

CORRESPONDENCE

The Tyne and Wear Archive Users' Consultative Council

Dear Sir,

Following the publication of 'Modern Public Records' which revealed that valuable public records are being destroyed by Government Departments indiscriminately and despite the worries and complaints about financial cuts affecting local archives, it is pleasing to report that in the County of Tyne & Wear the Archive Users' Consultative Council, which was set up in 1975, has worked very successfully to date.

Some readers may recall that Terence Gwynne wrote to the Editor in 1976 explaining the composition of the Council and its purpose.

AUCC has met regularly ever since and its discussions have been wide ranging. Regular reports from the education officer have been received and it is quite clear that the role of the archive service in education, is now firmly established. Moreover, bulletins are now being published and explanatory leaflets regarding the resources of the archive and the list of new acquisitions in recent years is both long and impressive. A considerable rescue operation has been carried out, saving many records that would otherwise have been destroyed and in addition, despite very limited resources, a skilled and valuable document repair service has been created.

All of those practical details which concern researchers, both professional and lay alike, have been ventilated in discussion in the Archive Users' Consultative Council. Dr. W. A. L. Seaman and his supporting staff deserve much credit for the service now offered. Let us not forget however, that the organisation was given the blessing of the county council from the outset and a number of councillors have given dedicated service.

Since good news is not always easy to come by I hope that this success story may be the means of encouraging other local authorities to establish archive users' consultative councils along similar lines, as a first step to improving their service to the community and without incurring any, or any substantial, additional expense.

Yours faithfully,
Ronald I. Duncan.

22 Douglas Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4XD.

The aged worker in the recent past

Dear Sir,

As a research student at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure I am presently engaged in analysing the effects of technical change on the ageing worker in Britain, and also the relation of the aged worker to industrial life in general — over the approximate period 1890-1940. I hope to work extensively from data which is tradition-

ally difficult to track down; detailed business or personnel records that might enable me to establish such factors as length of employment, age at retirement, wage levels, job description and details of promotions, pension subscriptions etc. I wonder if readers of **LPS** might have knowledge of local archives which may contain records of this type, primarily for such staple British industries as mining, textiles, engineering and steel production, as I would be most grateful to have details of their whereabouts.

My colleague Simon Szreter is also interested in discovering data for a slightly earlier period viz 1870-1914. He would be especially interested in records which might indicate family size (or family commitments) of company employees or union members; furthermore, any evidence of the linkage of family ties between established workers and new employees, such as records and references for apprentices, would be exceedingly useful to him.

We would both be extremely grateful for any information your readers might be able to offer as to the whereabouts of records of these types, as very often such records are 'hidden' with other documents or remain lost in the recesses of modern companies.

Yours sincerely,
Stuart Riddle.

Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure,
27, Trumpington Street, Cambridge.

The Liverpool Record Office; a testimonial from a satisfied customer

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the latest Editorial regarding record offices, but think that Liverpool Record Office merited special mention, as an example of the type of service that a record office should provide to all researchers. Although it is a city record office its collection of archive material rivals many of the county record offices. It is open twelve hours a day Monday to Friday and nine hours on Saturday, and sixty-nine hours of free access with ample seating and no booking is praiseworthy indeed when we see the difficulties faced in some areas.

Sincerely,
H. Culling.

Liverpool Family History Society, 11 Lisburn Lane, Liverpool L13 9AE.

Good news from the Cumbria Record Offices

Dear Sir,

I noted with interest that on Page six of **Local Population Studies** there is a table which sets out record office opening hours in January 1981. I have noted source of your information but it is, nevertheless, inaccurate.

Both our main record offices in **Cumbria** at Carlisle and Kendal are open for forty hours each week, i.e. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. with the exception of public holidays. Our small branch office at Barrow, which is a new development since Cumbria was established is open regularly Monday-Friday, 2 p.m.-5 p.m.

The hours of opening of our Kendal and Carlisle offices have not changed over a period of nineteen years. At Carlisle for a short while before Cumbria was created in 1974 we ran an experiment of late night opening for teachers. This experiment ran for about two years but was not continued as at that time support from teachers did not warrant it.

Yours sincerely,
B. C. Jones,
County Archivist,

Cumbria County Council, Archives Department, The Record Office, The Castle, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8UR.

Editor's note. We are delighted to learn that provision in Cumbria is so much better than we had been lead to believe.

Did the Commonwealth Act of 1653 lapse in 1657?

Dear Sir,

The Act of 24 August 1653 'touching marriages and the registering thereof, and also touching births and burials' was confirmed by an Act of 26 June 1657 'touching several acts and ordinances' (**Acts and ordinances of the Interregnum**, volume 2, pages 1131-42). This confirmation excepted the clause in the Act of 1653 declaring invalid forms of marriage other than that laid down by the Act, and was to continue 'for six months, from and after the end of the first session of this present Parliament'. As the session ended on 26 June 1657 and as there appears to have been no later continuation act, it is to be presumed that the Act of 1653 ceased to have effect in January 1657/8.

This is confirmed by a note found by chance in a printed copy of the register of Cowfield, Sussex (Sussex Record Society, volume 22, page 115), '30 March 1658. This register having been delivered by me (in obedience to the then power comanding of it) unto John Ford upon the 13 of Dec. 1653 whoe was chosen Register of ye Parish, & after his death being delivered to Mr. Tho ffreemen ye next chosen Register. The late Parliament having by theyr Act annulled the pretended Act for such Marriages & Registrings. The sayed Tho Freeman did upon the 30 March 1658 bring the Register back to me to remain in my custody as fformerly. George Vinter, Rtor of Cowfold.'

A glance at a selection of registers of City of London parishes published by the Harleian Society shewed that in many cases marriages before justices ceased and marriages by ministers resumed in 1657 or early 1658, as noted in Devonshire parishes by your previous correspondent, R. R. Sellman, in **LPS** 25, page 60. However, later instances of marriages before justices can be found, for example, those of Michael Fowler and Ellin Carr of St. Lawrence Jewry on 24 April 1658 (Harleian Society Register Section, volume 73, page 71, Guildhall Library MS 6986 folio

120v). The former couple were also married by a minister on the same day as their marriage before a justice.

Yours sincerely,
Richard Harvey,

148 Woodland Drive, Watford WD1 3DB.

Enumeration practice in 1871

Dear Sir,

Recently I noticed that at the bottom of page iv in the 1871 enumerators books there is a line which states, 'Of the above schedules the number filled up by the Enumerator himself was ...' Being interested in anything which could be relevant to the level of accuracy of the census I noted the details for the four enumerator districts which make up my study area in the county of Somerset.

Table 1. Number and proportion of householders' schedules completed by the enumerator.

	No. of schedules	No. filled in by enumerator	percentage filled in by enumerator
Pitcombe	93	26	28
Bruton East	171	30	18
Bruton West	223	123	55
Bruton Hamlets	44	8	18

Being surprised that the percentage filled in by the enumerators should be so variable, I made an analysis of each district according to the occupation of the first person listed on the schedules (i.e., the household head).

Table 2. Household heads by occupational group and parish of register.

Occupational group	Pitcombe %	Bruton East %	Bruton West %	Bruton Hamlets %
Annuitants	4	6	5	2
Professional	3	13	2	2
Farmers	12	6	3	25
Retail	2	21	11	5
Craftsmen	9	22	21	9
Agricultural workers	56	15	29	39
Labourers & servants	10	15	20	16
Paupers	4	2	9	2
Numbers	93	171	223	44

While it is clear that Bruton West tended to be of a lower social class than Bruton East, that alone cannot account for the high percentage of schedules completed by that enumerator. The enumerator for Bruton West was the managing clerk to a solicitor and was therefore quite competent to ensure that the census was completed in accordance with the instructions. Therefore I would suggest that where a high percentage of schedules have been completed by the enumerator, that might well indicate a high standard of accuracy rather than the reverse.

I would be interested to learn the views of other people on this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Donald M. McCallum,

School of Humanities, Leicester Polytechnic, Scraftoft Campus, Scraftoft, Leicester LE7 9SU.