

Origins of the British Crime Survey

In 1980, over a sandwich and a pint in a pub in Islington, JFH had a meeting with [Dr Ron Clarke](#) (then Director of the Home Office Research Unit, HORU) to discuss the possibility of a crime survey modelled on the USA [National Crime Victimization Survey](#). A further meeting was arranged at PNL attended by Dr Clarke, HORU researchers [Mike Hough](#) and [Patricia Mayhew](#), ?? (Director of the USA survey) Roger Jowell (SCPR) and Dr Mark Abrams

Dr Clarke then arranged a seminar for interested parties, at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge to which he also invited a number of HM Inspectors of Police. The latter were quite sceptical of the value of such a survey but were completely won over by Dr Abrams and agreed to proceed with the first wave of the [British Crime Survey](#).

SRU and SCPR submitted a joint bid to the Home Office
SCPR for Fieldwork
SRU for Data analysis

In the event a fieldwork contract was awarded to SCPR, but the data analysis was kept in-house. It later transpired that PNL was considered 'by those upstairs' to be too political. Later Mike Hough of HORU asked SRU to prepare the data for archiving together with a user manual. The data set was very complex and included hierarchical data at individual and household level, but SRU managed to produce an SPSS file. The manual was published with Home Office permission:

J F Hall and A M Walker,
User Manual for First British Crime Survey 1982,
PNL, 1985

<https://www.icpr.org.uk/people/professor-mike-hough>