

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters intended for publication in LPS should be sent to Kevin Schurer, 27 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QA

Editors' note

LPS readers are reminded that the editorial board is always prepared to offer advice on subjects within the scope of LPS. Sometimes queries which have been raised are discussed in print in this section of the journal but there are many others which are not published, so if you think we can help do not hesitate to contact us.

Extramural Research Groups and Group Projects

Dear Sir

The division of Continuing Education at University of Sheffield has been awarded a grant by the Universities Funding Council to conduct research into the various group projects that are a characteristic feature of the programmes of university extramural departments. It is the aim of our research to consider the practicalities and effectiveness of such classes and we believe that our conclusions will be of help to all extramural departments. There is great potential for academic research in such groups and the students prove themselves to be highly committed and motivated. Such students are prepared to devote long hours, sometimes for years, to bring their work to fruition, often as a very commendable publication.

These groups, however, demand much of the tutor and students and our research aims to discover the opinions of such people about their classes. We are interested, therefore, in hearing from lecturers who have run, or are running such classes. We would also like to hear from lecturers who have not run such courses – whether they considered the possibility, but were unable to begin a group for whatever reason. We would like to hear from anyone whose class failed to complete its task, again, for whatever reason. We would like to hear from students of such classes – about their work, their research contribution to the group and any problems they encountered.

The majority of projects undertaken by such research groups has been largely historical. We are interested to know how the research was organised within the group; what problems occurred; if the publication was achieved and whether it was worth all the effort.

By getting the views of as many people as possible, we hope to be able to offer suggestions about research topics which have proved to be successful, and to

try and suggest solutions to many of the organisational and administrative problems which are unique to this type of extramural class.

If you feel you could help, or would like further information, please contact me at the address below.

Yours faithfully
J. Unwin

Mrs Joan Unwin, Research Associate, University of Sheffield, Division of Continuing Education, 85, Wilkinson Street, Sheffield S10 2GJ.

Family breakdown

Dear Sir

May I make two observations on David Kent's excellent article on Family breakdown in the parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields (LPS, 45).

First: the author was surprised at the high number of deserted wives who were childless (43.43 per cent), given that nearly 80 per cent of them were married before they were 30. But the crucial statistic is surely that 32.46 per cent of them had only been married for 0-4 years. It seems probable that a proportion of the young women who claimed that their husbands had deserted them, had themselves run away from their husbands. They would not, of course, have put it this way to the parish officers who were deciding their fitness for parish relief. But they were more likely to have run away if they were childless.

Second: the low incidence of husbands claiming settlement on grounds of themselves or their fathers being born in the parish (less than 10 per cent) is not evidence for an absence of 'local restraints'. Settlement rarely depended on place of birth, but on the most recent of the many grounds on which it could be claimed. Any of the grounds cited in the article (apprenticeship, yearly hired service, or payment of rent) would thus take precedence over place of birth as the determinant of place of settlement. Place of birth would in most cases be irrelevant, and not recorded. Moreover, place of birth only bestowed settlement rights in the case of bastards. A legitimate child took the place of settlement of his father - until he won his own settlement by apprenticeship, etc.

I'm sure David Kent is correct in assuming that many of the deserting husbands were not 'local', and that this distinguishes them from rural deserters. He just can't use that particular piece of evidence to support his conclusion.

Yours faithfully
Patricia Kelvin

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