.
- There is a pressing need to commission the writing of a Rural Beat Officers Companion style book to gather the 'craft' details of rural policing and policing in a rural context. This requires chapters from other rural agencies engaged in law enforcement.
- There is a need to educate all police officers about the differential modus operandi and modus vivendi of rural and urban criminals.

Other innovations in rural policing include:-

- The opening of part time police offices.
- The use of mobile police offices.
- The use of Intelligence-led targeted patrols to concentrate upon local crime 'hot-spots'. This is a high visibility patrolling technique.
- The use of Rural Community Beat Officers.
- The use of dedicated Rural Special Constables.

What all these strategies have in common is that they seek to re-establish a lost policing presence. This paper is not a call for the reintroduction of police stations in every village

which would clearly not be feasible. Nevertheless, there are clear policy implications and conclusions which can be drawn from this study.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has discussed the demise and deskilling of the 'Country Bobby' and situated this occurrence within the changing geography of policing in a Scottish context. It has demonstrated how the geographic concepts of place and space have influenced rural criminality as the police force in question moved from being a County Constabulary to being a modern policing BCU. In considering changing policing structures and practices over time in juxtaposition to the changing nature of criminal typologies and practices this paper makes a valuable contribution. The changes in policing structures and practices have been incremental and perhaps inevitable because change, innovation and progress are central to policing in any context.

One of the major points to be drawn from the study is that rural crime is clearly not regarded as being serious crime because it is not measured and because of this it is an easy target for further cost cutting or rationalisation exercises. The strategic withdrawal from the rural area was brought about by the changing landscape of crime and the pressures of contemporary policing. In the same force innovations such as a Village Constable Scheme, the use of Mobile Police Offices, the introduction of new farm watches and the implementation of dedicated Wildlife Liaison Officers have taken place [4] in keeping with current policing philosophies. However, it is debatable as to whether they possess the presence of 'Country Bobbies' of old. Whilst we cannot turn the clock

back we can learn lessons from this case study and consider re-professionalising rural policing as a specialism to be taught in its own right.

FOOTNOTES

[1] It is a quasi-longitudinal study in that it is a case study based on empirically derived data or knowledge gained from the practical experience of being involved in rural policing over a twenty year period.

[2] In reality, the children did not tread the streets of the village in fear of the stereotypical PC99. In the early part of the twentieth century before the preponderance of cars it was a common sight to see the country Bobby cycling his beat and meeting up with his counterpart at their respective beat boundaries. They signed each others notebooks as proof of diligence and wiled away the hours speaking to farmers and farm workers alike.

[3] One such legend 'Big Bob' remains very much a part of village policing mythology despite having been long since retired. Such is the memory in rural locations.

[4] These are all considered best practices by the Home Office as advocated on their website http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/rural18.htm - which dispenses Crime Reduction advice.

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Table

TABLE 1 – A TYPOLOGY OF RURAL CRIMES			
Farm Crime (Predatory / Organised / Context bound)	**Wildlife Crime** (Predatory)	**Illegal Rural Enterprise** (Symbiotic / entrepreneurial)	**Village Crime** (Opportunistic / Context bound)
Theft – plant; trailers; caravans; metal gates; power tools; scrap metal; fuel; diesel; fertiliser. **Vandalism** – to plant and buildings. **Fire-raising** – to buildings and to straw bales in fields. **Cruelty offences and legislative infractions.** **Sheep worrying**	**Poaching –** Deer; salmon; Hare coursing. **Badger baiting and digging.** **Theft of eggs / wildlife**	**Theft of livestock /** sheep stealing and cattle rustling. **Illegal Smokies trade** **Illegal veterinary trade** **Illegal Dog fighting** **Illegal puppy farming** **Subsidy frauds** **Red diesel – tax avoidance** **Knowingly renting property to criminal gangs** **Drug cultivation / cannabis farming.** **Illegal brewing activity** **Traditional smuggling**	**Petty theft –** generally opportunistic. **Anti-Social Behaviour –** low level youth nuisance often alcohol or drug related. **Vandalism** – to public buildings and schools. **Drug Dealing –** less visible than in urban environments. **Boy Racers** - vehicle related antisocial behaviour.