

Keith Howe

## My Contribution to the *Wiś i Rolnictwo* Journal

### Mój udział w czasopiśmie *Wiś i Rolnictwo*

My acquaintance with *Village & Agriculture* (*Wiś i Rolnictwo*) began almost twenty-five years ago. The Polish Academy of Sciences and the British Academy jointly financed collaboration between the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development and the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth (UK) for a project titled “Sustainable Development of Rural Areas in Poland and Great Britain.” It proved to be the foundation for productive long-term professional and personal associations. But, for the British researchers, first, they needed a sound foundation of understanding about the characteristics of Poland’s rural sector, both historical and current. Nationally, an unprecedented era of change with uncertain outcomes was in train. Central planning was in retreat as the transition towards a market economy progressed, seldom smoothly. Moreover, Poland’s farm and wider rural sector was already known to have its own special, indeed unique, characteristics and problems. From whom, and where, to acquire the basis of essential knowledge about it? The answer was, and remains, the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences researchers and their publications, central to which is *Village & Agriculture* journal.

The scope and disciplinary breadth of *Village & Agriculture* is impressive. It encompasses economics, politics, demography, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, history and geography. The style is typically accessible, essential if it is to be read and its content absorbed by scholars and, above all, policymakers who need information and opinion based on impartial analysis from the application of conspicuous expertise. There is a place for demonstration of more advanced theory and quantitative analysis, notably in economics, but never for

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its own sake. Above all, the journal's focus is to address and illuminate real-world problems as a contribution to finding socially beneficial solutions.

The picture that emerges from reviewing the journal's contents over many years is one of progress, most notably over the past decade. The internet has transformed the world. Today, international English is the *lingua franca* for the global academic and wider scientific community. More than ever, the English language abstracts of *Village & Agriculture* local content, long included, are indispensable for readers without the advantage of Polish. Yet a commendable feature of *Village & Agriculture* is that full articles also have been published in their original language, the abstracts in Polish. This is conducive to widening international readership, fully merited for the journal and, by association, the global status of the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development. Problem-oriented analysis benefits from facilitating scientific collaboration and intellectual synergy both within and across borders. *Village & Agriculture* is the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development's flagship publication. Increasing its accessibility, both by "hard copy" publication and via the website, can further promote and enhance its contribution to such important roles.

Self-evidently, publication of *Village & Agriculture* is demanding of scarce resources, not least the time of its editors, reviewers, and administrators. Expected to remain primarily a Polish language publication, implicit above is also need for access to a sufficiently large coterie of technical translators for all the many articles, abstracts, book reviews, conference and annual reports. Then it should become possible to extend translation to the tributes published in celebration or commemoration of distinguished Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development professors. They, too, merit international as well as national recognition. On present evidence, their successors should feel confident that the global reach and reputation of *Village & Agriculture* can continue to grow. In celebrating publication of its 200<sup>th</sup> edition, my congratulations to the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences for its journal, and very best wishes for its continuing success long into the future.