

Profiting from Pauperism? The Business of the New Poor Law In England and Wales 1834-c1909

ESRC PhD CASE award, three years full fees

Supervisors

i. Academic

Dr David Green
Department of Geography
King's College London

ii. Partner Institution

Dr Paul Carter
The National Archives, Kew

Details

This ESRC collaborative award is for a three-year period to undertake full time doctoral research into the poor law in England and Wales. The partner institutions are King's College London and The National Archives. The studentship will be expected to commence on 1st October 2009.

Aims

The main aim of this research is to assess the economic significance of the new poor law in specific localities. This requires understanding the way in which the rates were raised, the precise items of relief expenditure that were provided and an awareness of the decision-making processes by which that expenditure was allocated. To achieve this, the research will address the following key questions:

1. How did the balance between expenditure and the rates vary between unions and over time?
2. What were the key items of expenditure within poor relief budgets and how did these vary between unions and over time?
3. What kinds of business practices and accounting practices emerged to supply the poor law?
4. How significant was poor law expenditure in relation to different types of local economies?

Sources and Approach

The research will use various sets of records generated by the Poor Law Commission, notably the MH12 series (Correspondence with Poor Law Unions and Other Local Authorities, 1833-1909, held at The National Archives, together with local board of guardians' records relating to the financial operation of the poor law.¹ TNA is currently digitising a selection of

¹ See

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/displaycataloguedetails.asp?CATID=9631&CATLN=3&accessmethod=5>

records relating to twenty poor law unions and it is likely that one or more of these will be used as case studies in the research.

Collaborative Arrangements

The student will be based in the Department of Geography, King's College London and will work with Dr David R Green as the primary academic supervisor. At The National Archives (TNA) the student will work with Dr Paul Carter. In their first year, the student will spend time working at TNA with Dr Carter to orientate themselves and learn about the Poor Law project. In the second and third years the student will support a small number of local history groups currently working on digitisation of the MH12 series.

Requirements

The successful applicant must have a masters degree approved by the ESRC or must be able to demonstrate the equivalent level of expertise appropriate to undertake the research. An interest in the poor law and nineteenth-century economic and social history is desirable. Applicants should be able to demonstrate some familiarity with using primary archival evidence.

Eligibility

Details of eligibility for ESRC doctoral awards are available from the following website:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/GUIDANCE%20MARK%20tcm6-7186.pdf>

Section 2 of the ESRC Guidance for Students available from the website contains full details of academic and residency requirements for eligibility.

How to apply

Students interested in applying for this project must complete an application form which is available on the following website:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/graduate/apply>

Applicants should mark clearly that they wish to be considered for the ESRC CASE award and should cite the title of the project in their application.

Applicants should apply no later than 15th May.
Interviews will take place in the first week of June.

Contact

For further information on the project please contact Dr David R Green by email on david.r.green@kcl.ac.uk or by phone on 020 8858 2522.