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Maura Banim, Youth and Policy  
PO Box 10, Blydon,  
Tyne & Wear NE21 5LY

Editorial Group:  
Isabel Atkinson  
Maura Banim  
Judith Cocker  
Ross Cowan  
Malcolm Jackson  
Chris Parkin  
Moyra Riseborough

Sarah Banks  
Angela Fenwick  
Sue Miles  
John Carr  
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# **W**orking with young people in rural areas

**RAY FABES  
and  
SARAH BANKS**

Since the formation of *Youth and Policy* in 1982 there has been only one article published in this

journal which specifically discussed rural youth work (Johnson, 1986). In this article Ian Johnson called for:

*a recognition that rural youth work is not simply urban work diluted but requires skills and has special priorities* (p.9).

He argued that effective youth work in rural areas needed highly mobile non-centre based workers with an understanding of rural life and a total commitment to all young people in an area, developing distinctive modes of operation. Johnson also made a plea for specialist training for rural youth workers.

In this the second *Youth and Policy* article on working with young people in rural areas, we suggest that five years later, in 1991, there is a growing recognition of the distinctive philosophy and skills of rural youth work (see, for example, National Advisory Council for the Youth Service (NACYS), 1988; National Rural Youth Work Network (NRYWN), 1990). There are many more peripatetic youth workers and mobile projects in rural areas (see NACYS, 1988: 21-24, Fabes and Gooding, 1990); and there is now a specialist rural option in at least one of the youth and community work initial training courses (at Leicester Polytechnic).

We have deliberately called this article 'working with young people in rural areas' because we believe this is a more useful and accurate description than 'rural youth work'. The term 'working with young people in rural areas' reflects the recognition that the work happening in rural areas is not just 'youth work', in a different setting, but involves distinctive approaches, including a commitment to work with all the young people living in a locality. In this article we will trace the growth of interest in working with young people in rural areas, articulate the position we think has currently been reached and suggest future developments.

## **Youth work is urban-focused**

Youth work in rural areas has only begun to emerge as a distinct area of practice, with a specialist body of knowledge and skills in the last 10 years. As Akehurst (1983) points out, youth work has its origins in the nineteenth-century concern over the problems associated with growing up in urban slums. The Scouts were established out of concern for urban men and boys. Similarly, the Girls' Club movement arose from work

in cities and towns. However, it is misleading to suggest that the issues facing

young people in rural areas were totally ignored. The Girls' Friendly Society, for example, set up Village Girls' Clubs in 1875 (Percival, 1951: 81-91). In 10 years these had spread all over England and Wales. The Girls' Friendly Society, based on the philosophy of 'rescue', was concerned about the conditions of work, hours, health and hygiene of the girls going into service, as well as those going from the countryside to the large industrial centres of employment. This echoes some of the current concerns about the employment prospects of young women in rural areas. There were obviously rural dimensions to the growth of the uniformed organisations. One or two references are made by Springhall about the initial spread of the Boys' Brigade through rural Scotland at the turn of the century (Springhall 1983: 94-118). Similar references can be found in some of the descriptive histories of the development of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides (e.g. Nagy, 1985; Thompson, 1990), although the more critical *The Character Factory* (Rosenthal 1986) makes no specific mention of rural issues. More recently, however, the Scout movement has developed a conscious programme of 'Scoutreach' into the rural areas of the U.K. (see Scout Association, 1986; 1989). Unfortunately there is little literature critically charting the growth and development of the Young Farmers' Club movement which began in 1925, and formed a National Federation in 1932 (for a history see Shields, 1982). Although there are critics of the social activity side of the movement, there is no doubt that in many rural areas it has enabled numerous young people to understand more about their rural heritage and the current issues in agriculture as well as developing the confidence of many young people through senior member participation in decision-making.

The earliest text that we have found which focuses specifically on working with young people in rural areas is *A Rural Youth Service — Suggestions for Youth Work in the Countryside* (Edwards-Rees, 1944). This remarkable text of 112 closely printed pages was written in preparation for the re-establishment of the Youth Service after the war. Although the terminology is rather precious, some of the ideas behind, for example, the chapter entitled 'Country Mouse Apes Town Mouse' could be used today in arguing for more

exchange visits. However, these insights do not seem to have been reflected in the thinking that was being assembled during the early 1940s. In *The Youth Service After the War* (Youth Advisory Council, 1943), the only reference to anything remotely rural is a reference to young people working in agriculture having less time for leisure. In *The Purpose and Content of the Youth Service* (Youth Advisory Council, 1945) there is only a one-way recommendation that 'It is important that the town dweller should have opportunities for getting to know the countryside' (Section 22, p.12). There is not one reference or suggestion that young people live there as well! Similarly the Board of Education Circular 1486 *The Service of Youth* (1939) simply states that 'Young Farmers Clubs should be included in the membership of local Youth Committees'.

Despite the fact that Edward-Rees apparently became an influential Inspector (HMI) with the Youth Service, there seems to be no reference to working with young people in rural areas in the years up to the publication of the Albemarle Report (1960). There is no reference at all to 'rural' either in the Albemarle Report itself (1960) or in the Fairbairn-Milson Report (1969). The latter is surprising. Since the 1969 report, *Youth and Community Work in the 70s*, was produced by the Youth Service Development Council, and in 1963 a sub-committee of this council was established, chaired by R.D. Salter-Davies, H.M.I., with the brief to consider: *whether, in the view of the members of the group, and from their own experience, there are special problems — identifiable on a national scale — in youth work in rural areas and, if so, whether the existing methods of dealing with these problems are adequate and to what extent new methods need to be evolved* (Youth Service Development Council, 1964).

We can find no direct evidence of any pressure being brought to bear on the Development Council to consider the issues affecting young people in rural areas and can only surmise that the impetus for this report came from the fact that several Shire counties were establishing Youth Services at this time and that their officers and members were feeling that little emphasis was being made of their work.

The Salter-Davies Report, published in 1964, identified a range of innovative and imaginative approaches to practice, including the conversion of lofts, barns and oasthouses; motor-cycle training groups; hop-on and mobile coffee bar vehicles; and expeditions to, and exchanges with, other towns. However, the report *The Problems of Youth Work in Rural Areas*, concluded:

*we recognise the limitations of our study of the special problems of rural youth work but we are, nevertheless, of the opinion that, at this stage, there is no need for a more detailed, systematic enquiry.*

*A study in depth would doubtless emphasise those problems of which we are aware, spotlight*

*others and result in more extensive recommendations; but it would take time, whereas the limited proposals which we have made could be put into effect now with benefit to the service in rural areas. Yet there is clearly a continuing need to assemble information about the methods used in rural youth work, and to evaluate their success. We suggest that this should be undertaken instead of a more formal enquiry, perhaps through the youth service information centre at Leicester, preferably in conjunction with representative bodies interested in the welfare of rural communities* (Youth Service Development Council, 1964: sections 54,55).

We can find no evidence that even this limited recommendation of assembling information was systematically undertaken in any part of the country.

The next significant reference that charts the development is the Special Issue of *Youth Service* (Winter 1975) on Rural Youth Work which notes that the Salter Davies Report received no marks for 'rousing enthusiasm or creating any sense of urgency' (p.4). This slim publication itself did not seem to do much except enable some Shire counties to write short extracts on their practice.

In complete contrast, the Thompson report, published nearly 20 years later in 1982 included a major section on young people in rural areas. A lobby was coordinated by the Campaign for Rural Youth within the National Association of Youth Clubs urging people to write to the committee and invite members to visit rural areas during their enquiry. This resulted in many people being jolted by the force of their reaction. Several sections of the report appear time and again in policy recommendations arising from Reviews within both Local Authority Youth Services and the Voluntary Sector since 1982. Indeed Douglas Smith's analysis of the Review of the Local Authority Youth Services undertaken after the Thompson report identifies 'rural' as an important, much maligned and ignored area of practice (Smith, 1987). In *Research Priorities in Youth Work* (Smith, 1985) recommendations are made for a rural dimension to be attached to almost every areas of proposed study. So, by the mid-1980s the idea of working with young people in rural areas was being articulated more clearly, argued for more purposefully and was developing its own motive force. How and why did this happen?

### **Rural deprivation as an issue**

Before we examine the growing concern with young people in rural areas and the response of youth work, it is important to set this in the context of a growing preoccupation with rural areas generally. For it is not just in the field of youth work that the term 'rural' is appearing in the titles of reports, conferences, research projects and policy documents. It is happening in community development (for example, Banks, 1988; Buller and Wright, 1990) and adult education (NIACE,

1989; Scott, 1989) as well as in social policy, sociology and planning. In all these fields, there has been a concerted effort to dispel the myth of the harmonious, prosperous village community which is usually associated with the term 'rural' and to show that genuine hardship and poverty exist in rural as well as urban areas. The debate has been confused by the variety of definitions of 'rural' used — ranging from the sociological/cultural (caring, close-knit community), to occupational/economic definitions (e.g. proportion of population employed in agriculture), to definitions in terms of accessibility (e.g. distance from nearest urban settlements), population size or density, or a combination of these and other variables. For the purpose of this article, a rural settlement will simply be regarded as one with a population of 10,000 or less (the criteria adopted by the Rural Development Commission).

The concept of 'rural deprivation' began to take shape in the late 1970s as a counter-balance to the earlier research on urban deprivation and an increasing central governmental focus on urban and inner city problems (for example, Jones (ed), 1979; Lawless, 1979). McLaughlin argues that the promotion of the concept of rural deprivation was 'orchestrated mainly by local authorities in rural areas, their associations and related interest groups' (McLaughlin, 1986: 45). In 1978 and 1979 reports were published by the Association of District Councils (1978), the Standing Conference of Rural Community Councils (1978), and the Association of County Councils (1979) on the declining rural services and economy and rural deprivation. There are a number of reasons for the concern with rural deprivation at this time and its continuation throughout the 1980s:

1. **Local government changes:** with the boundary changes of 1974 many Rural District Councils were subsumed within large District Councils which included urban areas. This resulted in a loss of identity and of power to rural areas. In County Durham, for example, Weardale (a relatively sparsely populated agricultural and mineral working dale in the North Pennines) became part of a much larger Wear Valley District Council which included towns such as Bishop Auckland and Crook. Councillors from the Dale, who might be Independent or Tory, were in a relatively powerless minority in the Labour-controlled council. Rates increased in the rural areas; rural dwellers saw themselves paying more than previously, yet having fewer services than the urban areas. The introduction of the poll tax in 1990 seems to have further intensified these feelings in some previously low rated rural areas (Fennell, 1990).
2. **Increasing central government control:** central government has gradually been increasing its control over local authority spending. Special monies have been targeted at areas of perceived need or deprivation (through the

Urban Programme and Inner Areas Programme, for example). Rural local authorities felt that urban areas had relatively higher central government funding and began to make out a case for extra money.

3. **Declining services:** the last fifteen years has seen a continuing decline in services in many rural areas — particularly closures of shops, post offices, banks, schools and bus routes.
4. **Changes in the agricultural economy:** There has been a continual loss of jobs in farming, as mechanisation has increased and agricultural profitability has declined.
5. **Patterns of migration:** in many rural areas, while young people have been forced to leave for employment, there has been an influx of 'incomers'. These people are vocal, used to urban levels of services and often come with expectations of the rural idyll. They may campaign on certain issues (for example schools, conservation and the environment) and hence raise the profile of rural problems.

These factors have all contributed towards the production of what McLaughlin terms 'list of woes', that is, catalogues of deprivations experienced in rural areas. Such lists might include the following:-

- Only 5% of Local Authorities day nurseries are in rural areas.
- Over 25 miles to the nearest hospital is the norm for rural Shropshire.
- In 1989, 7% of under 25s were unemployed in England, 10% in the Rural Development Areas of County Durham (*Rural Viewpoint*, 36, 1990: 14).
- Unemployment on the North Norfolk coast is 25% in summer, 30% in winter.
- 30%-50% of villages (depending on the definition) have no shop (Moseley, 1990).
- While only 22% of rural households are without a car (compared with 40% of urban households), 62% of rural bus services are one a day or less (compared with 6% of urban services) (Banister, 1990).
- 60% of rural women do not hold a driving licence.
- 72% of elderly women have no car.
- In 1985, 20% of people living in rural areas were defined as on the margins of poverty (McLaughlin, 1985).

(Source: NCVO, 1988 unless stated otherwise)

### **The emergence of rural work**

As concern grew about problems and issues in rural areas generally in the late 1970s, so did the particular 'deprivations' faced by rural youth begin to be investigated and publicised. Within the National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC) the Campaign for Rural Youth (CRY) was formed, publishing *Missed the Bus* in 1979 — a discussion paper on the way rural life affects

young people. Shortly afterwards the Rural Youth Work Education Project was established in NAYC. At that time (1981), rural youth work was said to be:

- of low status
- lacking an established body of knowledge
- under researched
- under resourced
- having developed little in the way of support
- having no distinct rationale or methods of work. (Akehurst, 1983: 29).

The Rural Youth Work Education Project, under the direction of Michael Akehurst, aimed to begin to change this situation. Through producing literature and encouraging the sharing and discussion of practice, it made a significant contribution towards developing a body of knowledge and describing and analysing the philosophy and methods of rural youth work. 1983/4 saw the publication of: *Groundwork* (1983), which attempted to place rural youth work in the context of broader sociological and geographical theory and research relating to rural areas and rural communities; *Fieldwork* (1983), which examined the support needs of rural workers; and *Delivering Rural Youth Work* (1984) — a compilation of descriptions of methods and practice. At the same time, Allen Kennedy was undertaking research on rural youth and youth work in West Dorset, the results of which were published in 1984 — *Shadows of Adolescence — Images from West Dorset*.

With the ending of the N.A.Y.C's Rural Youth Work Education Project, Leicester Polytechnic became the focus of a growing number of enquiries for information on practice in rural areas. Since 1980 Leicester Polytechnic had offered a Rural Option route through their two year full-time course of professional training in Youth and Community Work. This was in direct response to criticism from employing authorities that workers being recruited to posts including rural responsibilities had no appreciation of the particular demands that work in these areas presented. Ray Fabes, who had assumed responsibilities for this option at Leicester, decided to invite those whom he saw as prime movers in rural practice, to a Symposium on Rural Youth Work. This initiative, supported by H.M.I. and serviced by the National Youth Bureau, took place in Autumn on 1985 and was over-subscribed (Corben, 1986). The majority of those who had been unable to attend this first symposium, plus others, participated in a second symposium the following year (NYB, 1986).

At the conclusion of the first symposium, members of the planning group were charged with establishing rural youth work as a major national agenda item. In January 1986 they decided to form 'Rural Impetus', the main aim of which was stated as 'to raise and maintain the awareness and issues affecting young people, and those who engage with them, in rural areas of Britain'. Further symposia and conferences were held both nationally and regionally over the next five years (see

Table 1 below) and from these a network of workers, officers and individuals both within the statutory and voluntary sectors, has grown and expanded, so that today it is possible to find a growing number of interested parties developing a range of initiatives for working with young people in rural areas. Members of Rural Impetus were instrumental in forming the National Rural Youth Work Network after the national conference in 1987. This network encouraged a significant input into the NACYS sub-committee report which was published in 1988. This report firmly stated the importance of working with young people in rural areas, the need for resources and support structures for often isolated workers and gave examples of approaches and styles of delivery.

**TABLE 1**

**Some key events in the development of rural youth work**

1978	Campaign for Rural Youth (CRY) formed within the National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC).
1980	Rural Youth Work Education Project (RYE), established at NAYC.
1982	Report of the Review Group on the Youth Service — <i>Experience and Participation</i> — published (sections 6.30-6.34 specifically noted the challenges of working in rural areas).
1983/4	Publication of booklets from RYE project.
1985	1st Symposium on Rural Youth Work (Buckinghamshire).
1986	Rural Impetus formed. 2nd Symposium on Rural Youth Work (Lancashire).
1987	National Rural Youth Work Conference (Somerset).
1988	(March) Publication of <i>Youth Work in Rural Areas</i> the report of the sub-committee of the National Advisory Council on the Youth Service (NACYS). (May) Formation of National Rural Youth Work Network (NRYWN).
1989	Regional conferences on rural youth work held in East Anglia, the Midlands, North West, South West and Northern Home Counties.
1990	Further conferences in Lincolnshire, Humberside, Nottinghamshire the North East, and Wales. National Youth Bureau training event: 'Innovations in Rural Practice'.
1991	Further conferences in Hertfordshire and Staffordshire. Rural Development Commission funding for a research project to be based within the National Youth Agency (formerly NYB). National Conference on 'New Partnerships in Working with Young People in Rural Areas' to be held in Norwich in October.

**Is youth work in rural areas different?**

In attempting to convince policy makers, funders and managers that rural youth work is important, there has been a tendency to overstate the claim that it is different. Akehurst, for example, in 1983 seemed on one occasion to be implying that young people in rural areas had 'distinctive needs' created by the environment in which they lived (Akehurst, 1983: 37). These needs might be for better public transport or more local services, for example. More recently, however, it has been recognised that the needs of young people living in rural areas are no different than those of young

people in urban areas. But the ways in which the needs of rural youngsters are or are not met are different. The report, *Youth Work in Rural Areas*, published by NACYS in 1988 stated this position quite clearly:-

*We see the basic development needs of young people as fundamentally the same whether they live in rural or urban areas. The gradual growth of self-confidence, or natural curiosity and the widening of interests, and the search for enjoyment in the company of others are common features too. What is different is the immediate environmental context, and the impact that the environment has on the way that young people can help themselves, can be stimulated, can be supported, and can benefit from social education in the broadest sense. The environment thus requires young people in many ways to be more self-reliant (NACYS, 1988: 1).*

There has also been a tendency to emphasise the negative aspects of life in rural areas. This has been necessary to counter-balance the prevailing myth of the rural idyll — the popular image of the harmonious and relatively prosperous village community — and to demonstrate that young people in rural areas do suffer deprivations as much as urban youngsters. Some of the deprivations are the same; some are different. They include: isolation, powerlessness, low self-esteem and lack of access to resources and services. Table 2 is a list of 'deprivation indicators' derived from the views of young people in early 1990.

**TABLE 2**

**Deprivation in rural areas: young people's perspectives**

<b>Isolation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— peer group relationships are limited (because there are few people of the same age).</li> <li>— lack of mobility (because of poor public transport, high costs, time taken to travel).</li> <li>— loneliness (partly because of lack of peer support, services, etc).</li> </ul>
<b>Visibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— always visible to community at large.</li> <li>— feeling of claustrophobia.</li> <li>— lack of privacy.</li> <li>— less opportunity to experiment.</li> <li>— parental involvement in everything (especially reliance on parents for transport).</li> </ul>
<b>Equal Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— feudal attitudes in rural areas (i.e. strong hierarchical and class divisions; conservative and traditional attitudes).</li> <li>— stereotypical expectations; discrimination and prejudice (especially towards girls and young women; black people; travellers).</li> <li>— young people are not achieving their potential (because expectations are lower; access to education, etc. is limited).</li> <li>— lack of understanding about educational opportunities and low aspirations both by parents and young people.</li> <li>— opportunities and choices are limited generally.</li> </ul>
<b>Leaving Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— impossibility of access to low cost housing.</li> <li>— influx of wealthy and privileged.</li> <li>— benefit cuts for young people are creating dependence on parents.</li> </ul>

- lack of choice of partners and to establish independent living.
- employment prospects poor (none/part-time/seasonal/low pay).

**Access**

- poor access to: health care, education, training, careers and benefit advice, leisure and entertainment (because low population means resources concentrated elsewhere).
- limited opportunities to meet and mix with the opposite and same sex.

**Personal**

**Experience**

- pressure to conform to norms..
- bullying and abuse.
- incest (high reported incidence).
- less tolerance of lesbian/gay lifestyles; limited opportunities to 'come out'.
- feeling of marginalisation; low self-esteem, low expectations.
- no political clout; lack of participation in community affairs.
- limited breadth of experience; lack of exchange with urban experience.
- 'The world' is governed by urban experience.

This list was compiled from research undertaken by the National Youth Bureau in preparing a research submission to the Rural Development Commission (RDC). The NYB asked all members of the National Rural Youth Work Network to 'check out' with as many young people as possible their perspectives on the deprivations they experienced from living in a rural area. The framework used was compiled by Sue Bloxham and Ray Fabes in 1981 at the 'Young People and Powerlessness' Conference referred to in Leigh and Smart (1985). Although the responses were not drawn up as a structured or representative sample, they were culled from a number of corners in Britain, and through conversations and discussion groups, a very similar pattern emerges from all the respondents. However, many of the workers offering the evidence of their 'checking out' were very reluctant to see this compilation in terms of 'deprivation', while acknowledging that it was required in this form to match the funding criteria of the RDC.

While it is obviously important to raise awareness of the deprivations that can be experienced by young people living in rural areas, the production of lists like Table 2 does encourage both a negative view of rural life and yet another stereotype (albeit the opposite of the rural idyll). The NACYS report also mentions the advantage that may be enjoyed by young people living in rural areas:-

*the richness of the countryside, variety in the landscape and space as well as opportunities to benefit from having a recognisable place in small and close linked communities and the strength which often comes from long family association with a village or market town. (NACYS, 1988: 1).*

Yet both these lists of negatives and positives are based on gross generalisations about rural areas, which may, in fact, be very different from each other. A large industrial village of 2,000 inhabitants, with six working

men's clubs, a community centre, four grocery shops, three buses an hour to the town six miles away will offer very different opportunities to a small agricultural hamlet with no facilities other than a pub and with the nearest bus stop two miles away for a twice weekly service to town. And what of the differences within villages themselves? Social class, economic status, the relative wealth or poverty of parents, and whether they own a car will have a profound effect on a young person's life experience. This is not to say that generalisations about rural areas are not useful, but we must recognise that they have been made for a purpose, that is, to demonstrate that rural life has distinctive features which require special responses in Youth Service terms. Increasingly, workers, agencies and policy makers are having to be far clearer in their definitions of what is rural. This is a contentious issue, which could be debated at length. Often an amalgam of evidence from planners, young people and census statistics can produce some very telling arguments, even if the case for a programme of effective work with young people in a rural area has to be based on 'deprivation indicators' (See Fabes and Knowles, 1991 forthcoming for a more detailed discussion of definitions of rurality).

### Approaches to rural youth work

Since there tends to be fewer young people in small towns and villages, there are fewer (if any) purpose built youth centres, fewer youth workers and less resources and money. More work with young people is undertaken with small groups and with mixed age groups: volunteers are used more heavily; workers and volunteers have to travel further and will be relatively isolated from each other. To meet these needs and constraints, different styles of delivery are required, which in turn require different knowledge and skills to urban-based work.

Ray Fabes produced an analysis of the variety of settings and style of the delivery of rural youth work which was reproduced in the NACYS report. These included:

- 1 **Local activities in peer groups and with adults** e.g. young people join sports clubs based in local community.
- 2 **Area activities in peer groups and with adults** e.g. theatre performances, Young Farmers' Clubs to which young people travel.
- 3 **One night a week youth clubs run by adults/former members** e.g. a club run by local volunteers in a village hall.
- 4 **Grouping of Youth Clubs** — e.g. an Area Youth Officer plus full and part-time workers may engage with a group of clubs in a consciously planned approach.
- 5 **District/Patch Projects** — e.g. peripatetic workers operating out of a central facility with responsibility for a collection of youth clubs.
- 6 **Detached Workers** — engaging with young

people on their own territory, e.g. in bus shelters, street corners.

- 7 **Mobile Projects** — e.g. use of converted double-decker bus as a mobile information/advice service; as means of transport from remote villages to central facility; as a meeting place.
- 8 **Distance initiatives** — e.g. using radio to link isolated young people.

Research undertaken in 16 local authorities in 1990 by Ray Fabes and Maureen Gooding suggests that the practice of 'district work' (which tends to include variations on Approaches 5., 6., and 7. above) is gradually being recognised as a means of addressing some of the issues affecting young people, and the adults who work with them, in rural areas of Britain (Fabes and Gooding, 1990). In these 16 authorities more than 50 posts were identified which might broadly be described as 'district workers'. Yet the range of job descriptions and job titles of these workers is enormous, including 'Detached', 'Outreach', 'Divisional', 'Area-based', 'Peripatetic', 'Rural Youth Groups', 'Rural Development Team' and 'Mobile Project Workers', and 'Sports/Arts Animateurs'. The research undertaken suggests a wide range of assumptions being made about the 'areas', 'divisions' or 'communities' covered by workers. Some seem to follow District Council or school catchment boundaries, for example. Few seem to take into account where young people live, where they find territorial identity or what place is meaningful to them. Few of the posts reflect contemporary research around the issues that affect young people's lives in these districts, such as demographic patterns, economic climate, transport facilities and educational and employment opportunities. Seldom does there seem to be a link between the purpose of working with young people and the realities of life in rural areas of Britain in the 1990s. More importantly, from what is written about the roles, responsibilities and expectations of district worker posts, they seem to be about serving administrative structures rather than engaging the issues. For example, some posts had a district responsibility added on to an existing centre-based job with no thought of the resource implications. On the other hand, others assume that the servicing of one night a week clubs should be the major focus of the work — never stopping to examine the appropriateness of such a task.

### What is the role of the rural worker?

To offer some clarity to the role of district rural workers, whether they are designated 'detached', 'mobile' or 'locality' based, Fabes and Gooding suggest there are some key questions to be addressed and priorities to be set, including:-

- 1 What is the post expected to achieve, and how realistic is this in the light of local conditions? Account should be taken of the policy of the service, the location of the worker, the resources



at their disposal, the issues affecting the lives of young people and the attitudes of the adults with whom they interact.

- 2 An analysis of the above should inform a realistic appraisal of contemporary practice, with the worker being seen clearly as an informal educator in a variety of settings.
  - (a) With young people wherever they naturally congregate.
  - (b) With adults with whom young people regularly interact.
  - (c) With other agencies, associations and services which affect young people's lives, that is, those that may have power over them.
- 3 The logical outcome of all the above suggests that district rural workers have five main areas of work that would need to be set in priority according to the situation that exists at any given time in their area of operation:
  - (a) **Direct work with young people** (face to face) as educators — enabling young people to widen their horizons, and explore issues such as 'equal opportunity in the countryside' or 'moving on'.
  - (b) **Direct work with adults** to enable them to understand the purposes of their own work with young people, and to enable these adults also to become informal educators.
  - (c) **Research and compilation of evidence** concerning issues which affect the lives of young people in their area of operation, including 'advocacy' and publicising the evidence through appropriate channels.
  - (d) **Negotiating** with a range of formal and informal contacts to enable the work to move forward either collectively, for small groups, or for individuals (the worker acting as a 'broker').
  - (e) **Networking** within the educational service in terms of events across the district, communication with colleagues, bringing people together for support and development, and keeping in touch with contemporary issues to assist in their own professional development.

What, the reader may ask after reading these recommendations, is the difference between youth work practice in rural areas and good youth work practice generally? The answer may be (or should be) 'none'. For all good practice should take account of local circumstances, resources, young people's needs and adopt appropriate approaches and methods of delivery. But the fact remains that good youth work practice is often not happening in rural areas. And this has been because of a lack of research and awareness about rural issues generally and local circumstances in particular, a lack of resources, a lack of appropriate training and support structures for workers and volunteers, and the generally low status accorded to rural

work. These were all factors, as we mentioned earlier, which were cited 10 years ago by the Rural Youth Work Education Project. Since 1981, developments have been made. Some of the reasons for the low status accorded to rural work were because it was seen to be a 'soft option'. Because the real problems — vandalism, homelessness, alcohol and drug abuse — existed in the town and cities. As more literature on the needs and problems of young people in rural areas has been published, then this myth is beginning to be dispelled. An established body of knowledge is beginning to emerge through publications about the theory and practice of rural work and through conferences and networks of interest. There is still a long way to go regarding the researching, resourcing and supporting of rural youth work. Some steps are being taken, as is instanced by the growth in mobile projects, and peripatetic workers.

### **The present position, and prospects for the future**

Fabes and Gooding characterise the last 10 years as one of 'haphazard developments', which suggests a need to consolidate and clarify the theory and practice of rural work. At this stage, a number of fairly simple statements can be made about working with young people in rural areas:

- 1 The needs of young people are the same whether they live in urban or rural areas.
- 2 If the aim of work with young people is to meet their developmental needs and interests, then the aim of the work in rural areas is the same as that in urban areas.
- 3 The ways in which the needs and interests of young people in rural areas are or are not met may be different from urban areas; they will also vary according to social class, and the particular features of the environment in which they live. Young people living in rural areas do suffer 'deprivations', particularly related to isolation, access, restriction of opportunities which may have different causes and require different strategies.
- 4 Therefore the objectives and methods (how the aims are met) of work with young people in rural areas may well be different from those in urban areas (e.g. provision of transport or mobile projects).
- 5 Some of the knowledge and skills required by rural workers will be distinctive (e.g. knowledge of rural issues, networks, power structures, grant giving bodies; mobility, ability to work with mixed age groups, to do detached/outreach work, etc.).

It is beginning to be accepted now that there is an important role for youth work in rural areas, that a variety of flexible approaches is necessary and that youth workers can benefit from training in rural work as a specialist area of practice. But more thought needs to be put into the choice of approaches and

methods appropriate for each locality or specific group of young people. More research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches and styles of working in a more systematic way than has happened hitherto. Above all, it must be recognised that work with young people in rural areas requires particular skills. Developments are now happening. For example, the National Association of Youth and Community Education Officers (NAYCEO) Paper of 1991 acknowledges these skills, and that training is required for all workers. Following the Lancashire County Council initiative in 1986, several local authorities are now devising their own policy based on their work in rural areas. Derbyshire (1989), Hertfordshire (1990) and Shropshire (1989), for example, have produced public statements in the last two years. North Yorkshire (1989) is particularly noteworthy in that it operates on the basis of partnership with County Youth Association. A number of County Youth Associations, including North Yorkshire and Devon, have initiated experimental projects in conjunction with other charitable bodies as well as their own local authorities. Business and commerce has recently begun to see work with young people in rural areas as worthy of attention and support. Examples include the 'Barclays' rural youth worker with the Groundwork Trust in East Durham, and the Rank Foundation support of the work in Yorkshire and Humberside. The D.E.S. has an innovative rural project based with the Suffolk Youth Association, and a recent video produced by the Young Farmers was supported by Lloyds Bank. Much of this work is yet to be evaluated, though these 'new partnerships' will be the central focus of the next national conference to be held in Norwich in October 1991. Similarly, the National Rural Youth Work Network's response to the curriculum debate within the Youth Service (1990) offered indications that some of the more recently established practice in working with young people in rural areas could offer a more disciplined approach to targets and performance indicators. A process which engages with the needs and interests of young people as well as the workers in rural areas, seem to fit more comfortably with some of the curriculum demands.

Although we are conscious that we have neither described nor analysed many examples of practice in this article, there is ample evidence: from engaging with young mothers in Cornwall, to motor cycle training in Humberside, to a 'writer in residence' in rural Cumbria, to a sports amateur in Hereford and Worcestershire. Many innovative examples could form the basis of a further contribution. The Rural Development Commission Project to be based at the National Youth Agency (formerly NYB) has a specific brief to illustrate 'effective' practice from across the country, drawing out arguments for a field-led approach (Phillips, 1991).

In the last five years there have been some very distinctive developments in the field. Returning to Ian

Johnson's comments of 1986, many of his pleas are beginning to be answered. Recognition of the special skills required for the work is being given and specialist training is available. A growing number of local authorities are exploring and developing rural work as a priority area, and a range of distinctive methods of practice are evident. There are many more highly mobile, non-centre based workers, with a more accurate understanding of rural life. Many of the posts have a commitment to working with all young people in a patch. We are now far more confident in arguing that 'working with young people in rural areas' is a more useful concept than the simple notion of 'rural youth work', that it will be developed in many more positive ways in the near future.

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# **Y**oung People in Rural South West England

**CLAIRE WALLACE  
DAVID DUNKERLEY  
and BRIAN CHEAL**

## **Abstract**

There have been few studies of young people in rural areas, perhaps because they do not present the same threat to the social order that those in urban areas do. Models of the household have often assumed a universal relationship of dependency between young people and parents and studies of youth in rural areas have mostly reinforced this by arguing for the erosion of differences between urban and rural areas. The study of young people in the South West, however, found that there were important differences between the young people in urban and rural localities. An explanation was sought in terms of the articulation of the household within the local economy and here young people played a very particular role. One distinguished feature of the rural South West which played a part was the prevalence of self-employed workers and small businesses. Other factors including the shortage of housing and the expense of travelling led to different kinds of interdependence between parents and children than was found in urban areas in the same region. This paper focusses upon internal household transfers between young people and adults according to gender.

## **Young People, the household and rural areas**

Scholars in rural and urban sociology alike have stressed the way in which capitalist relations have transformed work and family life in Britain regardless of whether people live in the town or the countryside (Newby et al. 1987). Rural industries — often relocated or set up with regional aid grants — employ people in the same way as those in other areas and farming has responded to financial and economic pressures towards intensification in the same way as any other industry. In this pattern of work, the home is separated from the workplace as an institution and young people are defined by whether or not they have started full-time work.

At the same time, social policies have assumed — and helped to shape — a 'universal' model of youth: one in which young people are increasingly dependent upon a combination of parental support and state benefits for longer periods of their lives (Stewart and Stewart 1988, Wallace 1988). Under these circumstances we might expect an increasing homogenisation of work and family life for young people in rural and urban areas.

Following the work of Jones (1990a and 1991) we have focussed in this-

paper upon the transfers of resources within the household and looked at the influence of economic status of parents and children and of gender. Jones found that there were important variations in the extent to which parents supported children and children supported parents. In households where the parents were themselves poor or unemployed, young people provided a correspondingly larger share of household resources: rather than a one-way dependency of children upon parents there was what she calls an 'interdependency'. Here we have considered the variations in interdependency between rural and urban areas and found important differences which seem to undermine the 'universal' model of youth implied above.

## **Young people in rural areas**

Studies of young people in rural areas have stressed issues such as the problems of access to transport and to training and the problems of finding a sustained career in the context of a highly seasonal labour market (Dench 1985, Stern and Turbin 1987). Coles and MacDonald in their study of a rural shire county found that local knowledge of the labour market was a crucial factor, as it was in other regions (see Coles 1988). A study carried out in Scotland has traced the patterns of mobility between areas and found a migrational drift from the more remote areas to small town and from small towns towards cities. Those who remained in the rural areas were likely to leave home and get married at an earlier age.

This pattern is found more strongly in Eastern and other parts of Europe which have described the deprivation of rural youth, cut off from formal training and educational opportunities. Unable to participate in urban-based sub-cultures, they have tended to prefer to migrate to the towns if they could (Pavelka and Stefanov 1985). Social policies were often directed at preventing them from doing so in order to avoid creating pressure on resources in the cities.

However, the indication is that such patterns of urban and rural difference are being eroded. A study by Lothar Boenisch and colleagues in Southern Germany found that the advent of access to improved transportation, a centralised school system and universal youth

sub-cultures transmitted by the mass media had all served to create an increasingly universalised youth life-style over the last ten years, although some differences still remained. Young people in rural areas were more likely to be subject to parental control and more likely to participate in traditional rural organisations and associations rather than forming their own independent sub-cultures (Boenisch and Funk 1989, Gaiser 1991).

### **The rural economy of the South West**

The South West as a regional labour market — by which we mean Devon and Cornwall — have few large industries and few large cities. It is heavily dependent upon tourism and agriculture and including declining fishing and mining industries for employment outside of the towns. There is a high rate of part-time and seasonal employment with seasonal fluctuations in rates of unemployment (Dunkerley and Fearon 1985). The small scale of enterprise in the South West is reflected in the very high number of self-employed, with the South West having the highest rate of self-employment anywhere in the country.

In agriculture there is also a distinctive pattern. Average size holdings are small, with 63% of farmers in one survey of Devon and Cornwall farming less than 80 hectares and these are often 'small holdings' (Warren 1989). These enterprises are less likely to employ people outside of the family than farms in the other areas (Warren 1990) and are likely to combine farming with other economic activities and full-time jobs resulting in what has been called 'pluriactivity' (Shucksmith et al. 1989). These farms and other businesses can often be characterised as small, precarious petit-bourgeois establishments, much like many of the tourist enterprises. They may often rely to a greater or lesser extent upon the labour of family members including children to survive (Wallace, Dunkerley, Cheal and Warren 1990).

Although wages in general are low in Devon and Cornwall, these counties having some of the consistently lowest wages in the country (New Earnings Survey 1989), at the time of the survey in the late 1980s, the demand for young people's labour had picked up and the rate of unemployment was lower than the national average — 2% in Devon and 3% in Cornwall as against a national average of 8% for 16-year-olds. However, this disguises sub-regional pockets of much higher unemployment and rates of 50% in the winter months in some areas.

The South West is particularly affected by 'counter-urbanisation', whereby people have moved from cities and metropolitan areas to areas such as the South West in search of a better quality of life (Perry et al. 1986). They have been prepared to accept a lower salary and lower standard of living in order to do this and this can involve setting up a small business. These in-migrants push up the price of land and housing in the rural South West, putting it out of the reach of local

people on low wages.

### **Methodology — the South West study**

The results reported here derive from a survey of young people in the far South West as an associated study of the '16-19 Initiative' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Following Stern and Turbin's (1987) methodological suggestions, four 'types' of rural area in Devon and Cornwall were identified (see Table 2): predominantly seaside holiday areas relying mainly on tourism and related employment; prosperous rural areas in East Devon benefitting from relocated industries and more direct access to the economically ascendent areas along the M4; more remote rural areas relying predominantly upon agriculture; and finally a declining mining area where unemployment was relatively high and a complex of small towns provided a variety of different sources of employment. A number of schools were identified in each area and, using a systematic random sample, names were obtained from fifth year school registers. A further fifth of the sample was drawn from Plymouth to provide an urban contrast within the South West.

Two waves of young people were contacted in 1989 — half were 17 years and half were 18 years — and these were followed up a year later in 1990. A questionnaire was used which was broadly compatible with that being used for other labour markets within the 16-19 Initiative (see Bynner 1988). Out of the original 2,000 sample of equal numbers of male and female young people, 64 per cent (1263) responded. A qualitative dimension was added during the winter months of 1989/90 when one of the authors lived in an area of Devon and an area of Cornwall, contacting and interviewing young people on site.

### **Results of the study**

Initial survey results suggested that there were differences between the areas we had been studying and especially between urban and rural areas. There were very important differences in employment patterns. In rural areas a far larger number of parents were self-employed and this was in a region which already had an above-average number of self-employed. Hence, in our most remote area, 57 per cent of fathers were self-employed as against a national average of just 12 per cent in the labour force (this is further explored in Wallace, Dunkerley and Cheal 1990). Unlike Stern and Turbin's study described above, we found young people were highly motivated towards becoming self-employed in the South West — some two thirds said they would like to or would consider being self-employed compared with just seven per cent in a survey carried out in Liverpool. The remainder of young people and their parents were likely to be working in small scale enterprises rather than large ones. Hence, up to 28 per cent of people worked in establishments of less than five people in rural areas and only seven per cent in urban areas. These

proportions were reversed for establishments of more than a hundred employees. Those in rural small businesses were also highly likely to employ their own children directly — up to 31 per cent had done so in the most rural area and only 10 per cent in the urban area.

Other differences emerged too. In Table 1 we consider the various 'career trajectories' of urban and rural school leavers. (the idea of career trajectory is taken from that of the 16-19 Initiative — see Bynner 1988). The first is that of the 'academic' careers — those who remain in school or college undertaking extended academic education; there were twice as many on this path in Plymouth as in the rural areas. Secondly, there is the 'vocational' educational trajectory — people who go on to do a vocational course of some kind and there were more of these in the rural areas. Thirdly, there are those moving from school directly into a job; there were more of these in the rural area. Fourthly, there are those who move from school directly onto a YTS scheme; there were also more of these in the rural areas. Finally, there are those with 'no careers'; that is, they do not fit neatly into any of the above categories and there were more of these in the rural area too. Thus, those in rural areas were more likely to leave school and less likely to pursue academic training.

**TABLE 1**  
**Comparison of career trajectories of young people living in urban and rural areas**

	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural areas</i>
Academic trajectory	53%	24%
Vocational trajectory	9%	16%
From School to Job	19%	24%
From School to YTS Scheme	9%	17%
No Career	11%	19%
Total number of young people	180	408

Note: This is information for the respondents for whom there was information continually over a two year period. The concept of 'career trajectory' is derived from that used in the 16-19 Initiative generally and has been similarly operationalised here (see Bynner 1988).

They were also more likely to expect to have to leave home to look for a job. This may have been due to difficulties of access to centralised educational facilities for post-16 education — some had to travel two hours each way to reach a Further Education of Sixth Form college and for others this meant living away from home during the week. However, it may also be that since there was a ready demand for young people's labour in rural areas they were also more tempted to leave. It would appear from the qualitative interviews that those from some small business and farming households were needed for work by the family and they could not be spared for extended further education or training. Some of those who were going to take over the business could see little point in more 'theoretical' training when they could be learning 'on

the job'. Another survey of the labour market for young people indicated that qualifications were not much valued by employers who preferred practical, on-the-job training and hence it may not have been worthwhile staying at school in the context of this local labour market (Boyle 1990)

Following the work of Gill Jones (1990a, 1991) we turned to relationships within the household. Here we have developed a model of the household as a unit within which resources circulate in different directions. The relationship between young people and parents within the household can be characterised by the flow of money, goods and maintenance from parents to children on the one hand, and the flow of money (in the form of board) from children to parents on the other hand. Given that children in the rural South West were also likely to work directly for their parents as well, and that young people — especially girls — also performed housework for their parents, we need to include the labour of children in this circulation of resources. The labour of children needs to be further analytically divided between work for use value or for subsistence within the household and work leading to exchange values outside the household in the family or neighbouring business. This later work could be paid or unpaid depending upon the circumstances of the household and although it makes sense analytically to distinguish between these types of work, in practice it was not usually possible to make such a distinction: in the language of marxist economics, the value of family labour was 'subsumed' in the relation with capital (see Pile forthcoming). There was a distinctive division of labour in all these forms of work. The data revealed that those from rural areas were far less likely to get money from parents and were more likely to pay board money to their parents (Table 2).

**TABLE 2**  
**Type of rural area by whether respondent received money from parents regularly and whether or not they paid board**

	<i>Received money from parents</i>	<i>Paid board</i>
Urban area	53%	29%
Seaside holiday area	45%	37%
Declining industrial area	35%	46%
Remote agricultural area	28%	44%
Prosperous rural area	25%	55%
Total number of young people	398	398

These rows correspond with the type of rural area from which the sample was selected — see under 'Methodology'.

It might be argued that this was due to differences in economic status of young people, since we know that those in the urban area were more likely to stay in education and therefore more likely to receive support from parents. However, a breakdown according to the current economic status of the young person revealed

that even within each economic category, those in rural areas were less likely to get money from parents, were more likely to pay more board and were likely to pay higher levels of board money — although economic status was an important variable factor (Tables 3 and 4).

**TABLE 3**  
**Percentage of young people receiving money from parents by economic status of the young person**

	Urban %	Rural %	Total Number
In a job	2	2	251
On a YTS Scheme	15	11	213
At School or College	71	54	571
Unemployed/Other	20	10	41
Total number of young people	255	821	1076

**TABLE 4**  
**Board paid to parents by economic status of young people: urban and rural areas**

	Board Paid (£ per week) %					
	£0-10		£10-20		£20 plus	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
In a Job	3	5	74	63	24	30
On a YTS Scheme	40	24	60	72	—	7
At school or college	100	50	—	40	—	10
Unemployed/Other	20	10	60	70	20	20
Total number of young people	15	62	46	243	10	78

The other factor in the model we have set up is the flow of gifts from parents to children. Table 5 illustrates that parents were more likely to give goods to their children in urban areas, irrespective of the economic status of the children. This held true for everything apart from two factors: fares to work and — more strongly — the gift of cars and motorbikes. Here the parents in rural areas were far more likely to give their children such things. It may be that because parents had given their children such a large gift, they may have been less inclined to give them smaller gifts in rural areas or to give them money. Resources were concentrated upon private transport which was one of the single most important factors and added substantially to the cost of living in a rural area. Private transport was essential for finding jobs and for any kind of social life under circumstances where the bus might pass only once a week. Country living involves a great deal of driving.

We also undertook an analysis by gender on the assumption that since young men and women occupied a different place in the domestic division of labour in other studies, then they may also be differentially located in the transfer of internal household resources.

**TABLE 5**  
**Gifts from parents by economic status of young person(s)**

Gifts	Economic Status								Totals
	In Job		On YTS		At School/College		Unemployed/self-employed		
	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	
Clothing (in the last year)	86	76	94	84	93	91	83	83	947
Cigarettes (in the last month)	12	12	17	8	4	5	17	25	82
Bicycle (in the last year)	5	2	3	1	4	6	8	7	40
Stereo (in the last year)	16	11	23	18	20	19	42	19	276
TV (in the last year)	26	11	29	18	16	16	54	57	185
Personal Stereo (in the last year)	16	11	23	18	20	19	42	19	189
Any Electrical item (in the last year)	23	15	17	16	23	19	25	15	196
Home Computer (ever)	60	38	17	16	23	19	25	15	453
Holiday (in the last year)	28	20	47	19	63	47	25	30	410
Money for going out (in the last year)	40	22	31	39	56	56	50	34	487
Hobbies/Sports (in the last year)	32	21	37	33	60	52	54	22	441
Subscriptions to organisations	31	15	36	25	51	69	33	23	339
Fares to work (in the last week)	5	6	7	12	23	16	—	12	135
Cars/Motorbikes (ever)	12	18	28	29	9	15	8	11	182

We found that although females were marginally more likely to remain in education than males, there was no difference in the money they received from parents once we had controlled for economic status of the young person. Furthermore, there was little difference in the amount of board money they paid, since this was likewise determined by economic status and wage levels rather than by gender. When we considered gifts from parents, there were no consistent gender difference except with regard to computers (56 per cent of males had received a computer from their parents at some point as against 30 per cent of females) and the gift of a car or motorbike (22 per cent of males had received one as opposed to 14 per cent of females). Once again, this latter item was perhaps the most important single item in rural areas since it gives access to public and social life outside the home. In our attitudinal questions, young men were slightly more likely to think that parents should support them for longer than were young women, but that is partly because young women were less likely to be pursuing an academic as opposed to vocational education with correspondingly shorter periods of dependence. It is noticeable that contrary to Government assumptions,

nearly all young people who were not in education felt they should be independent of their parents by the time they were 20 or so although the sons and daughters of 'middle class' professional parents expected to be supported for longer.

Analysis of the domestic division of labour in farming families revealed that this was more rigidly divided by gender than other families, despite the fact that in many cases all the family members were drawn into working either inside or outside the home (see Wallace, Dunkerley, Cheal and Warren 1990). The attitudes to the sexual division of labour in the sample as a whole reflected strong gender variation: boys were more likely to see domestic work as being mainly women's responsibility whilst girls questioned this. We may ask how this affected attitudes to independence? The questions here were designed partly to test responses in the light of recent benefit changes. How far did respondents' perceptions of independence reflect how the Government thought they should behave? Not surprisingly, we found that those in education were more likely to think they should be supported for longer periods of time, even up to the age of 26, and this may reflect social class differences in expectations. However, it was still the case that within each economic category, young people in rural areas were more likely to expect not to be supported by parents by the time they were 18 (Table 6).

**TABLE 6**  
**Age at which young people said parents should stop supporting them, by economic status of respondents**

	In a job		On YTS		At school/ college		Unemployed/ self-employed		
	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	
< 16	—	6	3	5	2	1	—	17	
16 - 18	77	73	63	63	18	30	46	53	
18 - 20	16	16	34	25	47	51	38	17	
20 - 26	7	4	—	6	34	19	15	13	
26 +	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	
Should stop supporting you by age of 18									
	77	79	66	68	20	31	46	70	
Total answering questions								966	

This corresponds with the fact that the parents of rural children gave them less in terms of money and gifts and they gave their parents more in terms of labour and money. So far, however, we have avoided making any assertions as to how these flows of resources were negotiated in terms of reciprocity, but here, qualitative data can help to reveal particular sorts of patterns in rural areas.

## Case Studies

### Case A

A is a drama student at the local Technical college studying for A levels. She lives part time with her mother who runs a small-holding and part time with her divorced father who has a few fields but mainly works as a contractor for other farmers, having gone bankrupt himself. She is planning to go to University. CW: So you weren't tempted to go into farming yourself?

A: (shrieks) Oh no, no way, no. No, I've had too much of it — it's really put me off . . .

CW: So did you have to work on the farm when you were younger?

A: Yeah, as soon as you get home. It's a priority really.

CW: Even now?

A: Yeah, well, I live with my mum on a small holding and we try to be self-sufficient so we've got lots of little bits and everything . . . my mother does most of it and my step-dad works in Exeter. So we actually do most of the work mainly. He helps at weekends . . . I'm surprised if I hear that people have got farms and the children don't work on them . . . with a small holding you just have to otherwise you can't keep going. I mean its not profitable at all anyway. You're just lucky to scrape through. I mean we really have to have my step-dad working, otherwise we couldn't afford to carry on all the time . . .

CW: Do you get paid for working for your parents?

A: No, well you got to eat! No, we don't work like that.

CW: But you do it willingly?

A: No, I only do it when I'm at home. Well, if I've got something else to do, I do it grudgingly . . .

CW: So you do it out of a sense of obligation?

A: Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I've just always grown up with it, I just don't think 'Oh its a job' I just go and do it. Like you get home and put your working clothes on, you don't just sit down and watch telly.

A did not get a grant and therefore had no money of her own. She received 50 pence per week pocket money from her mother and her friends with a better-off parents subsidised her as well. She modelled for a GCSE art class and found odd jobs with the Theatre: 'But I mean, my mum will pay for any plays I want to see, she gives me money if I'm desperate or if I want to go somewhere. I mean, she is not totally mean, she's not. She hasn't got any money herself, so I'm always poor.'

### Case B

The second case is an example of a young man who is not from a farming or small-holding background, but another kind of seasonal self-employed family. He was 18 years old and lived with his mother and step father in a summer chalet (occupied all year) in a holiday resort. He left school to do a computer course at an Information Technology Centre but left after a



year. He worked in the summer for his father in the paint-spraying business and continued with his father as a YTS trainee. Because he was over 18 he was not entitled to a YTS allowance. His step-father could not afford to pay him because he has no work himself due to a slump in the building trade and because it was winter at the time of the interview. The pair of them spent their time renovating the family chalet.

'I get me rent free, food free, so at least I don't have to worry about that, because at least I've got a roof over my head, electricity and thing like that... and I do a bit of work here and there for money.'

B worked up in London selling Christmas presents a week before Christmas and he also worked decorating the local bar in return for free drinks. He says 'I was working this morning to pay off what I drunk last night.' His mother worked at the local hospital. However, he felt that that he was an unacceptable burden on his parents and could no longer give them the £25 per week keep which he used to pay when he was earning and which they needed in order to survive:

CW: Does it get you down at all being dependent on your parents?

B: Yeah, it does. 'Cos I'm sick and tired of it really. It's been like this since September, I haven't had any money to spend. I mean I haven't had any new clothes since September... (sighs) yeah, I get really pissed off with it... She (his mum) knows I can't support myself... but we're trying our best like to do up this chalet... so you know, she just takes it all and still feeds me and clothes me and all sorts, you know, but one day I'm going to move out. I owe them four or five months rent, so I will try and pay it back when I can... I'm just a burden on them really. That's why I just want to get out and leave them to it.

Of course, not all children did help in the family business and some simply refused to be involved. Parents still felt a moral obligation to support children who did not contribute (see Finch 1989 for a further analysis of this), but what was interesting was the extent to which young people did feel an economic responsibility towards their parents' precarious financial fortunes under these circumstances. It can be seen from these interviews that the interdependence of young people and parents was important (as Gill Jones has indicated) but that this was particularly significant in rural areas where there is much work to be done, fewer people to do it and little money to pay them with. The role of children depended upon the economic situation of parents.

Other factors emerged as important too and one of these was housing. In the rural areas the family was also a landlord since there were few alternatives for young people: public rented housing was almost non-existent and privately rented housing was exorbitantly expensive in the summer months. Furthermore, it is evident that whilst some benefits under some circumstances could be manipulated in order to augment household resources — and employing one's child on

a YTS scheme was an example of this — the removal of benefits for young people also produced instances of real hardship. The young man who was 'working for his keep' still felt a burden upon his parents.

The model which was set up at the beginning indicated that there was a flow of resources within the household between parents and children and we have now indicated some of the ways in which this varied with the economic circumstances of the parents and children. The basic commitment to maintain children was shouldered by these households in spite of the decreasing external support through social security. In addition to this there were a range of transfers of goods, money and services in either direction. Some households were able to manipulate external support by using the YTS scheme, for example, to employ their own children and by using tax relief to run vehicles which could be used as transport for children. However, others were not in a position to do so. There was also a gender dimension to the kind of work carried out by children, with boys less likely to be expected to do any domestic labour but being expected to work in the family business or contribute through doing 'masculine tasks' whilst girls were expected to contribute to the family well-being as well as doing domestic labour. What was different perhaps in these rural households was the way in which young men are drawn into working for the family and the way in which the labour of both young women and young men contributed towards the economic viability of the household.

## Conclusions

The study of young people in the South West has raised a number of issues. First of all the dependence of young people upon the family was balanced by the dependence of the family upon them: under some circumstances the young person's labour could be a crucial part of the family business. This appeared to be reflected in norms of reciprocity with young people in rural areas contributing more, but receiving less from their families in terms of goods, money and board. They also expected to be more independent of parents. This points to important variations in the nature of dependency relationships between young people and parents.

This status was intensified in some rural businesses — such as farming or building — where there may be no geographical separation of home and workplace. This meant that unemployment could be absorbed within family work strategies and that multiple and seasonal activity could be added on to the stock of family activities in circumstances of low wages and irregular work.

These rural areas of the South West reflected the movement towards a 'Post Fordist' labour market generally with increasing fragmentation of work careers, increasing flexibilisation and casualisation of employment and the combination of self employment

and unpaid self-provisioning (see Pahl and Wallace 1985) as a way of getting by. There were new combinations of formal and informal work in which the labour of children played a very particular part. The cutting back on formal state support for young people was replaced in the South West by this mixture of different kinds of formal and informal work. Whether other areas could provide similar opportunities for young people is something which would require further research. What is evident is that young people were socialised into long hours, hard work and poor rewards. It is also perhaps the case that amongst rural households generally the commitment to private transport was such an important item of expenditure that this overshadowed other kinds of resources in the household.

The results of this research suggest that it is wrong to assume that young people are simply passive dependents upon the household or that the flow of resources is all in one direction — from parents to children — or that children ceased to be workers with the passing of state legislation imposing a universal model of dependency.

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# Youth, Class and Locality in Rural England

ROBERT MacDONALD

## Introduction

This discussion has two main aims. Firstly, I will describe, very briefly, two broad approaches to the sociology of youth; that which has been concerned with exploring youth sub-cultures and that which, due to massive rises in youth unemployment at the beginning of the last decade, has been concerned with the transitions young people make into the labour market. I will argue that these two main areas of research have been kept largely distinct at a conceptual, analytical level and that exploration of questions of youth culture and transitions together would produce a more complete sociology of youth<sup>(1)</sup>. Secondly, and more importantly, I will suggest that 'class' has been inadequately theorized in both these approaches to youth. The ethnographic research discussed in the latter part of the paper investigated the cultural responses of young people in rural areas to the 'options' facing them after the age of 16. I explored the experiences of a reasonably large group of young women and men, who lived in villages, hamlets and small towns, as they found jobs, participated in YTS or further education or became unemployed. My analysis of these cultural aspects of rural youth transitions is presented elsewhere (MacDonald 1988a, 1988b), and here I have chosen to focus instead upon the relationship between youth and class and the way in which 'locale' informed these young people's accounts. I should stress that the issues of class consciousness and locality which I describe here may be equally significant in more urban youth cultures. Though the research was based in rural areas, the issues and processes I describe here may not necessarily be confined to such areas.

## The Youth Sub-Culture Tradition

The most influential and vital contribution to the study of youth culture in the past twenty years has come from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University<sup>(2)</sup>. Primarily, the CCCS has reintroduced a notion of class into sociological theorizing about youth and youth culture. Their approach is one which maintains an ethnographic hold on the details of specific sub-cultural phenomena yet attempts to locate this within a broader analysis of social structure. Clarke et al's seminal introduction to *Resistance through Rituals* (Hall and Jefferson 1976) exemplifies this theoretical approach. They argue that

it is on the terrain of class formations, of persistent working class cultures, that

youth sub-cultures arise and shape themselves into specific cultural phenomena with a significant generational content. They emerge from the wider 'parental' class, sharing with it common cultural elements — outlooks, understandings, ways of life — but confront the problems and inequalities faced by the class in common at a specific time — in youth. Finally, one of the main contributions of the sub-culture theory tradition has been to enliven the field of debate and much of the most attractive recent theorizing about youth culture has incorporated critical assessment of the work of the CCCS (e.g. Brown, 1987; Hollands, 1990). Here I will draw attention, very briefly, to three particular *absences* in their analyses of youth sub-culture.

Firstly, in searching for resistant rituals the CCCS theorists disregard the less obvious, less glamorous, less oppositional but more common modes of working class youth cultural response to their collective situation. Their focus is the minority of youth whose styles of dress, posture and activity can be 'read' as symbolising embryonic working class resistance. This not only excludes the majority of youth cultural phenomena, but also 'reads' by implication the mass of working class youth as thoroughly incorporated in the values and meanings of the dominant class. 'Straight' youth, the 'ordinary kids' (Kahl, 1961; Jenkins, 1983; Brown, 1987), the 'everyday people' are implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, regarded as uninteresting — the dull 'cultural dopes'. A few are capable of opposition, through style, whilst the mass of working class youth are represented as being ideologically incorporated. Clearly this focus on the sartorial vanguard is unsatisfactory on either a political or sociological level.

Secondly, this concentration on only a minority of working class youth is mirrored in a blinkered vision of what is important to/in working class youth culture. For the sub-culture tradition, style is paramount, albeit as an indicator of class resistance. Appearance, dress and demeanour are intensely scrutinized, but young people's own meanings and cultural outlooks are, in the main, absent<sup>(3)</sup>. Moreover, the cultured activities and interpretations of young men and women in respect of the more mundane and common-place — the job, the school, the dole — are sadly ignored in this focus on

resistance through rituals.

Thirdly, in widening our analysis of 'youth', the relationship of girls and young women, both to youth (sub)cultures and the sociology of youth (sub)cultures, must be addressed. As McRobbie and Garber (1976) say, they have been pushed to the margins of sociological accounts. This results, at least in part, from the CCCS's obsession with the spectacular few — gangs of young men with clearly visible styles which, given some fancy theoretical footwork, can be interpreted as challenging the ideological status quo. I would also suggest, tentatively, that young women can participate on equal terms with young men in the cultured activities and styles of the mass of 'ordinary kids'. Any evening stroll around the city-centres of Newcastle, Durham or York, for example, would prove to the most unobservant sub-culturalist observer that they have missed the (at least) equal presence of girls and young women on the streets, often in 'gangs', fully participating in the youth cultural activities of the mass — the 'ordinary kids'.

### **Studying Youth (Un)Employment and Transitions**

Whilst one part of the sociology of youth has largely been concerned with its sub-cultural styles another grew in response to the massive rises in youth unemployment in the early 1980s. The initial interest of this strand of research was in the impact widespread youth unemployment had upon the transitions young people made from full-time education into the labour market (e.g. Grey et al., 1983; Roberts, 1984; Raffe, 1984; 1987). Later the emphasis shifted toward studying government interventions in the youth labour market (e.g. the Youth Training Scheme) as more and more school leavers left school not for jobs but for places on a series of government schemes (e.g. Cockburn, 1987; Finn, 1987; Coles, 1988; Hollands, 1990; Lee et al., 1990; MacDonald and Coffield, 1991). Primacy is given to quantitative analysis, as this type of approach aims to map accurately the post-16 movements of age cohorts of young people through education and the labour market. The objective here is to *describe* the patterns of career track movement of large samples of young people through the 16 to 19 years, often in contrasting local labour markets (Ashton and Maguire, 1986; Coles, 1988).

More problematic, however, are the attempts made within this type of approach to *explain* post-16 labour market behaviour. The emphasis upon quantification of objective aspects of youth transitions means that approaches within this tradition tend to explain, or attempt to explain, the post-school (un)employment of youth in terms of the most easily identifiable, objective attributes possessed by young people (e.g. Payne and Payne, 1985; Jones et al., 1988). Attention is paid to the personal 'characteristics' of young people — their sex, age, academic qualifications, socio-economic class — and these are correlated to their 'career track'

movements in a form of 'variable analysis' (Blumer 1956). This sort of positivistic approach treats the 'characteristics' of young people (e.g. their 'social class') as 'social facts', determining their futures. There is little room for a more phenomenological appreciation of the meaning of these objective realities for young people, or the active involvement of young people in the construction of the patterns of 'career tracks' described by quantitative surveys.

To summarise, the sub-culture tradition (associated with the CCCS) has made important contributions to the sociology of youth, but has also developed in essentially elitist and exotic directions, ignoring the realities of everyday life for the majority of young women and men. Conversely, whilst studies of youth (un)employment have generated a wealth of information about disrupted youth transitions from school into the labour market, few of these seriously attempt to grasp the cultural meanings of these experiences. The importance of combining these two broad types of approach is the first main theme of this paper. The second concerns youth and class.

### **Youth and Class**

One of the main contributions of the CCCS tradition has been that it has relocated youth, and youth culture, within a class context. Previous analyses of youth culture tended towards descriptions and representations of youth as being either classless or constituting a class in itself. The CCCS approach to sub-culture has derived much of its appeal from exactly this concern with youth in class(es). The problem I would like to raise in relation to the CCCS tradition, and many other accounts of youth culture, lies at more of an empirical or methodological level. But plainly, it is how do the CCCS writers know these sub-cultures, and their members, to be working class? It seems that researchers of the CCCS identify a sub-culture, say punks, and then trace this cultural phenomenon unproblematically back to an (assumed) working class base. Their theoretical work is then directed toward understanding sub-culture as response to the collective problems shared by people in this class location. It is almost taken for granted that these are working class phenomena. There is little, if any, evidence presented to the reader to support this, and there is little information given as to how this 'reading' came about.

This problem points to conceptual and methodological difficulties in the whole field of the sociology of youth and (sub)culture. It goes without saying that definitions of 'class' abound, especially in the literature covering theoretical debates within neo-Marxism (e.g. Hunt, 1977). Much of this debate concerns the search for a refined, objective determinant of class position, especially for those groups marginal to production, apparently occupying transitional or contradictory class positions, or who are situated between the 'traditional working class' and the bourgeoisie (e.g. Poulantzas, 1977; Hunt, 1977; Wright, 1978). Little of

this debate, however, is directed at operationalizing concepts for empirical, ethnographic research.

The overwhelming concern within these debates is to see an individual's class in relation to (some aspect of) economic production. This means that large and important categories of young people, such as the unemployed, school pupils, people on training schemes, students in education, are largely excluded from the analysis or grouped together in one class category. Now this *may* reflect the objective relationship of, for instance, my informants (on government schemes, the dole or in education) to the means of production but pays little attention to their clear differences in material circumstance, the differences they perceived amongst themselves, or their expected futures in an unequal, class society. Wright's attempt (1978) to confront this problem with the notion of 'class trajectory' — that you are what class you are destined for — is inappropriate for our purposes. Predictions, at the age of 16 or 17, about where particular young people will end up in the class structure at a later date, some years hence, are difficult to make at the best of times, never mind in the context of a rapidly changing youth labour and education market.

More mainstream non-Marxist sociological approaches in the sociology of youth and youth transitions tend to adopt a class analysis based on parental (father's) occupation (e.g. Brown 1987). This definition of class is typical of wider social analysis, not just the sociology of youth and I would like to argue, briefly, that there are also difficulties with this approach. Issues of the journal *Sociology* have, over the past few years, given a great amount of space to theoretical debate about prevailing class identities and structures (see, for examples, Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1988; Leifsrud and Woodward, 1988; Emmison and Western, 1990; Marshall and Rose, 1990).

Firstly, and simply, there are problems with defining class purely in terms of occupation. Other criteria, income or housing for instance, could arguably be substituted for occupation as a class indicator.

Secondly, there is the criticism raised by writers taking a more feminist perspective (e.g. Gardiner, 1977; Delphy, 1981) that this categorisation is sexist — the model ignores the position of women (mothers) in both the productive and reproductive spheres in its exclusive focus on the male head of household (see Crompton and Mann, 1986 for a fuller review of the debate).

Thirdly, there is a problem of process. The temporal setting of investigations into young people mean that it is unsatisfactory to use parent class position as the definition of youth class. The 16 to 19 years are a critical period in the re-formation of class structure during which time young people are actively involved in searching for work, their own occupations, within the stratification system (Jenkins 1984). To freeze the frame, to stop this process and look for indicators of (parental) class, is to deny the processual, active nature

of class reproduction and young men and women's own part in it.

Fourthly, if we side-step these problems for a moment there arises another, namely how to deduce youth class from parental class. Clearly there is not a direct or unproblematic relationship between these categories. If there was there would be no need for concepts of 'social mobility'. The empirical problems of trying to 'read' youth class from parent class in *my* research were numerous. Essentially they stemmed from an unwillingness on the part of the informants to provide the information by which they could be so classified. Very many chose to ignore questionnaire questions relating to parental occupation. Others provided sketchy answers or responses which would prove difficult to fit into any preformulated schema. But much more importantly, and more directly related to the work of the CCCS, if we are serious in our ethnographic intent surely the meanings and experience of class for youth themselves must have a central place in our analyses? By this I mean that the meaning of class in the lived experience of youth, in their perceptions of themselves and others and in their 'theoretical' understandings of their social worlds must be a fundamental part of an analysis of youth which draws upon broadly inductivist, ethnographic tradition. In short, it is unsatisfactory simple to 'read off' the class of young people from that of their parents (as narrowly defined by father's occupation).

These points are not raised in an attempt to argue that youth are in some way classless, but to raise some conceptual problems in approaching the relationship of class to youth, and vice versa. Moreover, these are (empirical) problems which seem to be passed over in much of the most sophisticated attempts to theorize youth, class and culture. I do not, unfortunately, offer any simple solutions. The research I now discuss was not designed to study or theorize about class and youth in any advanced or formal way. However, in conducting the ethnographic research questions and issues of class did arise.

### **Youth and Unemployment in Local, Rural Labour Markets**

The vast majority of research into youth unemployment, indeed into the sociology of youth as a whole, has been carried out in urban and metropolitan areas. Only slight attention has been paid to youth transitions, for instance, the problems of unemployment, in the rural areas away from the big towns and cities (for the few exceptions see, Dench, 1983; McDermott and Dench, 1983; Nicholson, 1985; Turbin and Stern, 1987; Wallace et al. 1990).

At least part of the explanation for this lies in the invisibility of rural youth to, for example, urban policy makers, youth workers, academics and politicians. The problems of social disorder typically associated with youth unemployment — for example, the riots of the early 1980s — played themselves out on the streets of

the big English cities, not in the quiet lanes of Britain's countryside. Admittedly, there was a brief spell during the late 1980s when the spotlight of media attention flashed onto rural youth: under the label of 'rural lager louts' some young people in these areas were shown engaging in apparently unusually disorderly, alcohol-related disturbances. More typically attention was focused on the urban centres of the North — Liverpool, Cleveland, Belfast — places which were seen to have by far the worst rates of unemployment. This attention to the real problems of unemployment for urban youth during the 1980s diverted attention from the equally real problems faced by some young people growing up in smaller, rural communities blighted by unemployment.

Between 1984 and 1988 I carried out a largely qualitative investigation of young people's experiences after they left school in a large, rural Shire county. The aims of my research were shaped, at least in part, by the approaches I have outlined. From the sub-culture tradition I took an interest in how cultures, maps of meaning, are constructed, shared and used by young people in their everyday lives. From the more quantitative tradition I drew an interest in how the objective, economic realities of youth unemployment and limited job opportunities shape the transitions of young people from school to adulthood. The main aims and interests of the research are summarised below.

Firstly, the research was designed to explore unemployment in previously overlooked rural towns and villages, and within this objective to study unemployment in two contrasting local labour markets. Secondly, the aim was to examine unemployment, not in isolation, but within the context of the progressions of a wide range of young people from the age of 16 through the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), continued education and (un)employment to the age of 19. Thirdly, the research aimed to construct not only objective maps of post-16 progression but to explore the cultural meanings those 'career tracks' have for young people.

Though my research involved a large postal questionnaire survey of approximately 1,000 people (sampled from an age cohort), the major focus for this research was an ethnographic exploration of the cultural meanings of the post 16 'opportunities' available to young people. In all, I talked to around 100 young men and women in in-depth interviews and group discussions in two areas I have called Blackstone Bay and Batwith<sup>(4)</sup>.

Blackstone Bay, the area from which I will draw my examples, is a small town on the east coast of England. It has a population of about 10,000 people and the same number again live in villages and hamlets on the moors and in the dales which surround the town. Poor transport links compound the town's geographical isolation. The prosperity of Blackstone Bay previously depended upon its busy fishing fleet but more lately fortunes have become linked with the tourist industry.

Mining, agriculture, fishing and now tourism have all declined in the area and for well over two decades it has had unemployment levels markedly higher than the national or even regional averages. Blackstone Bay suffers particularly from seasonal unemployment, with many casual jobs becoming available during the summer. In January 1983, according to our survey, 1 in every 3 eighteen year old was still unemployed, a rate of youth joblessness very similar to that in Cleveland at the time. Rural Blackstone Bay suffered quietly, however, with far more media attention and policy initiatives being directed at the notorious areas of unemployment of neighbouring urban Teesside. Summaries of this research on the experiences of youth training, schooling, employment and unemployment in rural areas have been published elsewhere (e.g. MacDonald 1988b). Here I will focus upon some issues of youth, class and locality. I felt there were a number of problems with the way the major traditions of research in the sociology of youth theorize class and, within the ethnographic research, locality, rather than class, seemed important to my informants. Consequently, in the rest of this discussion I will explore the meaning and importance of neighbourhood, or 'locale', in young people's subjective understandings and categorizations of themselves, others and their social world.

### **The Significance of Locale**

During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of sociological studies generated theoretical and empirical interest in communities, often those based in more rural areas (e.g. Bell and Newby, 1971; 1974). Since then community studies have become less fashionable in sociology and discussion of issues surrounding identity and subjective feelings of belonging to particular localities has developed more fruitfully in anthropological studies of modern Britain (e.g. Cohen, 1982; 1985; 1986).

Hamilton argues:

*Community continues to be of both a practical and ideological significance to most people, and is thus an important area of study for the social sciences — despite prognostications to the contrary by those who see in the concept something which obscures the all-important structural dimensions of class in social action. The study of community will continue to be necessary as long as local relationships play an important part in people's lives and until we feel that the only determining feature of our social lives is our relationship to the means of production and membership of a social class (Hamilton p. 8, foreword to Cohen, 1985).*

I would add that issues of community and locality may be particularly significant sources of cultural identity and social action in less urban areas. Indeed, in this section I hope to show how a sense of locality and belonging informed young people's accounts of grow-

ing up in rural areas.

Informants described and explained aspects of their post-16 experiences in terms of a socio-geographic analysis of their home districts. They talked about different types of young people, from different parts of town, having different attitudes to school and taking different career paths at the age of 16. My interest in these cultural maps was alerted by a theoretical concern to avoid imposing 'objective' definitions of class upon the informants and their accounts. Rather, I was more interested in the ways young people themselves classified people in their towns. Cohen says that:

*the ethnography of locality is an account of how people experience their difference from others... [and that]... local experience mediates national identity, and, therefore an anthropological understanding of the latter cannot proceed without knowledge of the former (Cohen, 1982 p.2 and p.13).*

I would argue that the experience of class is also mediated locally and that any attempt to understand the consciousness of class, its subjective heart, must explore the local site of its operation and how it is experienced locally. For this reason, I introduce the idea of 'locale: the way young people maintained a sense of distinctiveness and a feeling of belonging to specific localities within their rural areas. 'Locales' are mapped less easily than physical geographical features. They could, for instance, be constituted by a particular housing estate, a side of town or a constellation of houses and streets. 'Locales' have significance in that they are commonly-held interpretations of local social geography. They are sections of the town or village accorded often implicit statuses by their inhabitants and can be described as mental maps delimiting the social horizons of people in terms of their feelings of belonging and identity.

Through 'locale' young people in Blackstone Bay and Batwith differentiated themselves, and these 'locales' became apparent when the most straightforward and simple questions were asked of them about what it was like to live in a certain place and where other 'types' of young people lived.

I explored this idea of 'locale' in both my areas of study, but here I will only draw upon material from Blackstone Bay (though my comments apply equally to the other area of research). The River Pask cuts this small fishing town in two and provides the physical basis for a more complex, and for us, more interesting, division between the inhabitants of the East and West-sides. In their descriptions and accounts of growing up in this rural town young people from Blackstone Bay immediately and continuously divided their area into two parts: East-side and West-side. Whilst the division of the town into sides — with associated socio-cultural statuses — is common knowledge to the people of Blackstone Bay, this was not a division that was previous known or apparent to me and I quickly incorporated the idea

of an East/West side split into interviews and discussions. I will now turn to some of the interview material to attempt to illustrate what I mean by 'locale'.

Firstly, I refer to Jimmy and his mother who live in a village just outside of Blackstone Bay, followed by Carl and Janice (West-side), and finally Steve and Nicola (East-side).

*RM:* What are the people of your age like in Blackstone Bay? Are they alright or ...

*Jimmy:* (Interrupts) Well, it depends what side you're from. There's different bits ...

*RM:* People have mentioned this to me ...

*Jimmy:* Yeah, all down there is classed as East-siders and West-siders. West-siders are posh. East-siders are supposed to be (pause) slum area, common area.

*Mrs Pursey:* They've got a different accent. You go down and you know if you are talking to an East-sider or West-sider.

*Jimmy:* All the East-siders are trouble-makers ... keep out of the way of 'em. At school it was always East-siders and West-siders fighting. They always used to fight. It was who you knew at school. If you knew the right people at school you didn't get filled in ...

*RM:* Do you think that there's any difference between here and the East-side?

*Carl (West-side):* East-side is a lot rougher, where all the rough 'uns live. Council houses where you get that type of person. West-side is a bit more select.

*RM:* Is there really a difference between here and the East-side?

*Janice (West-side):* Yeah, East-side there's a lot more aggro. That's where all the rough 'uns come from. There's a few rough 'uns come from this side, but not as many. They say its cos they come from council houses and we own our own houses over here. So they fight.

*Steve (East-side):* People on the West-side seem to think that people on the East-side are all right rogues and ruffians.

*Nicola (East-side):* Its not really imagined. This side, the East-side, was the fishing side. This side is definitely rougher. That sides got all the good addresses ... where all the teachers go. And all the retired gentfolk. All this is council estates on this side really.

There was clear and common agreement amongst the informants on the spatial definition of 'locale' and that these were used to divide up the rural town, and to divide the town from the surrounding areas of countryside. The vocabulary relied upon by informants is interesting in that it compounds disparate social categories into a general category of 'locale' (East-side/West-side). Reference is made to 'toffs', elsewhere 'swots', the 'middle class', 'posh', 'select' private housing, and so on to describe the West-side of the town.

The opposite, the East-side, is defined as 'rough' and 'where the rough uns come from', 'a slum area', 'common council housing', 'working class' and 'aggro'. The meanings of these 'locales' were thus constructed and conveyed in a series of oppositions which were commonly-held and frequently referred to. In this way, they amount to the most significant descriptive and explanatory device used by local people to introduce the stranger and outsider, for example, the social researcher, to their cultural world. 'Locales' are used by young people to differentiate themselves from others according to certain value-laden criteria. They conflate reference to *housing type* (whether council owned or privately rented), *social status* and *dialect/accents* within one clearer, overarching and perhaps immediately more obvious category: *locale*; East-side versus West-side.

*Social class* was used infrequently to describe this division. Virtually all those who did use the terminology of a class analysis were, or had been, A-level students:

RM: Are there different social classes here?

Roger (West-side): Yeah. A very broad outline would be the West/East side split, you know. The West-side — there's more older, conservative people. Houses of more value tend to be over here. East-side tends to be more of a community, it's the old town. More working class, I would say.

RM: Are people the same or different on each side?

Roger: They're different. They have different accents for a start. Different dialects... the East-side's got more community... you tend to get large families who stick together — the Collertons, the MacKenzies, the Herons. They are like clans really. People have loads of cousins they don't know about.

Derek (West-side): I'd say that Blackstone Bay is a class society. Definitely. Up the West-side is definitely middle class.

RM: How do you decide what's middle class?

Derek: Now it's where people live. It's just something you denote in people.

RM: How?

Derek: We, being at school, pick people out for their academic ability — really us. The other people are sort of (pause) plebs,

RM: Are 6th formers middle class then?

Derek: Not all of them.

Richard (West-side): But more of the, well, working class leave at 16 rather than stay on and do A-levels... All around here is middle class, the West-side.

RM: Is the East-side working class?

Margaret (West-side): Yeah, most of it, on the estates. People see it as that.

RM: Do you count yourselves as middle class?

Margaret: I've never really thought about it.

Derek and Richard: (pause) Yes.

Even when terms like 'middle class' and 'working class' were used by informants to describe Blackstone Bay, they were still used with reference to East-side/West-side. Often explanations for why people stayed on at school, or left at 16, and for why different normative orientations to school existed pre-16 (Brown, 1987), were phrased in terms of 'locale'. Thus, *educational orientation* and *academic ability* became crucial elements of informants' discussions of 'locales'.

Earlier I noted how terms like 'toff', 'posh', 'swot' and 'West-sider' were used quite interchangeably by young people. These terms were recognised by young people as referring to themselves. Dimensions of social status ascribed by young people (being a 'toff' or being 'rough') along with perceived orientation to education (whether or not you were a 'swot') and housing type (whether 'slum', council house or 'posh', private house) were used as intermeshed systems for socially defining and psychologically distancing themselves from other young people. Informants employed these stereo-typical images to dissociate themselves from neighbourhoods they did not want to live in, from people they did not want to be like and from expectations and futures they did not want to have. Cohen has made a similar point about self-image, identity and locality:

*the search for boundaries of identity goes further than between ethnic groups, localities, class, gender and generation. It extends even more insistently into small local communities... the compelling need to declare identity is social as well as psychological. (Cohen, 1986: preface p.4).*

When asked what sort of people got into trouble in school, or left at 16 or were unlikely to get a decent job, people replied 'East-siders', (including people from the East-side). When asked who worked hardest at school, achieved the best academic results or were likely to stay on in education, people replied 'West-siders'. 'Locale' was used as both description and explanation (as a source of identity and theory) in relation to some of the central questions of the research: the cultural responses to youth to schooling, work, unemployment and the Youth Training Scheme. The final two extracts from interviews help to illustrate this:

RM: Are there different types of people around here?

Easty: A few of 'em on the new estate, on the other side, walk around with their noses in the air. They think they're great and they're just shits.

RM: Is that the kids?

Easty: Well, the whole family, mother, father, kids... The kids at school, they think they're great. It's all 'yes, yes, yes'. Just prats. Always crawling. Always wanting to be the best. Teacher's pet and all that crap. A lot of 'em stay on to their 6th form. I had a couple of mates from round here that went. Working class lads that



stopped on. They didn't last long. Too many swots around them. Swots, them from the new estate, used to sit down and do the work. You had to sit down and work and that was it. None of the kids would mess about. So they got fed up with it. They used to mess about when they were with us. We used to have a laugh.

*James:* It just seems that all the civilised people are over this side. It's honestly like that. There's a difference in accent, you wouldn't believe it. They are alright but some of them can be pretty nasty. They're usually fishermen. You'll get the odd few who stay on, but they are doing re-take O-levels. I don't think there's many doing A-levels. They're not really bothered. They all want to leave and be fishermen.

Easty was an unemployed, East-sider and James was an A-level student who lived on the West-side.

In reviewing these cultural divisions in one, small rural town it can be seen that these informants employ shared conceptions of 'locale' and have theories based on 'locale' to explain patterns of post-16 labour market transitions, (for instance, the tendency for East-siders to leave school at 16 for, they hoped, jobs, and for West-siders to stay on into sixth form and Further Education). It seems that differing shared cultural orientations to education are specific to broad groups of people split by 'locale'. West-siders display an instrumental orientation to education using academic success as the key to 'getting on' and 'getting out' of their collapsed, local labour market. 'East-siders', on the other hand, operated a more critical and oppositional orientation to education, leaving school as soon as possible for, they hoped, the 'real world' of work. This was certainly confirmed in more direct discussions about their experiences of schooling (see MacDonald 1988b).

The theoretical impetus behind the exploration of 'locale' was founded upon a dissatisfaction with more formal analyses of young people's career progressions based only upon 'objective' characteristics such as occupational class. This discussion has instead identified and explored the categories and theories of classification used by young people themselves.

In comparing these local, cultural theories with data drawn from the questionnaire survey, I found that the descriptions provided by informants of their 'locale', and the uses 'locale' had in explaining their social world, seem, according to the survey, to reflect the reality of post-school progression. 'Locale' was found to have analytical power when compared with more 'objective', 'harder' data drawn from the survey (e.g. parental occupational class as a predictor of post-16 career tracks). For instance, the description of Blackstone Bay East-siders as people who leave education for the 'real world' of work at the age of 16 was supported when survey data was tabulated according to 'locale'. Eight out of ten followed this path, compared with half from the West-side who stayed on into post-16 education.

What young people described in talking about different types of people in different parts of town, are collectivities of youth separated not only spatially but also culturally. They talk about East-siders, for example, as a distinct group sharing certain cultural orientations, accents, a type of housing, prospects and so on. If we look again at the terms informing discussion of 'locale', it is clear that it does not require a great leap of the sociological imagination to understand these as descriptions of local, social class cultures.

Different patterns of economic and housing development on Blackstone Bay's East and West-sides, through history, have widened the basic geographical divide (see MacDonald 1988a). This has constituted the basis for a social and cultural division of the town into East and West-siders. This cultural division has been manifest over a long period, according to some of the older local people I interviewed, and 'locale' obviously still retains a great deal of potency in the cultural outlooks of young people from Blackstone Bay. As Cohen again says:

*So if individuals refer to their cognitive maps to orient themselves in interaction, the same is true also of collectivities. The maps are part of their cultural store, accumulated over generations, and thus, heavily scented by the past (Cohen 1985, p.101).*

Part of this particular ethnographic exercise, exploring the significance of 'locale', was directed by a concern not to impose the language, concepts and categories of a social class analysis upon the meanings expressed by informants. Indeed, the vocabulary of class rarely entered young people's descriptions of their social world. Though such accounts were devoid of overt expressions of class consciousness, as defined by Mann (1971) for instance, this does not mean that they did not define and classify people and their social world. It is clear, however, that the images and language of 'locale' used and developed by the youth of Blackstone Bay, and my other research area — Batwith — are very similar to the image and language used popularly and by sociologists to describe social class.

So, despite the fact that on only a small number of occasions did informants themselves express the bounded divisions between 'locales' in terms of social class, what we have in young people's more frequent talk of East-siders and West-siders are, I would venture, expressions of a quite keen consciousness of local class culture formations translated into the language of 'locale'. They describe class cultural divisions as they have developed, and are mediated, locally in one small, rural town. Both Brake and Cohen, though working in different traditions, make similar points:

*We are born into social classes, themselves complexly stratified with distinct 'ways of life', modified by region and neighbourhood. This local sub-culture into which we are first socialised is that parochial world against which we measure social relations that we meet in later life, and in*

*which we begin to build a social identity. Our social identity is constructed from the nexus of social relations and meanings surrounding us, and from this we learn to make sense of ourselves including our relation to the dominant culture (Brake 1985, p.3).*

*... people map out their social identities and find their social orientations among the relationships which are symbolically close to them, rather than in relation to an abstract sense of society (Cohen 1985, p.27).*

## **Conclusion**

The first conclusion of the discussion is that, in terms of the subjective meanings held, shared and expressed by informants to classify their social world, what is regarded as important is not 'class' in any objectively definable economic sense, but a host of cultural phenomena coded as 'locale'. Economic relationships were largely irrelevant. People were hesitant to class themselves under any of the categories normally used by sociologists and 'locales' became the source of cultural identity and orientation. In general these orientations, responses and types of practical, cultural knowledge developed by young people were closely linked to specific areas within the towns. In this way differentiated local culture informs and shapes individual 'solutions' and collective responses to the limited range of economically structured 'opportunities' facing young people. As I argued earlier, youth transitions are too often plotted, described and analysed with little or no reference to the role of youth cultures in their formation. I hope my discussion of the cultural orientations and responses of this group of rural youth, rooted as they were in 'locale', has at least illustrated the value of incorporating quantitative description of youth transitions with qualitative exploration of youth cultures.

As it has been long argued, the source of social imagery lies in immediate social experiences and social relationships, rather than in socio-economic categories (e.g. Bott, 1957, Bulmer, 1975). The second main conclusion is that for the majority of young women and men, the *school* remains the prime realm of shared social experience *and* that this is particularly true for young people in rural areas. They are often dispersed in small communities, with few other young people, poorly served by transport networks and have few of the leisure and recreational facilities often afforded urban youth. Moreover, the youth sub-cultures of the city streets, the Punks, Rudeboys and Skinheads well described by the CCCS, were all but absent from this sample of rural youth. The school, not the stylistic youth sub-culture, constituted the central point of contact and communication and was the place where youth developed their consciousness of difference from others.

The power of locality in defining and mediating consciousness of social class division may be particu-

larly important in small rural communities like those I examined, because of their small, and fairly stable populations, the closeness and immediacy of different neighbourhoods and the lack of large-scale industry (limiting work-based patterns of solidarity and collective consciousness)<sup>(5)</sup>.

For youth in rural areas, then, the school is the one social institution encountered by all, and encountered by all collectively. In the school, friendships were formed and collective orientations were developed and shared. From the school, at 16, young people took different paths toward work and adulthood. Thus, at the ages of 18 and 19, memories of school, and the different types of people and attitudes at school, play a central role in the way youth make sense of their social world.

The informants in this study were involved in quite diverse post-16 activities — being unemployed, participating in government schemes, going to school and college, working in jobs. It is perhaps true that the disruption that unemployment has brought to the traditional routes taken by young people to adulthood, has also served to fragment the historical sources of subjective class imagery, identity and consciousness. As writers like Phil Cohen (1983) and Bob Hollands (1990) have explained, young workers, as a class grouping, are no longer apprenticed in traditional forms of collective consciousness through waged factory labour. John Clarke makes the following observation, which is particularly pertinent here:

*Locality continues to act as a focus for some working class culture identifications, often amongst those who are in some senses marginal to production and to the collective solidarities generated there. Locality continues to act as a basis for collective activity among working class adolescents, both in the sense of providing cultural identities... for many otherwise 'unnamed' youth groupings... and of constituting their 'social space' (Clarke, 1979 p.251).*

What I have dealt with in the latter part of this discussion are exactly some of these 'unnamed youth groupings', not sub-cultures as defined by the CCCS, but fairly loosely-knit collectivities of young people who classified themselves largely by reference to 'locale', rather than class or style. For these young people other dimensions of experience, primarily the experiencing of schooling and the locally differentiated orientations to schooling, became dominant in their classification of the social world. Murdock and McCron (1976) make the following point:

*While it is true that young people are largely excluded from central areas of adult life, and confined to age specific institutions, it does not follow that they are cut off from the wider system of social stratification. On the contrary, through the insistent mediations of the family, the neighbourhood and the school, class inequalities penetrate into their everyday lives, structuring*

*both their social experience and their response to it. Schools provide an obvious case in point. They are institutions not simply of age segregation but of class domination. They operate not only to delay adolescents' entry onto the labour market but also to reproduce the existing structure of class inequalities and class relations. Far from uniting youth as a single subordinate 'class' therefore, the school serves to remake and confirm the prevailing patterns of class divisions and antagonisms (p.18).*

This, then, is the main conclusion of my discussion: it is in the realms of social life away from direct economic production — most importantly in the classroom and the immediate locality of neighbourhood — that youth experience difference between themselves and others, and use these perceived cultural differences to classify and understand the social world. For these young women and men in a corner of rural England, as no doubt for others, class is experienced and given meaning at just such an immediate, local level. If sociologists of youth aspire to develop comprehensive accounts of transitions, if policy makers hope to form effective policy for youth and if those working directly with young people wish to provide successful schemes and courses, then we must first understand the local, class cultural worlds that underlie and inform the way in which young people make sense of themselves and their localities and, in turn, that shape the steps they take towards adulthood.

#### Notes

1. The integration of these strands of research has also been advocated by Roberts (1987) and Coles (1986) and has become one of the main themes of the current ESRC 16 to 19 Initiative.
2. By the CCCS tradition I shall mean, for example, the work of Cohen, P., (1972), Clarke and Jefferson (1972), Hall and Jefferson (1976), Willis (1978) and Hebdige (1979).
3. The observational techniques largely employed in the CCCS's 'naturalist methodology' mean that there is a tendency in their research to ignore young people's own interpretations and analyses. These are more readily available within an interview-based investigation.
4. Blackstone Bay and Batwith are, of course, pseudonyms, as are the names of informants in this paper. The local labour markets selected for investigation are discussed in more depth elsewhere, as is the background to my research in these rural areas (Coles 1988, MacDonald 1988a).
5. However, it should be noted that a similar pattern of low youth 'class consciousness', but keen consciousness of 'local social stratification', has been reported by other researchers in urban areas of the North-east of England:

*The main impression we gained from the young adults was a lack of class consciousness in national terms, but an acute awareness of different social strata as experienced in their own areas (Coffield, Borrill and Marshall 1986, p.118 and 119).*

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# **C**ore Curriculum - Education for Change or the Status Quo?

**MURIEL SAWBRIDGE**

No-one in community and youth work can be in any doubt that questions about the desirability or not of a national curriculum for youth work are being debated (see the article by Davies, 1991 in the last issue of this journal). It is not entirely clear from where the initiative for this debate came, but not since the publication of the Thompson Report 'Experience and Participation' in 1982 has there been so much nation-wide discussion of aims and objectives. It is clearly a process stimulated by the introduction of a national curriculum for schools. There are many who see it as a government inspired move to control the activities of community and youth workers in the same manner as teachers. It could also be said to be a product of the leisure/education debates which have emerged as a result of local authority fiscal measures. Here education department based principal officers fending off colonising moves of leisure and parks department chiefs by emphasising the educational objective of the work, may have paved the way. The debate is given weight by those who, for at least two decades, have thought that youth work has lost its way and become a hostage to community development. Barely concealed by the 'back to youth work' view, is the belief that the introduction of a community remit to the work, mainly as a result of the Fairbairn Milson Report (1970), marginalised action geared to young people; furthermore it served to downgrade the traditional processes upon which the profession was based.

The full time training agencies were seen to be prime movers in this process. A fairly constant flow of critical opinion on this issue has been reported from principal employers over the years to the Training Agencies Group meetings. It is not surprising, therefore, that the idea of a national curriculum should emerge, not only to fend off the inter-departmental colonisations within local government but also as a vehicle to gaining more control over an occupational group which many employers feel has got out of control.

Another explanation is centred on the role of the National Youth Bureau in securing its own future. Government responses to grant-aided non elected bodies over the last decade have primarily been a mixture of redundancy, privatisation and amalgamation. The argument goes, that by taking a proactive role in fostering the idea of a curriculum for the newly conscious, education oriented youth work, the National

Youth Bureau would not only secure its own future but would increase its centrality

in the scheme of things. Undoubtedly its track record in research and publications and its skills in media communications placed it head and shoulders above other organisations which might claim such a role. Time has also shown that as an organisation it has provided extremely valuable and accessible material on the pathways to and the form a curriculum might take.

At the time of writing, the second ministerial conference has been held and the complexities of the consultation process and the problems of arriving at some degree of consensus are more apparent. What is becoming evident from hearing those who attended the conferences is that there is quite a lot of consensus at a general theoretical level about the processes of the work. Most central being that it is primarily educational, rooted in informal methods, especially facilitating participation.

The thornier questions about aims and objectives however seemed more difficult to resolve. These were most evident in the debates about the so called 'Mission Statement', debates which are fundamentally geared to explanations of disadvantage and inequality as the locus of the change process. It is therefore surprising to see the clarity of the recommendations produced by the National Youth Bureau from the second conference particularly in regard to the first recommendation ('Statement of Purpose') upon which all the others rest. Indeed it raises questions about the participatory experience at conferences and the degree to which perceptions of what has gone on are shared. This recommendation states that the purpose of youth work it to:

*redress all forms of inequality... it should be designed to promote equal opportunity through challenging oppressions such as racism and sexism and all those which spring from differences of culture, race, language, sexual identity, gender, disability, age, religion and class..*

It is hard to imagine a more radical statement of purpose from a professional group and one must give credit to those who had the courage to formulate it in such an unsympathetic climate.

Some years ago I proffered the view that there were fundamental conflicts about the purpose of commun-

ity and youth work which the profession seemed incapable of addressing (Sawbridge 1983). At the time it was suggested that community and youth work could take as part of its *raison d'être* challenging inequalities and oppression based on gender and race but seemed unable even to name, let alone confront in any official sense, class based inequality and oppression.

When I saw the 1990 second ministerial conference recommendations my political pessimism was for a short period of time suspended. I take no pleasure from the accuracy of the later realisation that the Minister, to whom the recommendations were addressed, would quickly distance himself from the aspects of the recommendations which involved societal as distinct from personal change. Indeed the response to the recommendations by the now ex-Minister (such is the speed of change at governmental level), is a masterpiece of the civilised put down (see letter from Mr Alan Howarth to the conference participants January 1991).

He congratulates everyone involved, stating that the major value of the conference was the consultation process itself and predicting that there will be wide support for much that underlies the Conference Statement. The letter then goes on to cast doubt about the language used, particularly some of the

*more politically charged terms. The relationship of the Youth Service to politics does, I believe need the most careful consideration... contentious ideology which is exclusive and divisive can only be stultifying and ought to be put aside... if, for example, we think of young people as victims of oppression — we stereotype and demean them.*

On reflection and in view of the issues emerging around the curriculum I now think the views I expressed in 1983 were mistaken, grossly oversimplifying the problems of the profession. The problems now appear far more all embracing and are probably best seen as an inability to establish aims and objectives that are acceptable to powerful interests and that fundamentally challenge the basis of inequality in British society, whether it be based on race, gender or class.

In many senses the problem is shared by social workers but can be said to have been confronted at least in the literature more openly than in community and youth work. In short, to quote from one of the more reflective of the publications

*there is an essential contradiction that the state both employs social workers and incorporates interests which act to cause the problems social workers have to deal with (Parry et al. 1979).*

Similar views are expressed in Bailey and Brake (1975) and Corrigan and Leonard (1978). In common with social workers, community and youth workers are constantly dealing with issues that cannot be encompassed in the social control function or in the personal development paradigm. Yet because of dependence

on state funding and deep, often undeclared disagreements about the nature of the society in which we live, a challenge to the dominant ideas of causation is dismissed, whether in the statutory or voluntary sector. Yet without some clearly articulated arguments about the causal factors which produce the problems and needs the profession is trying to address, any attempt to establish a curriculum content and process will be at best futile or at worst a denial of the nature of the issues at work. In schools for example, it is easier to arrive at aims and objectives geared to ensuring that children have access to basic numeracy and literacy skills and even, if more debatable, skills that employers think are important. As in community and youth work, it is easier to see the problems of young people as a combination of maturation or inadequate socialisation. Underpinning all the debates on the idea of a curriculum, though not always fully articulated, are views of the needs of young people and more often, the problems 'they' present to society at large. The second conference appears, from the perspective of the uninvited, to have started to question some of the taken for granted assumptions hitherto operating. If nothing else, the whole process so far has highlighted important gaps in the consensus about the shared understanding of the aims and objectives of the work. This is no surprise to anyone who knows of the variability of practice throughout the country, where it is clear that fundamentally different definitions of the work and the methods to be employed are in operation. Her Majesty's Inspectorate (1989) are right to highlight the variability of training experience between the training agencies and to spell out the difficulties for employers in knowing what they are getting from particular courses. What should also have been added is the difficulty encountered by trainers in knowing how to prepare workers for the imponderables of an employment setting which makes it almost impossible to gauge employer perspectives and practice.

This could be said to emphasize the need for some kind of curriculum development that that profession can own, share and practice. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to recognize some of the major problems to be encountered in its achievement. The most critical of these being how the needs and problems of young people are defined, particularly in regard to underlying causal factors which affect their resolution. It is not without significance that focus on or even mention of community work has been marginalized in the debate, yet the post 60s community development work produced not only some of the most articulate arguments on issues and the problems of definition but also forged the way in much of the practice particularly in regard to participation and empowerment (see for example, CDP 1975, CDP 1977, McConnell 1977).

To some extent it is necessary to revisit some of the history of the role of youth work to assess the current dilemmas. The current preoccupations with the de-

velopment of a curriculum for youth work have been in evidence for many years. Throughout history young people have been defined as problematic, see for example, Pearson (1983), Davies (1986) and Jeffs (1979). The youth work literature abounds with descriptions of varying problems presented to the adult population by the young and the process of growing up is more often than not seen as difficult, hence the influence of Erikson (1971) and Matza (1964).

Little attention is given to unproblematic youth of the kind described by the National Children's Bureau on the basis of sound research methodology (Fogelman 1976) or the way the media structures perceptions of the young so effectively demonstrated by Cohen (1973). Even less attention is given to the young as victims of social and economic forces of the kind described by Coffield et al. (1986).

It is of course possible to argue that without definitions of youth as problematic there would be no community and youth work occupation and in many senses this is at the heart of the current dilemmas around the question of a national curriculum. For most of the post-war years community and youth workers have been able to operate fairly independently under a broad, ill defined consensus of what the work is about and how it should be organized and enacted. The publication of policy documents such as the Albemarle Report (1960), the Fairbairn Milson Report (1969) and the Thompson Report (1980) lent weight to the idea that the profession knew what it was about and where it was going.

Albemarle was operating in a climate of 'race riots' and 'youth cultures' where the young were being portrayed in the media as symbols of a disintegrating culture. The committee clearly saw youth work as a substitute for the perceived loss of character-building opportunities provided by a national service no longer in operation. The Fairbairn Milson Report was written in a climate of concern about 'disintegrating and disaffected' communities where the young were seen as particularly vulnerable to alienation. The Thompson Report was written in a climate of considerable complexity; as before the young were seen as problematic but so were the professionals in the way the career paths of workers were monitored and controlled, hence the establishment of one of the foundations of any professional organisation, the creation of a body to monitor training and thereby professional standards via the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work.

In many senses, if one applies current terminology, the 'curriculum' was firming up. So-called constructive leisure and character forming activities were seen as important in the early 60s; by the late 1960s the significance of community influences was recognised, and the need to attract young people particularly young women who seemed to remove themselves from the ambit of youth work as currently defined. By the early 1980s there was a much clearer set of

statements about racism and sexism and the need to increase the focus on the participation of the young in the decision making that affected their lives.

Yet in the post second world war reports there was an underlying and mainly unchallenged consensus that the focus of change was the young. There was no real debate about the way the perceived problems of the young were related to the structure of society and the way opportunities and rewards are allocated in it. Also absent was any in-depth analysis about how a relatively minor occupational group, currently totalling in the region of 6,000 full time workers and heavily dependent on more than half a million part-time voluntary and paid sessional staff, could influence the life chances of young people other than at a highly localised and individual level.

In many ways therefore it is not surprising that there is so much variation in the way the work is structured and delivered that the idea of a regional (let alone a national) service does not stand up to scrutiny. In fact, regionally based research by Jean Spence and myself (see Sawbridge and Spence 1990) has demonstrated such a wide variation in definition and practice between one local authority and another as to make it very difficult to conceive of a single occupational group. This variation is manifested in over fifty different job titles over nine local authorities for what appear to be broadly similar jobs, as well as marked differences in the way the work is defined within and between nearby local authorities.

This paper therefore is working from the assumption that there is considerable variation in the theoretical and practice underpinnings of the profession, and that current attempts by government to seek more clarity and control of the occupational understandings and practices are not new. What is new is a more proactive control agenda, which Davies (1991) sees as part of a Thatcherite conspiracy making the ministerial conference recommendations even more surprising. There is no doubt that the Thatcher government heightened the profile on problematic youth whether they be 'cardboard city residents', 'employment training refuseniks', or 'girls eager for pregnancy to jump the housing list'. It is however highly questionable to argue that this is purely a manifestation of Thatcherism. To do so, in my view, denies the whole of the control agenda that has operated throughout community and youth work since its inception.

The starting point must be a recognition that although the terminology may be new, the idea of a curriculum is not. Albemarle in the 50s and 60s, Fairbairn Milson in the 70s and Thompson in the 80s were all in their own ways defining a curriculum and justifying a number of methods. The difference between them and the recommendations from the second ministerial conference is that the reports of the 60s, 70s and 80s focussed more on pathological explanations and individual change processes. The conference of 1990, by whatever means, clearly stated that inequality and

oppression are central to the work — and this is at a time when the climate for societal explanation has never been less favourable in the post Second World War period! It will be more than of passing interest to know how much of the Statement of Purpose defined at the second conference survives.

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# **outh Policies in the 1980s and 1990s: One for the Rich, One for the Poor?**

**DEBRA ROKER  
and LINDSEY MEAN**

The 1980s witnessed the implementation of a two-tier youth policy by the current Conservative government. The opportunities of certain groups of young people were increased, whilst for other groups they were restricted. Research work recently undertaken at the University of Sheffield demonstrates the implications of these policies very clearly, by focussing on their effects on two different groups of young people. The first research project explored the lives of 75 young people being educated in a private school, all of whom were aged between 15 and 18 and doing GCSEs and A levels. The second research project involved a more diverse group of 174 young people, most of whom were unemployed with a few in part-time education. Both projects were carried out in the north of England during 1987-1990 and, although undertaken separately, were linked to a larger national study of young people<sup>(1)</sup>. It soon became evident that there were considerable differences in the attitudes, opportunities and lifestyles of these two groups. In particular, it became clear that the policies of the Conservative government in the 1980s have further polarised the opportunities of two groups of young people whose opportunities were already unequal. The article describes two areas where the contrasts between the two groups were particularly stark: their opportunities in education, training and employment, and their perceptions of politics. The article suggests that the government's youth policies for the 1990s are continuing and extending the direction of these early policies.

The first study involved a sample of privately educated young people, a group of people rarely explored in youth research; hence some information about the private sector of education would be useful at this point. Private schools have long been central to the Conservative Party's aim of promoting parental choice and increasing educational standards. The role of private schools in the educational system remains contentious however. Whilst the Conservative Party supports the existence of private schools, the Labour Party views them as both elitist and divisive and, although unlikely to abolish them, would remove all state subsidies. (The arguments both for and against private education are extensive and detailed elsewhere; see for example Cibulka and Boyd, 1989; Walford, 1990). The current Conservative government has thus supported and promoted the private sector of educa-

tion. Walford (1987) identifies three main means of support: First, the Assisted

Places Scheme (APS). This scheme provides state funded, means tested places for children and young people to attend private schools; many schools are only able to remain open because of the financial support the APS provides. Second, the government has provided ideological support, via critical comparisons of private and state schools, and the existence of the APS implying the better education received in private schools. Third, the government has provided financial support (again via the APS) and by allowing private schools to be registered charities with various tax and VAT exemptions.

During the 1980s, the numbers in private schools grew steadily. Over half a million children and young people aged 5-16 are now educated in private schools, representing 7% of the (declining) school age population. However, very little is known about the young people who attend these schools: they are generally excluded from studies of youth because of the difficulties in gaining access to private schools and the pupils who attend them. What research has been conducted has shown, for example, that the stay-on rate at the age of 16 is much higher, a crucial factor in later employment success; in 1981 20% of all pupils in education post-16 were in private schools, mainly doing A levels. Additionally, success rates at A level are high: in 1981 45% of those privately educated left school with three or more A levels, compared with 7.1% of state educated young people (Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1984). Private school pupils have also been shown to aim for higher types of further education (in particular University) and for the more prestigious courses such as law and medicine (Elgin, 1984).

The first research project described in this paper involved a group of 75 privately educated young people aged 15-18, mainly female, attending a prestigious private school in the north of England. Each young person completed a questionnaire and was also individually interviewed, the interview explored their career plans, attitudes to education, training and employment, and political values. The second research project was a longitudinal study of unemployed young people. It is important to note that at the time of the study a number of this group, although registered as unemployed, were in part-time education; a number

were also trying to pursue more 'alternative' careers (such as music) whilst signing on. This sample were aged between 16 and 19 years at the start of the study and lived in a large northern city. The main attitudes and views that are discussed in this paper were obtained through interviews and questionnaires, the latter including space for individual and personal comments. These methods ensured particular topics were raised and also allowed the participants to raise issues which concerned or interested them personally. Comparing the two groups revealed the social, political and occupational gulf that exists between them. It is important to stress at this point, however, that the paper is not simply a comparison of those educated in private 'versus' state schools. It is acknowledged that different groups of young people have for a long time had very different experiences in education, training, and employment, many of these preceding the lifetime of the Conservative government. The point this paper aims to demonstrate is the role that the current government's youth policies have played in broadening and extending the differences between the most advantaged and disadvantaged youth in this country. Two aspects of the results are detailed below; these two areas were chosen because the differences between the groups were particularly noticeable. First, their views and experiences relating to education, training and employment opportunities are described, followed by their attitudes to politics. In both these areas, information is provided using tables of summary data and the comments of individuals in the two groups. Finally, there is an examination of wider issues of youth policy, and a consideration of the prospects for these groups in the future. (Note that for ease of description the two groups are referred to below as the 'private school' group and the 'unemployed' group.)

### **Education, Training and Employment Opportunities**

The majority of the privately educated sample believed that the policies of the Conservative government provided *all* young people with the opportunity to make a success of their lives. This feeling was typified by the following two comments:

*... the government... treat everyone the same. They let each of us make a success of our lives if we work hard enough...*

*Well I think everyone has the opportunity to do well now. It does not make any difference how much money you have or how clever you are. Everyone can do well it's up to them, we all have a real choice.*

The recent experiences of the unemployed group, however, led many of them to disagree with this view. They felt that recent legislation had, in fact, narrowed and restricted their choices. In particular, the policy which effectively made YTS compulsory was seen as reducing their choice and autonomy. As one 17 year-old forced to go onto the YTS complained:

*... I had to go on the Scheme. I feel and many others feel the same, they have been forced because there is no more options for them. 16 to 17 year-olds have no say in anything, they cannot vote...*

For many of the unemployed group, the recent changes in benefit rules had clearly increased their feelings of disaffection and levels of poverty:

*I am having financial worries and heavily in debt (not gambling) and always in worry of being homeless. I am not close to my family and under great stress and pain. No job, no money.*

The main difference between the two groups, however, lay in how their educational history and educational opportunities determined and influenced their futures. Past studies have demonstrated, for example, that the decision to stay on or leave school at the age of 16 is a key factor in determining future life opportunities. For many young people, however, this decision is pre-empted by the financial costs of further education, and yet it is generally these young people who are over-represented in the unemployment statistics. The impact of this decision at 16 was reflected in the two groups. At the private school, leaving at the age of 16 was rarely considered; the only 'option' was continued education to eighteen prior to entry into higher education, in particular University. Indeed, the period between 14 and 18 years is a distinct phase at most private schools. For the private school group, 64 of the 75 pupils (85.3%) said they planned to go on to University or Polytechnic. As one of the private school pupils, who had just gained a place to study medicine, pointed out:

*We are all pretty similar. It is just the accepted thing to do. You do A levels, maybe have a year out to travel, then a degree, then a really good job. To be honest once you are here that's it, that's what everyone does.*

For the private school pupils, it was extremely rare for anyone to want to go to work at age 16 (or even at 18), and anyone who did so was variously described as 'weird' or a 'drop-out'; YTS was an even lower status option which no-one would even consider. The only real option for the private school group was education and professional career.

It was clear from discussions with the private school group that they were unlikely to have to consider the financial costs of post-16 education. For some of the unemployed group, however, the costs of further education were central to their decision, and in many cases was prohibitive. Despite government policy aiming to encourage young people to stay on at school, many of the unemployed group still left (even though 60% believed their education had been of value to them). A small number (9%) stated that they currently wished to be in education, and almost all of this group expected to have entered further or higher education by the following year. Of those who stated the reason for not staying on at school or re-entering

education earlier, some reported that their parents could not, or would not, provide financial support for post-16 education; a number added that they were refused grants from the local council for continued education. Even those who tried alternative routes into higher education were frustrated by recent policy changes. For 16 and 17 year-olds, the option of part-time study whilst receiving income support was suddenly stopped in September, 1988. For many in the unemployed group, partially completed courses were abandoned, with the only likely 'option' being YTS or the near impossible task of finding alternative funding. One 17 year-old in part-time education survived without benefit in order to complete her course; fortunately it was only a few months until she became 18 years-old and was again eligible for benefit. As she said:

*My income support was stopped from September 1988... because I would not sign a form committing myself to a YTS Scheme.*

However, more recent policy changes have also affected eligibility for benefit whilst in post-18 part-time education. eligibility for income support/unemployment benefit is no longer assessed on the number of hours teaching per week, but whether the course itself is considered full-time or part-time. For example, in many areas A levels are held to be a full-time course, even if only one A level course is being attended. This is particularly frustrating for those using, or hoping to use, this route to gain entry to higher education. Further to this, the '21-hour rule' is now a '12-hour rule' (i.e. if a course has more than a 12-hour teaching component per week, the student is not eligible for benefit). A recent report confirmed these findings, stating that 'Complex benefit regulations make it difficult for unemployed people to study for much needed qualifications'. (TES, 18/1/91).

A direct consequence of the benefit changes of the late 1980s was that by the end of 1988 unemployment figures had been reduced by 90,000 (Employment Gazette, December 1988). With few employment opportunities in the local area, these benefit changes effectively made YTS the only method of gaining income and training for many 16 and 17 year-olds. One female in the unemployed group, who did not want to go on a YTS pointed out:

*I am very bright and know what I want to do in life. You may be thinking if I was that bright why hadn't I got a job straight from school. It's practically impossible to get a full-time job if you are under eighteen years old.*

It is important to realise that amongst the unemployed group, many had previously chosen not to go on the YTS, although 38% of them were found to have had prior experience of YTS. When asked if they would like to attend a YTS in the future, 63% said they would not, with only 9% saying they would like to attend a Scheme. This must to some extent be a reflection of the beliefs and attitudes to YTS held by this group.

Results of questions exploring attitudes to YTS are given in Table 1 below, with percentages given for those agreeing or disagreeing with each statement, and for those who were uncertain. The first four YTS attitudes were also explored for the private school sample, and these results are also given in the Table.

**TABLE 1**  
**Attitudes to YTS**

	Unemployed Group (n = 174)			Private School Group (n = 75)		
	A	U	D	A	U	D
YTS is better** than the dole	41	28	31	73	20	7
YTS are just slave labour	66	23	11	20	27	52
Going on a YTS is the best way for 16 and 17 year olds to get a job eventually	36	26	38	16	33	51
YTS helps unemployed people get jobs	49	25	26	83	—	17
YTS is mainly of value to employers	70	18	12	N/A		
YTS is mainly a way of lowering the unemployment figures	83	10	7	N/A		
Unemployed young people should not be made to go on YTS	81	6	13	N/A		
YTS usually provides good quality training	34	39	27	N/A		
I would rather have a part-time job than go on a YTS	74	17	9	N/A		

Note \* A = strongly agree or agree  
U = uncertain  
D = strongly disagree or disagree  
N/A = not available

\*\* The 9 items reported here comprise part of a 13 item scale measuring attitudes to YTS in the unemployment study. Alpha (reliability) coefficient = .84.

It is evident from Table 1 that many of the unemployed group viewed YTS negatively. The quality of training was considered to be low by 27% of the group, with 83% believing that the real purpose of YTS was to reduce the unemployment figures. 70% of the group felt that it was employers who mainly benefitted from YTS, although 49% did think that it helped the unemployed get jobs and 36% felt it was the best way for people of their age to eventually get a job. The view that YTS was 'slave labour' was supported by 66% of the group. In terms of the legislation making YTS effectively 'compulsory', 81% disagreed with this policy. It is interesting to note also that 74% stated they would rather have a part-time job than attend the YTS. Quite different attitudes to YTS were evident for the private school group with, for example, 73% believing YTS was better than the dole and 83% believing YTS helps unemployed people get jobs.

A common view of YTS among the unemployed group was summarised by one unemployed male:

*YTS is a waste of time, you do all the jobs no-one else will do. I have known a few people which have been on the course and they agree.*

Many of this group also pointed out that although YTS trainees do the same work as the 'proper workers', including overtime, they 'earn a pittance' by comparison. The majority of these young people (including those who had previously chosen to attend YTS) felt this to be unjust. Essentially, most viewed the legislation very negatively. The private school pupils clearly had a very different attitude to YTS. Although most said they would not consider going on a YTS themselves, they thought the scheme was a good idea and a good way for young people to get training. 'I'm all in favour of YTS' said one 17 year-old, 'as long as I don't have to do it'. As shown in Table 1 above, this group were generally positive about YTS.

In effect, the pupils at the private school were channelled into a narrow range of professional, high status and well-paid careers. The high numbers aiming for professional careers at the private school is shown in Table 2 below. This question asked what sort of work the pupils wanted to do eventually, with responses coded using a four-fold classification with the addition of a 'don't know' category. The results of this Table show the high career aims of this group, with over 60% aiming for professional careers:

**TABLE 2**  
**Career Plans of the Private School Group**

Job Type	Private School Pupils (n = 75)	
	n	%
Professional (e.g. law, medicine)	46	61.3
Semi-professional (e.g. physiotherapy)	25	33.3
Skilled (e.g. chef)	0	—
Unskilled (e.g. shop assistant)	0	—
Don't know	4	5.3

The educational ethos of the private school, reflecting these high career aims, was clearly articulated by one pupil:

*I've only ever been to a private school, so I don't know what happens there (in state schools). I doubt it's like here though. You see you go for the top in everything you do. So like, if someone likes sciences and wants to continue in that, they have to be a doctor, or a vet. No-one here wants to be a nurse or anything like that...*

It was this emphasis on high status careers, and the academic excellence needed to achieve these aims,

that had led most parents to pay for their child to be educated in the private sector. Pupils at the school were guided from an early age to choose one of these 'appropriate' careers, with medicine, accountancy, veterinary science and law being particularly common (as demonstrated in Table 2 above). An efficient and well-organised careers staff provided support for pupils' career plans, and contacts in the professions were widely used to provide pupils with several weeks of work experience. Many pupils commented on the value of these experiences for subsequently gaining entry onto highly competitive University courses. Just attending a private school was seen as giving them an 'edge' over those in the state sector:

*I think a private education does make a difference, gives you an advantage, even if some people here won't admit it. I've had two interviews at University and you can see it makes a difference. They know you're going to get good exam results and... well, they're just influenced by it.*

Very few of the private school pupils failed to fulfil their aims. As one 18 year-old girl, looking forward to a successful career in criminal law described it:

*It's like a factory here, but it works. You do well, here everyone does. Then you do well for the rest of your life. That's why we're sent here.*

These views were confirmed by discussions that were held with some parents of the privately educated. These discussions revealed that, in choosing a private education for their children, they had been influenced by more than the expectation of exam success and achieving a professional career. As one parent suggested; 'I don't care what the local authority school is like. I want good teaching, small classes and yes, I want the *right* sort of friends for my daughter. You can only get that in a private school.' This implies that any improvements in the state sector of education may still not be sufficient motivation for these parents to abandon the private sector. (Indeed, the percentage of privately educated children and young people is continuing to rise each year, this despite a declining number of young people in this age group).

It is apparent from the results of these two studies, that recent policy changes have disproportionately affected those who already had the least facility to exercise choice. This finding was reflected in the attitudes and view of the two groups, and in particular in their political and economic attitudes.

### Politics

The political beliefs of the private school and unemployed groups reflected their polarized opportunities. At the private school, most pupils had a right-wing political ideology and there was widespread support for the Conservative government and its policies. This was demonstrated by the results of a measure of 'overall political orientation' used in the study, exploring which political party (if any) the pupils were closest to. The

results of this measure for the private school group are given in Table 3:

**TABLE 3**  
**Political Orientation of the Private School Sample (N = 75)**

Political Orientation	n	%
Conservative	56	74.6
Labour	4	5.3
Liberal/SDP	6	8.0
Green	2	2.6
Undecided	6	8.0
Would not vote	1	1.3

The results demonstrate the high level of support for the Conservative Party at the private school, accounting for 74.6% of this group. As one 18 year-old female suggested:

*Most people here support the Conservatives, obviously. You know I mean it would be against our interests to support any other party. They help private schools... and when we're working most of us will be in areas which always support the Conservatives — business, the law. It just makes sense.*

The political commitments of the private school group were generally developed at an early age, and many admitted to never actually considering any other political viewpoint. 'Why bother?' said one 15 year-old 'The Conservatives have just got it all right haven't they?' The minority at the private school who did have left-wing or liberal/centre political commitments were found to be involved with environmental or religious groups outside of the school; these pupils identified their political values as stemming from these groups. The political commitments of the unemployed were very different to, and more diverse than, those of pupils at the private school. The largest proportion were left-wing and firmly committed to voting Labour (47%), with 7% supporting the Conservatives and 6% the Green Party. There was a general consensus that the Conservative government, and Mrs Thatcher in particular, was responsible for the continuing hardships of the poor and unemployed. Perceived as uncaring and unconcerned about the plight of all but the wealthy minority, the Conservative government was treated very harshly. The feelings directed towards Mrs Thatcher were particularly extreme. She was frequently identified as the main culprit responsible for both the current economic problems and the non-alleviation of poverty and unemployment. Thus the following comment was typical of many:

*The person to blame for all the hardship that the low waged and unemployed suffer is Maggie Thatcher. Her and her kids should be made to live on the dole money for a few years. See how she likes it. Failing that she should be hung, drawn and quartered.*

Others in the group rejected all political parties and politicians, and viewed voting as a 'waste of time' (14%). Whilst these young people comprised the minority, the reasons for their political non-participation were two-fold. First, all political parties and politicians were considered to be essentially self-interested, with little or no difference between parties. Second, voting was not viewed as an effective method of influencing government. Amongst the under-18s this could be a reaction to the fact that they were not able to influence the system through voting, and perhaps some will change this attitude when they become eligible to vote. Even so, the fact that a government which they had played no part in electing was reducing their choices angered and alienated a large number of participants.

In comparison to this group, most of the private school pupils views politics very positively. Table 4 gives the results for both the private school and unemployed groups on three political attitudes:

**TABLE 4**  
**Attitudes to politics of the two groups (%)**

	Unemployed Group			Private School Group		
	A	U	D	A	U	D
Politicians are mainly in politics for their own benefit and not for the benefit of the community	45	39	16	15	32	53
It does not really make much difference which political party is in power in Britain	26	22	52	8	5	87
None of the political parties would do anything to benefit me	28	39	33	11	29	60

Note: A = strongly agree or agree  
U = uncertain  
D = strongly disagree or disagree

The results of Table 4 show that, for example, a larger proportion of the unemployed group believed that politicians were mainly in power for their own benefit (45% compared with 15% of the private sample). Overall, these results and information from elsewhere in the two studies showed the private school group had a more positive attitude to the political system.

For many in the private school group, inequality and poverty was seen as a natural and inevitable consequence of the free-market economy and individual responsibility. As one private school male said in response to a question on whether Britain was divided:

*Well, yes, I do think we live in divided society. Obviously there are some people who are rich and some who are poor, but I think it's so naive to think you can change that. I mean people are different and that's just the way life is. It'll always be like that.*

The dominance of this philosophy in the private school group has important implications. Most of the pupils

will enter careers and positions of power in business, law and policy-making. If these views persist amongst those reaching positions of influence over policy, inequality of opportunity may continue to exist if it is considered as natural and inevitable. This is also a particularly interesting finding in the light of Prime Minister John Major's recent claim to want a 'classless society': it is of note that of the 21 members of the current Cabinet, 17 were from Oxbridge and 19 from private schools (Guardian 29/11/90).

### **Youth policy in the 1980s and 1990s**

In effect the 1980s have witnessed a two-tier policy in relation to young people. Those pursuing the traditional academic route have been largely unaffected by the new benefit and training rules and policies. In particular, those in private schools have been untouched by changes in youth policies; the careers and experiences of this group continue in much the same way as ten or twenty years ago. Privately educated young people generally pursue a traditional route from school to A levels to higher education and a good career. As already demonstrated, the government have reinforced this position by providing increased support for the private sector via such things as tax benefits, and the provision of free and partially-funded places under the Assisted Places Scheme. The 20,000 Assisted Places provided since 1981 have simply allowed more young people to undergo these experiences at public expense.

In contrast, the recent changes in benefit and training rules have directly restricted the choices available to those leaving school at 16, and those aiming for higher education via part-time education. These policies were aimed at reducing the number of unemployed school leavers who were still not choosing to take places on the YTS. The actual purpose of this legislation, however, has frequently been questioned in the media, academic journals and by the general public. Many of the unemployed young people in the study described here felt the purpose of the policy changes was simply to reduce the unemployment figures. However, if the aim was to increase employability and qualifications, the fact that it has prevented many young people in (or aspiring to) part-time education from completing their courses seems counter-productive. What is of equal concern to the authors is how these changes are affecting the psychological health and work attitudes of young unemployed people: What happens when a young person's personal control autonomy, choice or financial support is effectively removed? These areas are also being explored in research with the unemployed group, and will hopefully provide further understanding of the impact of current government youth policies.

Ultimately, the traditional Conservative philosophy of individual responsibility and free choice is difficult to identify in terms of policy directed at the young unemployed throughout the 1980s. The exercise of

personal choice has little meaning where YTS is compulsory and part-time education virtually impossible. Essentially, the government can be seen to have a 'model' of the ideal young person as conformist, hard-working, and skilled. Many of the young unemployed have deviated from this ideal model, and as a result training was imposed, benefits were cut, and vocationalism and conformity were stressed. Whether a non-conformist career or non-traditional educational route was being pursued has not been considered in the policy-making equation; additionally, the fact that employment-related skills can also be gained through the voluntary sector has been largely ignored, since those who are unemployed cannot easily undertake such work without benefit loss.

However, the Conservative philosophy is more clearly identifiable in the most recent YTS policy — the introduction of training vouchers. Whilst this policy is aimed at increasing the power of choice for potential trainees, serious concerns have been raised about how this will work in reality. For example, if a young person uses their vouchers to attend what turns out to be an unsatisfactory YTS, how easily will they be able to gain access to an alternative scheme with the vouchers that remain? What about those least able to discern and choose between schemes, especially at a time when the Careers Service is already overloaded? Additionally, what happens to those who do not gain access to a desired scheme in a competitive market: do they lose the power to exercise choice over how and where their training vouchers are 'spent'?

In conclusion, the two research projects described in this paper suggest that government policies in the 1980s (and also the 1990s) were functioning at two levels, essentially reflecting a view of 'one for the rich, one for the poor'. The lives of these two groups of young people were very different, and it was clear that their futures held very different prospects. This was very clearly reflected in how the two groups viewed the future. The optimism of the private school group was reflected in the following comment:

*Oh well, how can anyone these days be pessimistic? There's so many options... I'm really optimistic about the future.*

Clearly, many of the young people in this study who were unemployed **did** have reasons to be pessimistic about their futures. As one young female said:

*I've just come back from signing on, and I went to the job centre as usual. I would just like to say I think it's disgusting, young people are told to go out and look for work, you see a couple of jobs that are for once for your age group and then the pay is disgraceful. All they're doing is helping themselves by finding some-one stupid enough to take the job, and they are left with a big profit.*

It appears that Government policy directed at these two groups has pushed them further apart, further polarising the lives and opportunities of the most advantaged

and disadvantaged groups in our society. If government policies continue this trend in the 1990s, the disparity in opportunities between these two groups may become even more extreme.

#### Notes

1. The ESRC 16-19 Initiative. For further details of this study see *British Journal of Education and Work* (1990), Special Edition on 16-19 Education and Training, 3(2).

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# **'L**osing the Generation Game'

**Revisited: Youth, Politics  
and Vocationalism**

**BOB HOLLANDS**

Times change and fashions pass. Today's news become yesterday's forgotten headlines. For nearly a decade

young people's relationship to the labour market has been a hotly debated topic, particularly in reference to unemployment. This window into the world of largely working class youth had the additional spin-off effect of drawing attention to a wide variety of issues affecting young people in our society. Broken, or at least interrupted transitions into the world of work, raised a whole series of debates in the 1980s about education, the family, leisure, youth culture, the role of training, skills and vocationalism, as well as giving rise to various 'moral panics' about workless youth, dole queue babies and various types of so called 'hooligan' behaviour.

These debates about young people had an explicit impact on, and relationship to, political parties and social policy-making. The link between many of these social problems and issues and Conservative government policy is largely self-evident. Yet, they also helped to focus attention on the Labour Party's own 'alternative' policies in education, training, leisure and employment. In other words, it became fashionable for political parties in the 80s to concern themselves with the relative support they commanded amongst the youth population. Labour's specific failure over this period in both coming to grips with the youth question and providing the necessary policies to gain young working class support, was aptly coined by one commentator of the day as a sure recipe for 'losing the generation game' <sup>(1)</sup>.

Recent discussions however have suspiciously appeared to have swept many of these issues and concerns off both public and political party agendas. According to the new conventional wisdom, the 'youth problem' has been magically dissolved by a Malthusian sleight of hand. A declining youth population and improved economic conditions, the argument goes, will go a long way towards solving their previously poor employment prospects and this 'demo-economic' miracle will, in turn, smooth the waters in a once troubled adolescent wasteland. In short, the 'generation game' has been suspended due to a lack of participants. Eclipsed by the new rhetoric of 'skill shortages', and the need to harness the potential energies of other sections of society (i.e. older women and the black community) to fulfill the requirements of

the 'post industrial' labour force, young people have once again been relegated

to the margins of political and economic debate.

Now, not all of this is completely wrong. The youth population (16-19) is indeed declining and will continue to do so until the middle of this decade (at which time it is projected to pick up again). Skill shortages have occurred within particular economic sectors throughout various parts of the country and there are clearly positive aspects in improving the take up rate of mature women and black people into the labour market. For too long, like young people themselves, these social groups have been marginalised by employers and the labour movement alike.

Yet these same truisms ironically act as a smokescreen for understanding the current plight of many working class youths. For instance, they gloss over the basic fact that youth unemployment has been 'displaced' rather than eradicated through the introduction of compulsory training schemes and legislation attacking benefit eligibility. Numbers in youth training, for example, have increased four-fold since 1979. This displacement also hides the fact that the young have always suffered higher levels of unemployment even in times of sustained economic growth, not to mention the way in which schemes have been actively utilised to prepare particular kinds of youth labour required in the political economy of Thatcherism.

Those who get sucked into the numbers game then not only throw out the youth 'crisis' baby with the demographic bath-water, they also miss the central point. The preparation of youth labour has never been simply about matching supply with demand, but has always involved a much deeper state concern with respect to the cultural remoulding of the working class. This general falsehood is rooted in the dangerous and mistaken assumption that changing economic and demographic conditions will somehow ease young people's traditionally fraught relationship with the labour market. The bare fact is that youth labour in whatever guise is absolutely crucial to the smooth functioning of our so called 'post industrial' economy. Black people, or older women returning to work will be hard pressed (or hard up) to oust trainees and young workers out of jobs characterised by long, unsocial hours, monotony and abysmal rates of pay. The Low Pay Unit has recently unveiled a number of employ-



ment situations involving young people which are more reminiscent of Victorian times, than of the last decade of the 20th century (reported in the *Sunday Correspondent* 28.1.90). Additionally, some labour market surveys reveal that many employers actually prefer recruiting young people because they are malleable and haven't yet been socialised into 'inappropriate' work cultures<sup>(2)</sup>. Finally compulsory training, in whatever form (i.e. YTS or just YT now, and ET), will continue to provide adequate 'work socialisation' and a cheap form of labour for many employers. So while youth recruitment may become increasingly difficult over the next few years, various mechanisms are already in place to ensure that they don't rise too far above their lowly station in the employment hierarchy.

The much bigger lie however is the assertion that economic upturns and demographic changes in any way alter working class youths' subordinate position in British society. Any casual look at the press reveals the continuation of a series of social problems created by young people's relative position of powerlessness within our culture — ranging from homelessness, poverty, drugs, truancy, pregnancy, compulsory training schemes, lack of coverage by state benefits and for some, the continuing experience of unemployment.

My own research on young people in the contemporary period supports the general point about displacement of unemployment through training schemes, calls into question pre-emptive statements about the lack of need for youth labour and rejects the assertion that their problems can be magically dissolved by a demographic miracle<sup>(3)</sup>. In addition, the main crux of my work was to understand how young working class people's lives were changing and indeed diversifying in the current period, particularly within the context of their movement into work, adulthood and political life, through their experience of vocational training. What is crucial is that we must begin to understand the youth issue not simply in isolated economic or demographic terms, but as a wider class cultural and political transformation. Such a suggestion, as I'll go on to argue, has massive implications for the labour movement's success (or failure) in reviving and winning the generation game.

In my view, any analysis of young working class Britons today will reveal an apparent contradiction — that is, new identities and lifestyles overlay and spring out of traditional routes and forms characteristic of deeper-rooted working class culture. Our current understanding of the youth issue must be at least partly based on the notion that what we are witnessing now is part of a longer historical transition which has begun to change how the working class is formed generationally.

The historical legacy of class relations in this country must form the backdrop to understanding present day youth identities. Traditionally, working class transitions were rigidly contoured by the inheritance of a wider

'cultural apprenticeship', represented by the movement of young males into industrial production and the preparation of young women as eligible domestic labourers. Such historical forces resulted in the production of fairly stable and predictable patterns of life on the shop-floor, in the community and in the political realm. They simultaneously helped to organise personal experience and identity, as well as worked to socially reproduce the class structure.

It is clear that some aspects of these traditional cultural apprenticeships continue to structure contemporary experiences of schooling, leisure, home, community and politics for many young people, not to mention affecting their training and occupational choices. For example, young working class women's experiences continue to be influenced by domestic and marital expectations and it is clear that they continue to train for a very narrow range of 'feminine' jobs. Similarly, many young men continue to embrace traditional masculine attitudes across the spectrum of social life. Despite a massive downturn in manufacturing and construction occupations, and a progressive deskilling, reorganisation and deunionisation of 'manly' jobs, 'lad' or 'shop-floor culture' in the form of work, training choices and leisure (i.e. football culture), remains a dominant and formidable identity into the 1990s.

These general underlying patterns are today overlaid and complicated by the development of a diverse series of youth identities, styles and transitions. Rapid and wide ranging social, economic and cultural change, has meant that these older, historic working class patterns and consequent identities began to break down, most significantly in the post-war period. The advancement of a plethora of youth cultural forms and styles from the 50s onward are perhaps the most visually explicit examples of the fracturing of class and generational identities. More recent however, are the more directed State policies designed to reorder the young working classes' introduction into the 'free market' economy of Thatcherism. Both these longer historical transformations and the more recent explicit political interventions of the last decade, have had the effect not of destroying class but of recomposing it — by breaking up and diversifying young people's identities and transitions into work and adulthood.

Changing definitions of the economy and skill have influenced at least a section of working class youth to embrace more 'careerist' and individualist orientations towards work and lifestyle. Whilst the attraction towards 'upward mobility' may not be anything new amongst the working class (not to mention the fact that these career routes are still very much contoured by traditional gender-based criterion), the state mechanisms for implanting this type of ideology clearly bear the blueprint of Thatcherite philosophy. For instance, the social construction of feminine 'glamorous' jobs and 'people-minding' occupations as possible careers for young women has emerged in various training circles in recent years. Ironically, these patterns both chal-

lenge and reproduce gender and class identities in contradictory ways. 'Glam jobs', while questioning the traditional female apprenticeship (i.e. housewife), with the possible image of a career, largely act to substitute feminine sexuality for domesticity in defining one's work role and adult identity, not to mention blunting any class affiliation young women might have possessed. 'Para-professional', or people-minding careers on the other hand, provide a deskilled service worker identity, not to mention reproduce women's traditional 'caring' roles.

A section of young working class men have also been bitten by the vocational 'career' bug, with the creation of white-collar and so-called 'middle-management' training placements and jobs designed to enhance company loyalty and create a respectable atmosphere in which to police the labours of one's contemporaries (with their consent and cooperation of course). The so-called 'McDonaldisation' of not only the food industry, but also the retail and office sectors, has helped to produce the image of an upwardly mobile middle class occupation and lifestyle for some working class males. All of these newer youth identities, engineered largely through vocational training and work experience, are influenced by a more general spirit of entrepreneurship (not surprising considering the government's underlying philosophy). Careers in glam and para-professional jobs, as well as management, can also be construed as possible paths to self-employment. Of course, all these routes have their own specific conditions and rationale. One typology of particular interest might be characterised as a 'youth culture enterpriser' — young people imbued with a desire to make money and be the boss, but in specific economic sectors which reflect modern day youth commodities and cultural concerns. Particular combinations of leisure, pleasure, style and cash are intertwined to produce a new 'hip' type of enterprise culture.

Many would recognise much of this lot as 'Thatcher's generation', born and nurtured on the enterprise culture. Imbued with the spirit of penny capitalism, highly individualistic, conservative politically, but certainly stylish, many of these new transitions bear the logo of the Conservative Party's long reign of office. However, not all identities forged in the current period are quite so predisposed or favourable to the new free market work ethic or Tory politics.

Some of the human casualties of crude vocationalism and 'manpowerism' undermine any simplistic theory of political socialisation. Even those young people who temporarily buy into image-making and careerism often change their minds when faced with the brutal realities of the marketplace or small business bankruptcy. Others however, very early on, are differentially placed to assess their chances in the enterprise merry-go-round. Many young working class people have a history of disenchantment with schooling, training schemes and available jobs ('shit jobs and govvy schemes'). I have already mentioned the strength and

persistence of some of the traditional transitions in this regard. Lad culture, for instance, remains a potentially collective opponent to the new vocationalism and its individualistic philosophy — particularly if training doesn't lead to 'real' skilled jobs. Some young women turn to motherhood and a domestic career in place of an acute lack of decent job opportunities. Other young people choose to resist such ideology by opting for alternative identities in such spheres as leisure, politics and voluntary work.

Some young people, for example, attempt to use vocational schemes to develop their own interests and skills, while protecting themselves against the harder edges of the capitalist labour market. These 'survivors' are often reabsorbed back into their own communities, utilising their technical skills in the 'grey' economy and their political savvy to stay out of the reach of government directives. Others find their niche in the declining voluntary sector and prefer to perform 'really useful work' (caring jobs, youth work, the arts), while eeking out a meagre existence on low pay or state benefits. Finally, a minority of young people either bring with them, or develop through their experience of vocationalism, a politics which provides them with both an identity and perhaps an alternative vocation (i.e. youth politics, community work, trade union activity, etc).

The sheer diversity of the youth population in the current period categorically implies that anyone who seriously wants to get to the bottom of the generation game needs to look far beyond a simple economic or demographic miracle for answers and solutions. The point is that no political party is much in tune with either the basis of the youth question or the variety of class cultural transitions and identities and what they mean in a wider political sense, let alone in electoral terms. Thatcherism, through its various State interventions into the education, training and employment markets, has at least a partial stake in the shaping of some of these new identities. Yet, they have never been in complete control of the youth issue, and have often suffered badly at the hands of young people in electoral terms. The Labour Party however, seems even further removed from the class cultural lifeworld of young people. Buying into a simplistic demographic miracle or a modified 'training solution' will not gain them much support from the youth cohort. Unlike the Tories, the Labour movement faces some additional political and indeed historical contradictions and problems which appear to render it unable to respond to the current youth situation in a constructive way. A section of the party and movement believes that if government policies are criticised through the rhetoric of the thirties unemployment movement, and socialism is preached loudly enough, the young working class will come around to their 'true' belief that Labour is really for them. The problem here is that this traditionally 'labourist' position is not only outmoded by historical and cultural circumstances, but that it

represents at best a thoroughly un-modern approach to the generational nature of class politics and at worse, an embracement of past racist, sexist and ageist traditions. The old patriarchal linkage to youth movements and the apprenticeship system worked to subordinate youth and reproduce the most exclusive aspect of labour movement culture (i.e. white, skilled, and male organised labour or 'jobs for the boys'). Additionally, it is blatantly clear that today there is virtually no support for such a political tradition amongst even the most radical of young people, let alone the majority.

On the other side, more 'modernist', dominant and electorally motivated elements in the party have taken a different approach. Clearly, some would prefer if the youth issue simply disappeared (at least they wouldn't have to inherit the 'problem' if elected). In the main however, this faction of Labour is prepared to respond in much the same fashion to any youth 'crisis' as the Conservatives have. The new Labour Party document *Looking to the Future*, much heralded by the leadership and such modernists, express this approach well. For instance, the document contains no overall or comprehensive policy directed towards and for youth, despite the fact that such an approach was raised in the party's Youth Forum. Instead, party policy appears to focus in on youth only as a social problem to be rectified by state intervention and employer-led employment initiatives. Training will be overseen by a new organisation 'Skills UK' and the Tories' employer-based Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) will be reformed to include wider representation (i.e. trade unionists, women, local councils). All of this seems terribly familiar and reminiscent of the old tripartite MSC and the local Area Manpower Boards (AMBs), with employers perhaps retaining their upper hand in a new 'partnership' with Labour. In other words, we are offered a slightly modified state/employer-led structure to deal with the 'training problem', rather than a wider culturally-based youth policy based on young people's experiences and social conditions.

If Labour is to recapture the 'real' spirit of the times (rather than a lost golden age or a veneered vision of the future) and devise alternative ways of making the link between young people and politics, it must begin to do at least two basic and interrelated things.

First, it should quickly reject any current prescriptions about young people based on a dubious demo-economic miracle, and become aware of the fact that what we are witnessing is a much longer and complicated class cultural transformation. Neither a magical conjuring up of an old working class politics nor an electorally motivated bit of razzle-dazzle will score points with the young. Second, Labour needs to develop youth policies which reflect not just an economic or training 'problems' perspective, but ones which aim to capture the attention and support of a variety of transitions and identities which encompass young people's own lifeworld and focal concerns.

There are those who will continue to argue that the youth problem will solve itself through demographic and economic means and anyway political parties need no longer be concerned with a declining constituency. However, Labour, more than any other party should recognise that politics and electoralism isn't simply a static question of numbers. Rather, it should understand that politics is also a question of class recomposition, culture and generation — dwindling support from a declining manual labour generation should make this point clear enough. The fact is that Labour needs imaginative policies to attract young working class people, as well as forge a future programme for continued support. The children of yesterday grow up to be the electorate of tomorrow.

If the labour movement becomes fooled and opts for the easy demo-economic argument then the battle is halfway lost. Rather they must begin the difficult task of comprehending the class nature of changing youth transitions and identities and start to construct radical and innovative policies in light of the diversity of young people today. If not, then Labour is surely set to lose the generation game once again.

#### Notes

1. P. Cohen, 'Losing the Generation Game', *New Socialist* 38 (1983). In addition to being indebted to Phil Cohen's pioneering work on the youth question, I would also like to thank Helen Carr and Rob MacDonald for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.
2. Hilary Metcalf, *Employers Response to the Decline in School Leavers into the 1990s*, IMS Report No. 152 (1988).
3. A fuller presentation of the argument which follows can be found in my book *The Long Transition: Class, Culture and Youth Training* (Macmillan, 1990).

# **T**he state of inequality: review article

**ANDREW WEST**

**Jeffs, T. and Smith, M. (eds) 1990 *Young People, Inequality and Youth Work* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan £8.95 (pbk) xiv + 261pp**

There was once a television comedy which included a sketch satirising a children's programme (Blue Peter). In this case such a script would be '... and next week we'll be showing you how to play the violin, how to bring an end to poverty and how to rid the world of inequality', perhaps with the added punchline 'except in your youth service'. For as the editors state, 'many of the inequalities that are discussed in this book are reproduced with the help of youth workers and youth organisations' (p xi).

Whilst this is not primarily a book of instructions or recipes it describes contexts and models for understanding and analysing inequality and suggests some forms of action. Its purpose would appear to be to make youth workers think about what they are doing and therein lies a key. In their discussion of class Jeffs and Smith note that not all is pessimism for 'socialist and radical traditions of (youth work) practice have survived and developed...' What they have demonstrated is that to approach class in any sustained manner is to begin to question many of the basic premises upon which youth work has been predicated. When this is linked with constructing an analysis of the relations of subordination and exploitation generally, then the possibilities for a liberating practice become clearer. At its core is the development of 'critical thought and action' (p 225).

This analysis, of questioning youth work and critical thought and action would hold true as necessities for all of the forms of inequality discussed in this book. But the book as a whole underlines the question as to what is the purpose of youth work? The tension between reproducing and challenging inequality seems to ultimately lie beneath that purpose for the term 'youth work' covers such a wide field of activity. This range of work, differing in objectives, aims and practice with a commonality only of age range, requires discussion of the 'traditions of practice' and has led to a paucity of theory. Coupled with this is the comparative lack of theoretical and practice literature which runs alongside an observable anti-intellectualism, a tendency of workers both paid, full and part-time, and voluntary, not to read for inspiration

and reflection but to depend on doing. Such criticism may seem unnecessarily

severe but without an awareness of and openness to personal change, to current issues surrounding social policy legislation and social problems, to the practical difficulties, choices and environment faced by young people, in short to the results of inequality, the inequalities described in this book will not be removed. 'Doing', that is, uncritical practice, is as insufficient as perpetual reflection in the form of supportive and validating meetings preparing for some future event. The broad spectrum which makes up youth work and workers reflects a range of cultural perceptions. This book operates on the premise that inequality is a 'bad thing' and furthermore extends, as Kent-Baguley paraphrases and states 'you either join the struggle against... oppression or remain an oppressor' (p 119, on heterosexism). Yet there is a body of opinion, not only reproduced in the media, especially newspapers, but respectably written up in the textbooks of the 'New Right', which asserts that inequality is a good thing. Such opposition of views means that workers and their organisations not only need to state a position but undertake it in practice. The need for this stand surrounds us: for example, a part time social worker on a television programme mentioned a conversation about disability she had had with a farmer, in which he had said that he thought a humane killer was the best thing for them; another programme dealing with the social separation of people with disabilities included an interview question asking a young woman with disabilities how she would really like to be with an able-bodied man — any sexuality granted being immediately assumed. Reproduction of dominant social models can be both blunt and subtle. Thus, there is a need for a book to assemble an accessible discussion of inequalities for youth work. Is this it?

The book opens with a paper by Annie Franklin and Bob Franklin on 'Age and Power'. This is a particularly appropriate opening since the whole book is predicated on an age category which is given social significance. By implication ageism is defined as discrimination against older people in the irony that 'those who hold ageist views must necessarily grow old and, by so doing, fall victim of their own prejudices' (p 1, quoting Comfort). Franklin and Franklin define power and draw comparisons between the position of

young and old in terms of politics, culture and economics. They look to collective action for change in the political area but acknowledge that all three are interconnected and mutually influential. This chapter sets the tone for the book by establishing the fundamental inequality of young people (and old) because of the power base among the middle-aged. This is important because it provides a rationale for looking at inequalities among young people, for the book (and also perhaps for the youth service). This reality of powerlessness is in contrast to the negative images provided through 'folk' and moral models thriving in the media and elsewhere which attribute power to young people based on an inherent violent or sexual energy. It is this perceived power which is used to justify so much youth work in forms of control, physical exercise, useful leisure opportunities and formal and informal education. Whilst ageism is discussed in this chapter these issues of age categorisation being at the root of youth work are not. Yet it could be argued that it is the social construction of the youth category and its needs which determines that youth work occurs.

The analysis of the position of youth is further developed by Jeffs and Smith in the next chapter of 'Demography, Location and Young People'. Here the authors examine outcoming trends from decreasing birth and fertility rates. These should provide key questions for workers for, as the authors point out 'As an age-specific agency the Youth Service is particularly vulnerable to shifts in the size and location of its client group' (p 28). The relationship of the position of young people to political and economic power nationally and regionally is particularly apposite in regard to the now established debates on a north-south divide, the 1991 recession and increasing unemployment, and especially the concept of core and peripheral economic regions in the U.K. with all that implies. The regional differences are acknowledged as one basis of difference in youth work practice: 'the myth of there being some common or universal mass practice has for too long obstructed the creative exploitation of regional and local differences' (p 66).

Although the book is probably not meant to be read from start to finish at a single go, the first two chapters provide a basis and context for the rest. Each of the succeeding five focuses on an aspect of inequality — gender, sexuality, race, disability and class. However, in each the precise aim of the focus is different. Despite the words 'youth work' in chapter titles the extent of discussion of practice and practical suggestions, and the analysis of the social construction of the inequality, is varied in proportion, generally in favour of the latter. The paper by Jean Spence is probably that most linked to practice and most accessible to youth workers in being immediately recognisable. Detail of work is not given but the difficulties of establishing girls/women only provision will be recognised in 'women workers have instituted girls-only events, activities, groups and clubs, often in the teeth of hostility and to the cries of

What about the boys, we mustn't forget the boys!' (p 83), statements I had heard from several workers in the few weeks before I read this piece for the first time.

Apart from using practical examples the analysis of gender is dealt with well, acknowledging the number and complexity of associated issues such as feminism, heterosexuality and masculinity. This last is a particular problem, struggling for identity as analytical concept and tool, but here it is important to remember the subject of inequality, where strategies required might be of development work with young women and anti-sexist work with young men. However, the construction of masculinity and models of anti-oppressive and oppressive (acceptable and unacceptable) versions need development alongside practice work with young men. This is an important area because young men, as Spence points out, garner a majority of worker time. Again the question arises of what youth work is about? The danger arises of 'work with young men' suddenly gaining the reputation as an area of need, becoming the buzzword and fashion, and it turning out to mean anti-sexist work in one area and the development of male rugby or pool teams preparatory to full manly adulthood in another. (Alongside, of course, the usual statement that pool is a good way of making contact, establishing trust and so on in order to do the real youth work, which also appears to go on around the pool table doubtless disguised as conversation on the score and balls).

Peter Kent-Baguley's chapter on sexuality leads on nicely. This could prove a disquieting chapter for many practitioners. Sexuality is a contentious area with official disapproval of homosexuality (of both gay men and lesbians) coupled with legislation and compounded by legalised harassment of both, especially gay men. A classless society may be an official aim (as per Prime Minister Major), some legislation (albeit insubstantial, frequently ineffective and worthless) exists to offer some official countenancing of racism and sexual discrimination at work, the disabled can expect sympathetic noises (but their needs ignored and no legislation), but any other sexuality is roundly condemned and frequently legally punished. As this whole book amply shows inequality remains a fundamental problem for individuals, both alone and grouped in categories, and no single manifestation can be placed above the other. What can be difficult is the realisation of, and public discussion of sexuality. Kent-Baguley suggests that 'fundamental characteristics all human beings share are class, ethnicity and sexuality' (p 101). He points out that what we do in bed is not our own affair, because the state intervenes through legislation delineating what is and is not permissible and further, that sexuality is not about genitalia and orgasm only. Here is another problem which can arise among the 'enlightened' for talking openly about sexuality is not a licence for men to discuss their own detailed heterosexual preferences with a denied but real suggestiveness: the 'right-on' equivalent of leering. There is a boundary

between the open and frank discussion of sex, sexuality and the reproduction of conventionally constructed power relationships not discussed here but a real issue. Kent-Baguley looks at repressive legislation, including the notorious Clause 28 promotion of heterosexuality and diminution of homosexuality, and the social construction of heterosexuality (linked to capitalism and racism). In looking at AIDS and the surrounding moral panic the key issue, again perhaps uncomfortable for some workers, is the way people have sex. Kent-Baguley contrasts government and Terence Higgins Trust advertising on AIDS, demonstrating the need for open discussion of methods of sex and pleasures but the caveat of avoiding patriarchal dominance, noted above, must prevail.

In these passages arise some more implicit than explicit suggestions for practice and the final section examining gay and lesbian youth movements warns against patronising or matronising attitudes that have occurred even from the best intentioned. The need to examine personal attitudes and practices is clearly underlined.

Keith Popple's chapter on race concentrates on black inequality (black defined as Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Chinese, and Vietnamese in particular); he acknowledges experiences of Irish, Jewish and Eastern European peoples in Britain but concentrates on black issues for reasons of space. Popple discusses and defines racism and the context of inequality, spending two thirds of his piece on essentially historical and contextual material before advancing 'the case for black youth workers'. In his section on anti-racist youth work he draws on strategies devised by Ritchie and Marken in their 1984 work for the National Youth Bureau. These entail; providing the facts, multicultural education, political and cultural education, making rules and confrontation. He discusses the failures of the 'condemnatory approach' (shaming young white people), reiterates the criticisms (of a number of writers) of multicultural approaches, and notes the limitations of educational approaches and the controversies surrounding Racism Awareness Training.

It is unfortunate that Vipin Chauhan's work 'Steel Bands 'n' Samosas (NYB no date, 1989/90?) was apparently not available when this chapter was written. The lack of discussion of Chauhan's four models of practice weakens the paper. These four are: the colour-blind model, the multicultural model, the anti-racist model and the black community development model. These Chauhan analyses in terms of context and actual and potential practice, viewing with favour only the last two models as being truly worthwhile for black individuals and communities. The issues surrounding the models of work Chauhan describes need airing in a book such as this; questions of anti-racist strategies with young white people and development work with young black people, and especially the need for funding and provision of black only resources — both time and space, including black only centres. Additio-

nally the needs of young black women especially need to be addressed. Potential parallels in practice of work with young women and young black people, of anti-racist and anti-sexist work, of development work with young women and young black people and the issues of separate provision, clearly make up part of an important agenda for the 1990s.

This question of separate division is reversed in discussion of young people with disabilities. Don Blackburn opens his paper with a clear statement about the field; 'The only acceptable forms of debate about disability are those which examine ideologies and practices towards those who have been categorised as disabled' (p 152). He moves onto a brief but extensive history of the separation of young people categorised as disabled in the area of education since the nineteenth century and, in so doing, covers the history of the development of the social construction of disability. This especially delineates the iniquities of the welfare benefit system, 'The assumption seems to be that people are either disabled *or* poor, whereas in reality people are usually disabled *and* poor' (p 169, italics in the original). Against this background he sets youth work practice linked to leisure provision and personal relationships before asking what is to be done?

The key to the question here is that of separate provision 'There is a responsibility here on youth workers in both mainstream and special provision to move towards the short-term objective of abandoning an increasingly indefensible form of segregation' (p 174). Without segregation and with equal access in practice Blackburn sees a range of possible work, enumerating development of skills, specific assertiveness training, rights work, further leisure opportunities. The main issues concern not only material disadvantage but the personal stance of youth workers and the need for action regarding access, the latter ultimately taking workers into the political arena.

Finally Jeffs and Smith have the last say with their paper on class, a question inevitably bound up with political issues by its association with political ideologies and parties. They first initially demonstrate the existence of class inequalities, conceptually and in reality. That such demonstration is necessary was shown late in 1990 in two instances. Firstly in the much heralded media and governmental view of a contemporary classless society by the elevation of John Major to Prime Minister. Secondly in the court action between the Duke of Westminster (in the blue corner) seeking to prove that the working class exists and Westminster Council (led by Lady Porter in the other blue corner) seeking to prove that it doesn't; a debate symbolically between two wealthy titles overtly about poverty and covertly about power and control. In terms of wealth alone inequalities markedly exist and have been greatly exacerbated over the decade of the 1980s.

Jeffs and Smith then go on to analyse class inequality and its effects in sections on income, employment and

the labour market (considering also further dimensions of race and gender inequality), housing, education and leisure. Given the increasing prominence of youth homelessness over the past few years and the horrific severity and scale of the problem, especially among 16-17 year olds, it is surprising that housing is not discussed in greater detail here and in other chapters. The constructions which develop inequality depend greatly on the location of power in British society and the exercise of that power. The macro effects of this include unemployment, widespread lack of access for people with disabilities, marginalisation of black people, subordination of women, ignorance of sexuality; in short, exclusion from participation. In addition to these homelessness ranks as a major problem which at the micro level prevents individuals escaping from personally dangerous situations where they are held in the power of others; for example, young people sexually and violently abused in families, women with violent or sexually abusive partners find escape difficult partly because of structural inequalities in income maintenance/welfare benefits, but also and perhaps more significantly, because they have nowhere they can go. Homelessness is a manifestation of inequalities in power expressed in class, race, gender, sexuality, disability and age which needs to be addressed through youth work — or perhaps better described as through work with young people.

This differentiation in practice, between youth work and work with young people, is demonstrated in the final part of the paper on class. Here Jeffs and Smith discuss the issues surrounding the class base of youth club users, workers and managers. Although this is entitled 'youth work', the authors use DES statistics which relate to youth clubs and their discussion is largely centred on these. Even in the consideration of underclass it is the club which features. This in itself might be an important part of the initial question of what is central to youth work. Throughout the book there is a consideration of what work needs to be done in various areas but when it comes to specific practice the forum is generally envisaged to be the youth club. In practice this frequently imposes constraints of organisation, and probably bureaucracy, tradition and history which divert away from the purpose of the work. It is the sort of scapegoat to innovative or crucial work and is often described as reality or being 'in the real world' as though the theory or desired practice were abstract and could be discussed but of necessity were separate and not undertaken in practice. 'Yes, I know that, that's what you talk about at conferences, what do you really do?' as one youth worker once asked me. It is perhaps surprising that not more is made throughout of the notion of hegemony and cultural reproduction of power through ideas.

Linked into this is the notoriety of workers apparently not reading books about their work, an issue relevant to this book. The book is generally stimulating and covers a wide field. It lays out and explains the context

of inequality and oppression, indicates how they are constructed and maintained and makes suggestions for necessary youth work. But for whom is it intended? For workers who keep up with the literature it may not contain much that is new but will put it succinctly and act as a refresher, a reference for various arguments; for students on proliferating (community and) youth work courses it will be a useful groundwork; but for workers who do not keep up, who need an overview of issues in order to develop and inform their practice, it may not be that accessible. In some of the papers there is too much context (valuable though it is) relative to the issues, especially those linked to practice, which need debate. There may also be difficulties with the academic style of the book making it less accessible for those seeking a first time background reader on inequality and young people.

It could be argued that people not committed to fighting inequality and developing equal opportunities work and to reading around the work that they do should not be youth workers. But this is predicated on inequality being the central issue of youth work. Inequality brings with it several uncomfortable sidelines. Its effects require work not only with individuals but a commitment that of necessity involves personal change and action. The action means not only working on self but is inevitably political — the link of personal and political brought to the fore by the late twentieth century wave of feminism. In this form youth work takes on an aspect which is truly community based for, as the contributors in this book demonstrate, education, of the informal type espoused by workers, is not sufficient in tackling the issues and the position of young people created by inequality. The power inherent in the construction of norms, stereotypes, exclusion and discrimination is not dissipated by merely raising awareness of their existence. Practice means involvement and taking action based on a set of aims and workers must choose where they stand.

A number of issues around practice require opening up to greater discussion, such as the difference between 'none' and 'anti' work as in 'anti-racist' for actively working against racism at all levels, rather than non-racist which implies collusion with the existing social structure. The status accorded to 'tough' youth work needs to be diminished; tough here as in 'My club/centre/practice is in the roughest community/has the roughest young people', a patriarchal culture of machismo effectively reinforced in the status given to physical youth work, such as various outdoor pursuits, as opposed to appreciation of the environment to say nothing of rights work, work with groups of young women, work with groups of young people with disabilities, work with sexuality. This book should be seen as a starting point for further development and the creation of sets of practice models on which workers can draw.

This is a crucial aspect. By its very nature the book is about change, personal and political, and facilitating,

ensuring or causing that change. This is easy to speak and write of but very difficult to do. Whilst the book establishes the need, and gives models for analysis, and the reviewer has the luxury of critical reflection of variable accessibility, an agenda for action is created. How that agenda is to be enacted is also required — the recipes to try, the sets of instructions to follow. Such precise forms of practice are not explicit amongst the overviews given here, which may be frustrating for many but will hopefully stimulate others. Some common strands stand out forcefully. One is the tension between the two models of separation and integration for moving forward; the separation is for groups of young women and young black people in order for developmental work to take place within a culture of shared and validated experience and a fully acknowledged history/herstory; the integration for the presently separated out groups of young people with disabilities; the excluded and unacknowledged young

gay men and young lesbians need both space for group meetings to validate and develop but also integration. Over all this broods the issue of class, economic power and its consequent powerlessness. The other strand, repeated throughout, derives from this: the need for action, and at a political level, for without such action is collusion, a suggestion which might seem out of place to many a youth worker. In an earlier volume Jeffs and Smith wrote of the lack of adequate theory in youth work; the problem of social and economic inequality of young people offers a centrality for critical practice and the thrust for the work. Without such identity youth work will remain dissipated and diluted amid functions of leisure and education opportunities, welfare and control and reproduction of the status quo. Thus, this book demands circulation; reading, debate and response; it is more than a worthwhile exercise.



# **R**eviews in this Issue

**RURAL ARTS. A  
DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**  
Trevor Bailey and Ian Scott  
Calouste Gulbenkian

**FAITH IN THE COUNTYSIDE.  
REPORT OF THE  
ARCHBISHOPS'  
COMMISSION ON RURAL  
AREAS**  
Churchman Publishing

**RURAL CHILDCARE**  
Moira K. Stone  
Rural Development  
Commission

**TRAVELLERS: AN  
INTRODUCTION**  
Jon Cannon and the  
Travellers of Thistlebrook  
Interchange Books and  
Emergency Exit Arts

**BOOTSTRAP, TEN YEARS  
OF ENTERPRISE  
INITIATIVES**  
Martin McEnery  
Calouste Gulbenkian

**SEX, RISK AND DANGER.  
DON'T DIE OF IGNORANCE**  
Janet Holland et al.  
WRAP Tufnell Press

**TRAINING FOR SPECIAL  
NEEDS**  
Max Taylor and Sara Hills  
Longman

**TRAUMA IN THE LIVES OF  
CHILDREN**  
Kendall Johnson  
Macmillan Press

**YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING  
CARE**  
Maureen Stone  
Royal Philanthropic Society

**NOWHERE TO GO AND  
NOTHING TO DO**  
Newcastle Young Womens  
Project

**COMMON CULTURE**  
Paul Willis  
Open University Press

**CHILDREN AND  
TELEVISION: THE ONE EYED  
MONSTER?**  
Barrie Gunter and Jill  
McAlear  
Routledge

**RURAL ARTS — A discussion  
document for the Calouste  
Gulbenkian Foundation  
(UK Branch)**  
Trevor Bailey and Ian Scott  
ISBN 0903319 470  
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation,  
1990

**98 Portland Place, London W1N 4ET  
£5.50 (pbk). pp 110**

With the reading of 'Rural Arts' having enlivened one long rail journey, it was a delight to receive an unexpected invitation to review it for *Youth and Policy* the following week. For someone whose prime area of work centres around studies of rural deprivation and disadvantage, especially as they affect young people, women, and less visible but oppressed groups in the countryside, I actually found this discussion document refreshingly stimulating. However one should not be misled, it is not a strong analysis of issues and many of the recommendations are rather thin and speculative e.g. Section 14 pp 8-95 (which conclude the publication) are versed in terms of 'Questions arising from the review' and 'the options' which are pretty indeterminate. Nonetheless all the sections have a certain flair to illustrate the potential for a Rural Arts approach, and in that sense I thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to re-read the text in detail, for, as the foreword states its intention is 'as a starting point for debate'.

If Rural Arts has been a relatively neglected subject — and certainly there are few texts of which I am aware — then this publication will go a long way to filling that gap. However when I first saw it mentioned in the Gulbenkian Foundation and Bedford Square Press Joint Book Catalogue I had expected something quite different. However, considering what one pays for some publications, £5.50 for a hundred clearly typed, error free, A4 pages in firm covers bound with a plastic spine, is a fair price. The Section summaries are very good but the referencing is very poor and an overall Bibliography is non-existent, which is a pity. Some readers of *Youth and Policy* may have views about the Gulbenkian Foundation's intervention in Rural Issues — I am certainly aware of some people involved in rural matters who have ethical problems about their rationale — but the stated intention of this study was

simply to inform their own arts policy making. Researchers Trevor Bailey and Ian Scott were asked to prepare a briefing paper and to report on 'the main issues concerning the sustenance and development of Rural Arts, to consider if the Foundation could have a useful role to play and, if so, to define what that role might be and how it could be carried out.' Although originally intended for internal use the Foundation has decided to make the report available to a wider audience.

Quite what that wider audience might be is rather difficult to determine, but one can only applaud the initiative which led to this publication finding its way to my desk twice in six months. At the same time many readers may have come across people who have been reporting enthusiastically about their involvement in a national conference on the arts in rural areas which took place in Durham over three days last March. Further, in a letter dated August 1990 the Arts Development Association note that a publication 'Pride of Place' based on these proceedings including 'extensive photographic illustrations, new contributions, additionally researched material, more detailed case studies, as well as contact lists and a bibliography' is due to be produced early in 1991. So this is certainly an appropriate time to offer Rural Arts some attention in this publication.

If this is an area of activity to be opened up to examination — what do we expect to find discussed? I think my first thoughts were of Drama, Music, Crafts and even Pageants. However what 'Rural Arts' does is widen the perspective considerably, although as the researchers note; 'this was never intended to be a definitive or exhaustive research into rural arts'.

Nonetheless, from my perspective, considering innovative ways of working with young people in rural areas, I was reminded of the value of such enterprises as the Oral History project, in the fast disappearing rural coalfields of North Nottinghamshire, that those involved recounted at the Midlands Rural Youthwork Conference. When one realises the potential such projects have, with just a little bit of imagination: to bring isolated schools, parents, and elderly residents together, enabling them to achieve 'with young people' a status and identity in which they can all take pride.

Within all the examples 'Rural Arts' quotes; from using Newsletters, Village Bands of all ages, publishing, film, radio and photographic enterprises not to mention the ever-present folk music, dance and folk singing that I could immediately identify with, the text also outlined what was possible, for example: one such venture — a Saturday multi-arts workshop enticingly entitled 'The Company of Imagination', which offered opportunities for a wide range of people to come together in a spot accessible to those living in a sparsely populated rural area.

The authors lay claim to starting from a community development standpoint, and suggesting that the pairing of Community Arts and Community Development workers offered opportunities to combine in, for example

campaigning, by exploiting video techniques 'for those who live in rural areas to articulate local points of view to decision makers, to express a sense of belonging to a local community, to pick up local people's political concerns'. This may seem a rather idealistic aim but also seems to suggest that 'rural communities' are homogeneous entities, and that Local Authorities have readily on hand appropriate and identifiable committee structures to respond. My experience would be the opposite, but more could perhaps have been discussed concerning the varieties of partnerships which are now emerging to sponsor joint arts and development projects.

However there are some illuminating examples of activities undertaken, and venues exploited, in what is, of course, basically an amateur activity. This presents the dilemma — how will those who live in rural areas respond to Arts 'Animateurs' and what precisely could be their role?

Colleagues in the National Rural Youthwork Network embarked on a most original Summer Programme in Cumbria this year by employing a 'Rural Writer in Residence' though she was in fact mobile and her attempts to engage with girls and young women in isolated bus shelters, encouraging them to write about their experiences. This was featured in the Guardian in August last year.

This type of imaginative initiative could well now be adapted, and copied, as might other examples quoted in 'Rural Arts', for although it reports negative responses (e.g. the young person who spoke in the context of their response to national television 'where I come from doesn't exist' page 65), it also highlights the possibilities of Rural Youth Theatre in Wiltshire using rural environmental issues as a theme. That could also be matched with the new loose association of village youth clubs, practising circus skills and then coming together under the aegis of the West Sussex Downs Rural Youth Worker for a collaborative and celebratory performance at a central venue.

Much as 'Rural Arts' stimulated a number of ideas, (and reminded me of the enjoyment and success of others,) it must be said that the report was the result of only a limited number of respondents. An examination of the location of the organisations studied, and of the individuals interviewed, was very revealing — 16 came from Ireland, 7 from the Isle of Lewis, 6 from Scotland, 3 from Wales, 11 from Lincolnshire and Humberside and 9 from Devon, Somerset and Dorset — 52 out of 60 from the extremities of the British Isles. That fact may tell us something in itself. If one were offering a longer critique one might question why the authors felt it was the culture of these 'fringes' and — predominantly Celtic at that — that seems to offer the most significant lessons for the future?

From my perspective the most noticeable omissions in the report are: one, the lack of any detailed discussion of any form of mobile project, the researches only seem to have put static locations under scrutiny. From my experience the mobile project has enormous

potential to engage people living in isolated situations in varieties of informal 'artistic' interactions. The one project I would commend is Pentabus which operates in the West Midlands and Welsh Borders — their penchant is for film and street theatre. My daughter went on a weekend in Shropshire where they relived with locals some of the characters and issues that influenced the lives of small communities. That was a weekend she will never forget, and neither will any of the 120 or so who participated in the Midlands Rural Youthwork conference forget the stirring presentation Pentabus offered us in their production of 'Becca's Children' in which we all got caught up in the issues of toll roads, rural poverty and oppression and its modern day equivalents. Participative drama is a powerful medium when used with one or two people or many more in larger groupings.

Obviously size is a major determinant of any activity in rural areas, what this publication illustrates is what is possible in a 'Rural Arts' context.

Second, the omission of any reference to work with any travelling group, (numerous and varied as they may be,) is marked. Fairground workers might have merited a mention, and surely much of our rural artistic heritage must give some recognition to that gleaned from migrant workers, canal barge dwellers and the outward expressions of the proud and colourful Romany culture.

In conclusion though, one must acknowledge the contribution Gulbenkian is attempting to make in an area of rural society that has previously received little attention and support. 'Rural Arts' not only signposts some possibilities, but the Foundation has also produced a leaflet advertising its small grants programme entitled: 'Making a Song and Dance About It'. If this review has only brought that leaflet to the attention of a few more people it may have stimulated a little more of the potential for 'Rural Arts'.

Whilst not ignoring the facets of the considerable deprivation, disadvantage and the suburbanisation of the countryside that now face the traditional rural dweller, many of whom can now be seen as members of a minority, 'Rural Arts' is, nonetheless, a refreshing review of some possibilities which might enable the exploration of change from an unusual perspective. One could not select more appropriate words than those quoted in Section 11 from Lynn O'Brien of the Orcadia Folk Arts Studio to conclude this review:

*The final part of this dynamic would be the offering of oral reminiscences, sagas, legends, ballads, dances, music and dialect poems to our people with the aim of blasting the past into the living present.*

If rural arts, in all its forms, can make a contribution to that end it will have a distinctive role to play in examining rural society, and what is becoming of it, in the last decade of the century,

**Ray Fabes**

**FAITH IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**  
**Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas**  
**Churchman Publishing 1990**  
**ISBN 1 85093 274 3**  
**£12.50 pp xiv +400**

This report is very conscious that it follows 'Faith in the City'. In presentation it is keen to anticipate the political battles that came with the other report: Lord Prior chaired the commission, the cover would give it a place on a country gentleman's coffee table, the appendices A-K are typically careful pieces of study by Doctors of Geography. This self-consciousness about possible reactions — which haven't in fact happened — is distracting from the content which is useful and leaves the sense that arguments have been kept on a tight rein. Broadly speaking the report is a must for anyone working in a rural setting. The definition of the commission worked with was populations of under 10,000 people. They refer to mining villages (5:67 and 5:68) and were moved by the coastline at Easington. The analysis begins with a theological chapter but the section dissecting the rural church is preceded by four chapters (100 pages) on: the changing structure of the countryside, the environment, the economy and the social condition. The analysis provides a good up to date overview.

I am disappointed that the European Community context of the structure of land ownership and use was not explored in any depth (5:41-44). This seems to reflect a political insularity that is unreal. I am also disappointed, as a theologian, that land ownership and use is described but not challenged. The Levellers and Diggers get no mention, of course. Enclosure is referred to (7:15) as a time of wealth for clergy but no other viewpoint is offered. There is no reference to 20th century Latin American land ownership battles waged by the church with the landless. I work in the diocese of Durham and these questions seem to have direct consequences for the young men and women here. Work is no longer available under the ground and if land ownership and use remain tightly controlled then no new possibilities are open for land based employment. The commission itself records a need for diversification in the North Pennines (5:44) but there is no clear attempt to follow this up. More typical of the report is an encouragement to trim current policy: Training and Enterprise Councils need a better rural strategy, Rural Development Areas need a more integrated approach, parishes should carry out a housing needs survey with the advice of the Rural Community Council to assess the need for affordable housing so that the district council and local housing associations can be told. Some of this fine tuning may be useful but there is a sense that — after 'Faith in the City' — the commission does not want to be clear that government policy needs to change. The report addresses the area of 'Young People and Education' explicitly in Chapter 10. Much of it is devoted to church schools and the role they have in local communities. Ten pages concentrate on the work done by

churches directly with children and young people. They express more clearly than 'Faith in the City' did the state of the Church of England's work at a parish level. Contact is poor, there are some good ideas which it is possible to reproduce and there is some support — for example SPECTRUM youth leader training is helping develop good voluntary work. Strengths are found in the community context of church life and this is particularly true of relations between the Residential Centres in rural areas. This is good honest stuff and a good basis for local alliances by youth and community workers.

The report presents a very clear position statement in terms of what is going on and why. This in itself is useful: the rural situation can be viewed at one glance. It is useful in that it may help workers identify common practical ground as far as ways forward are concerned. I remain disappointed that there seems so little questioning of fundamentals but maybe the combination of rural life and the Church of England makes that inevitable.

**Jonathan Roberts**

**RURAL CHILDCARE**

**Moira K. Stone**

**1990 RDC**

**Rural Development Commission  
Research Report No. 9**

In its analysis this paper describes the rural face of a national scandal; in its interpretation, it tries to cover up with a diversionary attempt to look at the issue of childcare as if it were merely a useful accessory to women returning to work.

This report is not about rural childcare, but about the RDC's problems in relating its stated concern for social and community problems to its actual overriding requirement to help industry and private sector investment find a comfortable home in the English countryside. The report looks at the interaction between the provision of childcare, and the prospects for women returning to work through four field-word studies (Fenland, Chippenham, Bude and Holsworthy, and East Cleveland), and a literature search.

It does not describe the issue of childcare in the matrix of women's or children's lives: it only just manages to mention the significance of childcare as relating to equal opportunities and does not mention at all the impact of cuts in RSG/SSA on the provision of local authority childcare services. It is a bland report; the RDC is obviously calling the tune; it is promotional in that the author makes statements about the prospects for the growth of childcare provision which are quite unwarranted by the facts she examines.

The best summary of employer-provided childcare is given by Mrs Spencer, deputy general secretary of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, who remarked that most women in her industry 'are as likely to encounter a career break scheme or childcare subsidy as fly to the moon.' (p. 14).

What do these employers think about childcare and women returning to work?

'In rural areas, employers attitudes towards assisting with childcare are not always favourable, and in some areas such an idea is seen as a laughable proposition.' (p.43).

'Many rural employers do not believe that they should assist with childcare, seeing it as something to be arranged by the family (usually the mother).' (p. 34).

'An Institute of Manpower Studies report found that fewer than 14% of UK employers have addressed the needs of working mothers despite nearly seven years of publicity about the projected decline in the workforce. A report by Rosslyn Research found that only 4% of companies said they were likely to take action to attract women back to work. 27% said they would be taking no action.' (p. 14).

So which employers do anything? — 'the larger employers.' (p. 14).

What kind of employers are there in rural areas?

'Most rural businesses are small, or very small, without much spare cash.' (p. 34).

Where else can women find childcare?

'The majority of rural counties provide fewer than ten places in day nurseries for every 1,000 children under five.'

'The supply of childminders in rural areas can be limited and out of school care schemes are practically non-existent.' (p. 32).

'The cost of childcare... can take it out of the range of lowly paid women. Low wages for women are common in rural areas often well below the £163 a week considered as low by the European Community.' (p. 33).

'There is a large unmet need for appropriate childcare.' (p. 18).

The report struggles to present some information about childcare — that fathers may also have responsibilities, that parental leave is an issue, that women often have other caring responsibilities, that transport is an intransigent problem, that there are no tax exemptions when paying for childcare, that caring is a low status, low pay job, that childminding needs proper local authority support etc. Instead of relating these issues in the context of social policy, or in the life experience of parents they are described as incidental extra hiccoughs in the labour market.

So where is the state in this morass?

'Britain has publicly funded childcare for fewer than 2% of children under three compared with for example, 44% in Demark.'

Of the report's thirteen conclusions, nine refer to the need for increased resources to remedy the absence of childcare facilities, and eleven say the Rural Development Commission should be doing something about it. There is an interesting lack of analysis about what the RDC is currently doing...

The report highlights local authority experiments — or should I say, it lists the handful that might get off the ground in rural areas eventually; the most that can be said at present is that there is some studying going on. Some of the conclusions are astounding in view of the above.

'The picture of childcare in relation to employ-

ment is developing rapidly.' (p. 41). Developing? It has been printed — it shows a complete blank.

'This study has made valuable links with childcare organisations...' For whom? (p. 41). The field studies, being based on different types of rural area give good articulate pictures of the childcare problems in rural England, but still tend to relate it only to employment.

On the basis of the evidence contained herein, the report should have only one set of conclusions — that the absence of childcare provision in rural England is a national scandal; it holds up a mirror to the oppression of women and children in those areas, and it shows the cynicism or ignorance with which the RDC looks at social need by pretending that the solutions to a problem as serious as this can ever be found in the Thatcherite dogma that the private sector can be encouraged to provide.

Pull the other one, its got bells on.

**Les Roberts**

## **TRAVELLERS: AN INTRODUCTION**

**Jon Cannon and The Travellers of Thistlebrook**

**Interchange Books & Emergency Exit Arts 1990**

**ISBN 0-948309-14-8**

**£4.95 (pbk). pp 73**

This is an excellent book for anyone who wants a brief introduction to Gypsies and Travellers. I wish it had been available when I first began working with a Traveller Project, two years ago. It provides any reader new to the subject with basic information about Travellers and the various and diverse sub-groups which compose the Traveller communities. It details the history, culture, religion and beliefs of the Travellers, but also explores the discrimination and oppression which they suffer from the wider society.

The book is in two parts. The first is a concise and simply presented account of Traveller history and culture. It begins by considering travelling as a way of life, but moves on to describe the three main groups of Travellers in Britain: Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Age. A brief history of Travellers in Britain since 1505 to the post war era, sets out some of the dramatic changes to the way of life which have occurred in modern times. Most significantly, this section details examples of the various persecutions which Gypsies and Travellers have suffered. Subsequent sections explore culture and beliefs: religions; male and female roles and attitudes; the importance of the trailer and possessions; power and organisation within the communities. The writing is thoughtful and careful and manages to provide a great deal of information in a very few pages. What it conveys, and this is important since it confounds the efforts of the bigot to stereotype, is the sheer diversity of the Traveller communities, apparent in a wide range of expressed beliefs and ways of life.

The second part of the book gives Travellers a

voice (in print) to speak for themselves and express their views on a whole range of subjects including their feelings about Gorjas. (Gorja is the commonly used perjorative for non-Travellers). This half of the book is based on interviews conducted with Travellers by the Emergency Exit Arts Group. This is a very appropriate method, since many Travellers are illiterate, having never attended school. It would have been impossible for them to 'write' in any other way.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is here that Traveller culture comes to life and demonstrates how — like any other culture — it is neither homogeneous nor simple to understand, but reflects many different, even contradictory, beliefs.

There's other Travelling people and all Travelling people have the same rights. But nobody else can call themselves a Gypsy, that's not right. We were born to this way of life, it's our birthright. We've been like this for hundreds of years.

*Bubbles Brazil p49*

Mind you there's probably not a single pure bred Gypsy anywhere. It only takes one of your sort of people.

*John Harris p49*

All Travellers are one. I don't believe what they say about the differences between them.

*Moses Brazil p50*

The quotations illustrate that, like the rest of us, Travellers hold a variety of individual beliefs, but they nonetheless share and are proud of a distinctive culture and tradition... their Gypsy way of life.

There's something there that's different. You don't know what it is, you only know it's there if you've been with us, or if you are one. You couldn't put no words to it, ... I'm proud I'm a Gypsy.

*John Harris p49*

A Travelling man doesn't believe in banks. You can see if he's from the silver, chrome, china and glass. You can tell us by what we carry.

*Marion Mahoney p48*

You may see rubbish outside people's trailers but they're always clean inside. We use them chrome pots. Some of them may cost a hundred pounds each but they last a lifetime. We keep them separate. I wash vegetables in one, clothes in another, dishes in a third. Settled people don't do that. You won't find a Travelling person who doesn't.

*Marion Mahoney p48*

Gorja kids all keep themselves to themselves where as our kids will share anything — but they don't get independent till much later. When we goes calling our kids keep what they earn.

*Bubbles Brazil p48*

I ought to mention that the book also contains photographs and a few pieces of original writing by Travellers. Since Emergency Exit Arts is a community arts group I can only assume that they felt it appropriate to publish these creative works. I wouldn't have missed them, but nor did they get in the way of the

genuine information contained in the book. The photographs too do little to enhance the book, other than to break up the text. Some of the historical photographs and family snapshots were of interest, the rest were of little merit. The book ends with a short section detailing further reading and resources. Overall the book is a must for any mainstream youth or community worker who is beginning to work with Travellers and wants to learn something of their culture and history.

**Annie Franklin**

## **BOOTSTRAP, Ten Years of Enterprise Initiatives**

**Martin McEneary**

**Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1989**

**ISBN 0 903319 48 9**

**£4.00 (pbk). pp 70.**

'Bootstrap, Ten Years of Enterprise Initiatives' documents Bootstraps growth and development over the last decade. Its story is not in itself unique. The experiences described are common to many working in co-operative development, community business, or third sector development. For anyone contemplating a move into this area of work it would be a useful and informative book to read.

Bootstrap is based in Dalston in the London borough of Hackney, an area of poor housing and social deprivation but with a 'mixed and vibrant population'. It started in the late seventies as a result of successful tenant co-operatives and has grown steadily with expansion through new 'Bootstraps' in Swindon and Blackburn in 1987. The aim of the project is to develop sustainable co-operative enterprises through the provision of training, workshop space, support and business development.

The book describes a development from the idealism and commitment of two workers through to a hard nosed and apparently successful project currently working with a substantial number of embryo and trading co-operatives. The original influence for the project came from JCP schemes, Community Co-operatives in Scotland, Mondragon and the work of E.F. Schumacher. Co-operatives were identified because they were eligible for financial assistance and they retained wealth and control within the community.

Pilot projects were run in the early stages and depended on great dedication from the workers enduring a shoe string existence. Their first premises was originally a cow shed but unlike many similar organisations they resisted MSC funding and were fortunate in having the skills, and luck, to obtain alternative funding which gave them the time to consolidate and develop their activities.

Reading between the lines it can be seen that they took some knocks in the early days, an experience that will not be lost on anyone else who has tried to establish similar projects, and gradually they developed a framework for supporting co-operative ventures that is both

hard nosed and sensitive to people. Their ability to do this can be traced to their clarity of purpose. From the early days they decided that they were not there to provide welfare services but to develop financially viable co-operative business ideas.

The result is that from early days Bootstrap selected the people for the co-operatives, vetted business ideas and developed an increasingly structured arrangement for support and finance. The qualities they looked for were enthusiasm within the group about the trade, the possession between them of the technical skills (or the ability to acquire them), commitment to making a business viable, interest in setting up co-operatives and the ability to get by on low wages in the early stages. Thus, as Martin McEnery readily admits, those with severe disability, very young people and people with severe numeracy or literacy problems were not taken on and few people with young dependant children were able to participate. "This "top down" approach was our response to what we saw as the dangers of letting people embark on an idea that was not viable" (p22). Once again this dilemma is one that many people working in the field will recognise.

It would be false if this gave an impression that Bootstrap threw away their ideals in the research for financial viability. Throughout the book the commitment to reaching those most in need comes through loud and clear and their ability to attract alternative finance is all the more impressive given that they have not sold the project on the grounds of job creation alone. However they do also have a commitment to create real jobs and in these competitive times this requires a realistic approach to business as well.

Over the years they have evolved a fairly comprehensive structure for their work. Business ideas are either developed by Bootstrap or people come in with their own ideas and Bootstrap helps them to develop these. This is less and less done through feasibility studies and more and more through trial runs. The arrangements for finance, space, training, support, supervision and responsibility are clearly defined and the book contains details of most of these contracts, agreements and procedures in a useful appendix.

What can be seen overall is a move into a highly structured process, designed so as to maximise the chances of financial viability and genuine co-operative organisation, and at the same time reflecting the commitment of the organisation to the human side of development.

It is a useful book and one of the failings of the co-operative development movement, and also of youth work generally, is the lack of documentation of fine ideals being put into practice. However whilst this is worthwhile in itself, and many valuable lessons can be learnt from it, there is also a need to go deeper than to simply describe the administrative arrangements.

An illuminating foreword by John Pearce of Strathclyde Community Business puts this into perspective. For anyone who wants to see changes in terms of community and grass

roots control there are fundamental questions to be asked. As Pearce says 'for their second decade I would like to see Bootstrap attempt to build at least one large enterprise and apply their ten years of experience to ensuring that ordinary people can learn to run a bigger business and remain in control of it. *If that cannot be achieved then all the grand hopes of the third sector will fade and we shall be left with nothing more than worthwhile intentions and small enterprises struggling on the edge of the main stream economy. Lets seek to move beyond the edge*'. (p12). Nevertheless Bootstrap demonstrated that 'co-operatives can be successful businesses and draw attention to dilemmas of democracy within large organisations and the financial needs for expansion.' (p9). In other words after ten years of Bootstrap and numerous other organisations hard questions still have to be asked about the practicalities of the work.

For youth workers who have also tried, in many different formats, to develop self management and democratic control the lessons that Bootstrap have learnt will not be new and the hopes for the third sector outlined so eloquently by John Pearce in the foreword are not so very different from the hopes held by many youth workers. However, we really should be going some way beyond the asking of these questions and I can't help feeling that organisations such as Bootstrap have some answers, unfortunately this book does not really go into them.

Martin McEnery does give hints of the real dilemmas that exist but without analysing them or passing on to the reader in any real depth the experience of Bootstrap in trying to tackle them. For example they explain how it became necessary to adopt a top town approach and to develop a highly structured approach to their work with co-operatives but there is nothing about how this was explained to participants, where and when conflict arose in this and the difference in approach to young people, parents, and people from ethnic minorities. Also they mention that they select individuals to form a co-operative but nothing about how this is done, how a balanced team is developed and how they respond to dominant or submissive individuals within this process. They clearly illustrate the need for structure, rigour and development to take place but they don't say how they judge the time scale and the risks in doing this. They obviously hold the co-operative ideal close to their heart but to what degree are people who participate in the project doing so because they are getting better support and training than anywhere else and how much because they are also committed to the co-operative ideal. One wonders how Bootstrap tackled these issues? None of these questions have easy, or right, answers but they are pertinent to the practice.

In addition if we believe that local and grass roots control is of importance, then the question of how this sort of development fits into a competitive, capitalist system also needs to be addressed. How can co-operatives succeed when by their nature they are likely to be less

competitive in terms of efficiency, decision making and ruthlessness in the face of fast, efficient and experienced entrepreneurs. This is explained in the foreword in terms of the experiments and learning curves that developers need to work through if alternative economic strategies are to be developed but this is not the message that comes across from the book. Bootstrap would probably be the first to admit that local economic control is fraught with difficulties but if these difficulties are to be overcome, as many of us think they must, it is important to move beyond a factual description. The sooner these sort of questions are seriously addressed the sooner the third sector will be able to justify its existence on more than idealism and we will no longer see a situation where 'local effort by co-operatives, by enterprise agencies, by community businesses, by local authorities appear(s) horribly marginal' (p11).

Having said this, after years of reading reams of uncritical propaganda for the small business movement this is refreshing in that the dilemma between funders and the aspirations of workers is to some extent made explicit and the shortcomings and mistakes are discussed honestly.

As with many organisations in the voluntary sector funders and backers have to be constantly kept in mind, and I suspect that this book is no exception. This is no real criticism because it reflects the realities of our existence and Bootstrap has resisted this more than most and the difficulties of fitting everything in a book in terms of both time and space are appreciated. However the details of methodology really need to be tied down more if the aspirations that many have for the third sector and for youth work are ever to be a reality. This is less a criticism of this book than a plea for workers to start to understand and share the practical methods, techniques and processes they use and develop.

**Andy Gibson**

**SEX, RISK AND DANGER.  
DON'T DIE OF IGNORANCE  
Women risk AIDS project. Tufnell  
Press**

**Janet Holland et al.  
ISBN 1 872767 55 9 and  
1 872767 50 8  
£3.00 (each pbk). pp30**

I found it very heartening to read in these two short books that at last a serious piece of research has begun into young women in relation to their sexuality and sexual practices; the way they see and experience sex. It seems to me that the work which had begun in this study may hold vital clues as to how to help young women to be able to reassess their ideas and practices around sex in a much more constructive way. As a former youth worker, I was pleased to read in print many of the things I had observed and had a hunch about as far as sex and young women were concerned. The findings of the research team

and the young women's responses has backed up my observations and feelings. I hope this will be true of others working with young women.

Now, as I work in the voluntary sector in the HIV and AIDS field, I am becoming even more aware that heterosexual women in particular are greatly disadvantaged when it comes to protecting themselves and others with regard to the spread of the HIV virus. An example of this is the safety pin. From about 1985 for some time many gay men wore a safety pin, as a safer sex badge, a very clear symbol for all around to see. It also made safer sex an issue for those who were less likely to practice it, but were consistently reminded by this symbol. For women there is no such symbol and even if there were, how many men wanting heterosexual sex would honour it?

I found that the larger number of quotes in the second book, *Don't die of Ignorance I nearly died of embarrassment* made it even more readable than the first. It was very useful having quotes from women on the survey to back up the more formal statements from the researchers. I found it very valuable indeed to read what the young women actually said.

#### *Sex, Risk and Danger — AIDS education policy and young women's sexuality.*

In this first of the W.R.A.P. papers, the authors begin by outlining the spread of HIV into the heterosexual population, which, of course, includes young women. They point out how people whom the Government called 'at-risk groups' during their early campaigns do not stay just within their own group. The risks for women are great, yet research into sexual practices and understanding of HIV and the nature of risk involved is sadly lacking.

The authors point out that women are beginning to be held responsible for controlling the spread of HIV by controlling men's sexual behaviour. This, they point out, has happened in this country before, when syphilis was increasing. It was seen then that it wasn't the men who were in any way to blame for the spread of this disease as far as the law was concerned, it was women who were thought to be prostitutes who were hounded by the police and subjected to violent medical examinations in the name of stopping the spread of the disease. Despite the work of reformers like Josephine Butler, who saw that the scapegoating of women was not the way to stop the spread of this sexually transmitted disease, it took until the 1940's when penicillin came in as a cure for syphilis that the pressure finally subsided on women being used as the scapegoats for this disease. We are, however, left with the question, 'will the same thing happen again with HIV?' Bearing all that in mind, the authors then go on to point out just where the power lies in sexual encounters and that is most often not with young women.

Important for me is the whole issue of education targeted at young women. This, as the authors point out, is fraught with huge difficulties which do not help young women come to any clear conclusions about their part in the spread of HIV. The Government campaign in

1986 was aimed at everyone in general. The Health Education Campaign of 1988 was a little better as it was targeted at young people. This campaign talked about choices and the authors in their paper ask what choices young women actually have. Sex education in schools (where eighty nine out of one hundred interviewed said they gained some teaching on sex) is very varied. The emphasis is still on penetrative sex and not so much about the many other aspects of sexuality and sexism. Quantity and quality differ greatly, but with the independent running of schools, sex education is now in the hands of school governors, who may not have the understanding, the nous, the wit, or the necessary education themselves to make a valid choice for a school on sex education that will empower young women.

#### *Don't Die of Ignorance: I nearly died of embarrassment: Condoms in context.*

There are pressures, embarrassments, factual doubts, physical dislikes, cultural implications and lack of practice and other implications which need to be taken in to account when thinking about condom use. Condoms are a means to protect both partners in safer sex — nothing is safe only safer, the authors stress the major difference between a) known facts on the contracting of HIV and relating social factors, b) negotiations to protect partners by the use of condoms. This paper explores some of the contradictions which have arisen around condoms and their use. They sometimes form a constraint on the choices and discussions — but are needed for safer sex 'public health education may be able to affect what people think, but not necessarily their behaviour'.

'...while the English education system may equip pupils with some knowledge of the mechanics of vaginal intercourse, much of the danger, and virtually all of the pleasures of sexuality are an embarrassed area of silence'. People don't talk about sex and this accounts for some of the moral dilemmas around sex. Some of the women in the study found it very difficult to ask a man to use a condom. It was just very embarrassing.

The authors quote different young women's feelings about broaching the subject of condom use. 30% of the women interviewed had used a condom, but a young woman who used a condom on one occasion may not use one on another. The authors go on to point out, however, that the past HIV and AIDS campaigns have done one important thing for young women in alerting them to the fact that they can have pleasurable and safer sex without it involving penetration or use of a condom; but whether young women can negotiate this is another matter. An interesting revelation for me was how some young women asked their male partner to use a condom because they weren't on the pill and said they wanted to avoid pregnancy. This, it would seem, is a good way of getting the protection necessary for HIV spread under the guise of not wanting to get pregnant. This is fine as long as the encounter is short term, but when a couple are 'going steady' this reason for using a condom no longer holds. The

element of trust has now come into the relationship and the boy may say 'why haven't you been to the doctor yet for the pill'. I suspect this may force some young women into having more partners.

The use of condoms is not just about dealing with the risk of dealing with disease. It should be much more to do with the equality of partners who are working out their role in sexual encounters. 'The physical intimacy which can lead to orgasm, pregnancy, or sexually transmitted disease, is potentially an experience of both pleasure and danger'. With each new partner one steps out along new territory and all the physical and emotional feeling are to be experienced afresh, this may of course be true with the same partner, but on different occasions of having sexual experiences. 'These encounters are not predictable and it entails trusting our bodies, our identities and our self respect to others and not uncommonly to strangers'. Women have an ambivalence to having sexual intercourse on occasions, but they are also reluctant to refuse it. People don't talk about sex because it is embarrassing and there is a major fear of rejection.

I have read the two papers with great interest. I applaud the authors for their patience in studying the young women in their survey and I look forward to reading further papers on the information they gather and I wish the authors success in their future research. I recommend these papers to female and male workers who have anything to do with young people who are becoming sexually active, and to any worker who is used as a confidante. Further these papers may be of importance to men working with young men helping them to understand women's sexuality.

**Patsy Wilson**

#### **TRAINING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Max Taylor and Sara Hills**

**Longman 1990**

**ISBN 0 582 06301 9**

**pp 165**

This book, as the title says, is intended to provide a framework for constructing training programmes to meet the needs of young people with special needs. The authors are described as 'self-employed consultants', Max Taylor ran the Building Societies Staff College, according to the cover, whilst Sara Hills 'managed a NACRO YTS in Oxford'.

What do the authors mean by 'Special Needs' in this context? It is a phrase which has often been used to legitimate any number of different kinds of practices. In this text it is used to indicate young people who may have a range of needs, but here one suspects that the term relates more to the process of legitimating funding from the Training Agency and TECs for various projects, than it does to the diversity of needs which the young people concerned will actually have. In fact there is very little discussion of the use of the term itself, apart from a number of little vignettes which are

intended to illustrate the client group.

Why is it that this particular selection of young people require to be 'trained' as opposed to 'educated'? Training is regarded as one of four responses to the needs of the young people for whom this book is designed. These are outlined as follows:

- (a) social workers are engaged in 'caring' and 'caring on its own is a policy for despair' (p4).
- (b) offenders may be punished in a 'penal' response, but this doesn't work in stopping people from offending in the first place, nor in stopping them re-offending.
- (c) 'therapy' is a possible response, but people who have undesirable behaviour are not ill.
- (d) in consequence we are left with 'training' as the only response to these young peoples needs. I leave the reader to make what they can of this logic.

The stated aims of the training programme are at the least succinct:

*The word that sums it up is 'effectiveness'. Personal effectiveness has always been one of the stated outcomes of YTS: however since the Training Agency has still not succeeded in defining it, it has been largely neglected, in favour of the narrower (though still important) outcome of enterprise.*

It is hardly surprising that training, as in this text, focuses on changing the individual and only to a limited extent deals with the social context. The rationale for this is that even if the social system has been significant in the damage suffered by young people, there is nothing that can be done about that, the important thing is for the young person to be helped to acquire the qualities whose absence has caused them to become deviant. It is very much a deficit model of social problems.

It is not unconnected that this text is written for a wide range of applications in training based schemes, such as YTS and Employment Training, as well as in schools. Of course if you are training people you only require training yourself. These areas of work are the very ones where least attention and money is being spent on the education of workers. In the field of education for working with young people with severe learning difficulties, the Tory government has abolished the few degree level courses specifically designed to meet that need. In 1984 a small coterie of 'advisers' in higher education (Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers) colluded disgracefully with this decision. As a consequence it is not surprising that there is a dearth of qualified people to draw upon for this work. The text is written in that breezy and non-sense style which always looks to me like a combination of Scouting for Boys, those dreadful posters with motto's on them, and the kind of documents which have emanated from the Further Education Unit over a number of years. In other words the authors probably consider themselves as well intentioned and pragmatic. Consequently we are treated to a

continuous diet of prescriptive practice within which there are no problems, merely solutions waiting to happen.

The reader is faced with a series of exhortations which themselves are supported by reference to a series of other authorities, such as educational, psychological and sociological research. But these other writings are merely used as props, there is no real attempt to deal substantively with the often problematic or subtle implications of the arguments in the supporting material. A wealth of other material is mined and reduced to over-simplified diagrams which presumably are intended to inform the worker in this field.

As a consequence the book is replete with those simple diagrams which management experts love. So human activity is reduced on page 7 to three overlapping circles indicating THINKING, FEELING and DOING. Why do these diagrams always appear? I suppose they fit in with the notion of snappy aphorisms which litter these sort of books. You know the kind of thing 'LOOK to the future, REFLECT on the past'. It is not that the advice given is itself wrong, it is that it is limited and on occasion reduced to banality. There are no ideas here to grapple with, no moral issues to perplex us, and as a consequence no interest. The word training is always useful in this context since it seems to allow anyone to present arguments about learning which treat the world as non-problematic. Although education is not explicitly mentioned in a discussion about the use of the word training in the title, there is an implicit view about education in the text. It is argued that although training 'involves knowledge and understanding... training is not concerned with knowledge for its own sake'. (p6). Thus training, which is about the 'real world' is presumably contrasted with education, which one has to assume is concerned with knowledge for its own sake. There are some of us around who would disagree vehemently with this distinction.

The implication here is that education is about dilettante 'knowledge for its own sake', but it also reflects fundamentally the kind of anti-intellectualism that has permeated our society. This is the case from the philistinism of the Conservative Party to the brutal pragmatism of sections of the left. It is reflected in the arguments of those who prefer practice as the place where learning takes place, the language of National Vocational Qualifications and the focus on 'skills' as opposed to reflective activity.

This set of preferences has its roots in the division of labour. But today the prejudices of the petit bourgeoisie against intellectual labour have been combined with the understandable hostility of the working class to the professional classes and their institutions. The idea of 'Really Useful Knowledge' can easily be transformed into an instrumental perspective on the educational process. As a consequence there does seem to be an attraction in setting up forms of teaching and learning which are outside the historically established institutions of higher education.

Training is not about people's needs ultimate-

ly, it is about disciplining individuals and groups into the frameworks of thought and activity required by industry and work. The watchword is efficiency here, not merely the young person becoming more effective as a person. That effectiveness of course is as defined by employers and the state. Efficiency also relates to the way in which the programme operates. In other words the need is for a programme which pares away an educational agenda so that what is left are those components which are attractive to employers. This involves the removal from the educational process those very elements which are assumed to be dangerous, like critique and social analysis.

It also needs constantly restating that the interests and needs of people are *not* equivalent to those of employers or the state. And although this may appear unfashionable these days, I would argue that in an educational programme the fundamental relationship is between teacher and student, and that relationship is not the same as other professional/client relationships. It has its own specific components and dynamic. Without wishing to appear too defensive of what is sometimes indefensible practice, it is possible to argue that it is not necessary to reinvent teaching, nor to recast that set of relationships, even though the system itself may require improvement.

There is a huge element of struggle, negotiation and risk in the real processes of education. This means that the outcomes of the process cannot often be pre-specified with any degree of certainty. It is this sense that the process is also inefficient for the needs of employers. The achievement of an effective reproduction of labour is in reality the Holy Grail for employers and the state.

Ultimately, what young people in these situations really need is at least an adequate education by people who themselves have received an at least adequate education in the processes of teaching and learning. Young people should not be deprived of this by some limited form of experience called training.

Overall this book is one example of the difficulties that can be created by involvement with the various labour policies funded by the state. If ones own income and livelihood depends on funding derived from 'consultancy' to these agencies, then it can be difficult to be critical. After all you don't want to bite the hand that feeds you, do you?

**Don Blackburn**

## **TRAUMA IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN**

**Kendall Johnson**

**Macmillan Press**

**ISBN 0 333 510941**

**£8.50. pp 237**

The author has a stated aim of producing a book which has an emphasis on practical advice on crisis management for a variety of professionals dealing with children. This is a commendable aim as consistency of

approach across professionals must be helpful in managing children's insecurities following a critical event. However to come up with a book that will be useful to such a broad audience: 'teachers, administrators, counsellors, psychologists, therapists, social workers, concerned parents and others who work with, care for, and provide services to children' — is no mean feat. The task has been made even more difficult by the author's definition of trauma and all that that encompasses.

In the initial chapter Johnson classifies 'trauma' into three types — victimization, loss and family pathology and as an example of each discusses the consequences of sexual abuse, parental death and alcoholic parents. He clearly considers it important to distinguish between childhood and adolescent experiences of trauma by dividing the chapter into two sections, but he does not make it clear as to why he makes the distinction. To add to the confusion I found that the section dealing with adolescents was devoted to reactions to, rather than types of, traumatic experience and wondered therefore why this had not been an adjunct to the second chapter, entitled 'Children's Reactions to Trauma', rather than the first.

In this initial chapter we are introduced to the author's abbreviation code e.g. CI's for critical incident, MAB for maladjustive behaviour etc., which personally I found very irritating as I think that jargon restricts, rather than broadens, the audience appeal. The second chapter expands the jargon further and introduces an argument about whether or not PTSD — post traumatic stress disorder — should be included in DSM-III — which is a diagnostic manual for psychiatrists — an argument which I would not think relevant to the majority of the proposed readership of this book.

Chapters III and IV which are entitled 'What Schools Can Do' and 'What Therapists Can Do' I thought were at last beginning to achieve part of the authors aim by getting down to some practical guidelines and ideas for individual and classroom management.

The chapter entitled 'What Schools Can Do' contains advice which would be applicable to not only teachers, but youth workers and child care workers who deal face to face with children on a day to day basis — 'frontline workers', to use the author's term. There is a section on individual counselling and an interesting section on classroom debriefing aimed at helping children to share their feelings about trauma experiences as a group. There are practical guidelines for how to facilitate such discussions and an excellent section on what *not* to do. Here is the most practicable section of the book — and I would have thought the most marketable. As Johnson points out, schools fill an enormous part of a child's life and the classroom is a fertile ground in which crises may occur. This rightly addresses the importance of the 'front-line' worker in dealing with crisis on the spot and underline the importance of the worker as the adult who may be most accessible to the child at a time of crisis. It is important therefore that

the crisis for a child does not become compounded by also being a crisis for the adult who may panic through lack of skill or guidance on how to handle the situation.

There is also an observation checklist in this chapter to help frontline workers decide when to refer on to therapeutic agencies, thus helping to distinguish normal responses to stress from symptomatic indicators for treatment.

The author makes a relevant point regarding the mystery surrounding 'psychotherapy' and how this can lead to mistrust between professionals. The frontline workers having referred a child on for therapeutic help can feel frustrated by a lack of knowledge of what therapy entails and may wonder whether they made the right decision if feedback is not communicated. Chapter IV, 'What Therapists Can Do', may help dispell some myths surrounding therapy by explaining differences between particular approaches e.g. family therapy, psychotherapy, play therapy.

Chapter V aims to highlight ways in which families respond to crisis and I felt was too general to be useful to therapists and too jargonistic to be interesting to frontline workers — a criticism which seems to apply to the book as a whole. The author has tried to appeal to too wide an audience on too broad an area and all in a comparatively short space. If one excludes the chapter on the authors own research and the resource information (only useful in the USA) this brings the relevant pages down to 180.

It is thoughtful that Johnson has included a synopsis chapter by chapter in the introduction as well as a summary at the start of each so that the reader can select quickly those topics of relevance. Going straight to chapter on 'What Schools Can Do' will avoid over exposure to the jargon and get one straight to the practical guidance.

*Linda Clifford*

## **1. YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE**

**Maureen Stone**

**Royal Philanthropic Society 1990**

**ISBN 1 873 134 00 2**

**£8.50 (pbk). pp 96**

## **2. NOWHERE TO GO AND NOTHING**

**TO DO: THE VIEWS OF YOUNG**

**WOMEN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE**

**Newcastle Young Women's Project**

**1990**

**109 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle NE1**

**6QF**

**pp 47**

The two publications being reviewed here are the results of two very different pieces of research connected with services for young people in care. The research projects were conducted with different aims, but both have very similar conclusions about the needs of young people in care, or leaving care. Disturbingly both indicate that these needs are not being met to the extent that they could be if all available resources were used.

Despite coming from different perspectives both pieces of research address issues and make conclusions which go far beyond the boundaries of residential care. They are of relevance to any of us who manage or work in projects which provide facilities or services for young people, for hostel providers, for voluntary and statutory sector partnerships, and perhaps most importantly provide an important lesson in the merits of listening to those who use, or are potential users, of our services and facilities.

Maureen Stone's study is subtitled: *A Study of Management Systems, Service Delivery and User Participation*. It was commissioned by the Royal Philanthropic Society and aimed firstly, to increase the understanding of leaving care issues in order to help in policy formation and in developing good practice.

Secondly it hoped to provide an evaluation and feedback on three Leaving Care Schemes which had been set up in partnership with the Royal Philanthropic Society (RPS).

The RPS is one of the oldest voluntary child care organisations in this country. After two centuries of residential work with young offenders, it moved into the field of leaving care provision which seemed, after much consideration to be the area where it could make its strongest contribution. It was decided to develop these as partnership schemes with three local authorities (Kent, Surrey, and Wandsworth). The idea of partnerships between the voluntary and statutory sectors had been positively encouraged by several Select Committees in the 60s, 70s and 80s: a study such as this one helps to examine the benefits and problems in managing such a partnership. The RPS study has an important contribution to make in terms of voluntary sector management, partnership management, and the management of hostels. Anyone currently involved in hostel provision would however be surprised at the naivety of the researchers regarding the dilemmas between bed spaces, financial constraints, the qualities of staff, and the nature of the service. Such a dilemma is a constant concern for those of us providing specialist hostels to fulfill a need, and needing to fill beds in order to meet costs; as well as employing staff who can manage the accommodation but who can also relate to the needs of the residents.

For many readers who work with young people leaving care the important parts of this research will be about the services by Leaving Care Schemes for young people leaving residential care. The research is not only an in depth study of the three partnership schemes, it also provides important information through Stone's survey of 36 other Leaving Care Schemes in England. The inclusion of such data provides an important point of reference for the research, but also supports one of the conclusions of the second publication (the Newcastle study) that existing services for young people in care do not make use of existing local services. This, both studies found, can lead to duplication whilst missing the need to address some of the needs specifically faced by young people in care, or



leaving care.

The RPS study makes important points therefore about the links (or in most cases the lack of links) between Leaving Care Schemes and other agencies. Young people in care or who have left care are mostly seen to be the responsibility of Social Service Departments: they are therefore further disadvantaged by a lack of access to youth clubs or youth provision in other specialist or generalist agencies in both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

In evaluating the 3 Leaving Care Schemes in depth Maureen Stone draws attention to the difficulties faced by some social workers in being objective about the schemes, to the extent of being uncritical. Some social workers were described as merely feeling that any service was better than none at all. This was acutely contrasted by the maturity and objectivity of young people in evaluating the Schemes of which they had been part. The young people were much more aware of the positive and negative aspects of the project, whilst at the same time being very clear about the potential improvements.

The need to listen to what the users of the scheme are feeling is an important aspect of youth work. Indeed it is often taken for granted that this is what we do. Within Social Services the views of the client are much more rarely sought. The importance therefore of the second publication in this review is all the more relevant. The Newcastle Study specifically set out to obtain such views in order to make recommendations about residential care and provision.

The Newcastle Young Women's Project provides information about an important area identified by the RPS study as missing from Leaving Care Schemes:

*None of the 39 Leaving Care Schemes... seemed to have a policy towards young women's problems, or to be aware of specific methods for working with girls... The issue of teenage pregnancy and motherhood is a case in point... contraception and birth control as a topic is not an adequate response.*

The Newcastle research, on the other hand, specifically sets out to give young women in care a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, voices which demonstrate the clear need for a policy about young women in Leaving Care Schemes.

The second publication in this review shows how the Newcastle Young Women's Project aimed to increase our understanding of what it means to be in care through the direct voice of young women in care. The idea for the project was that they could thereby do more specialist work with such women through a specific project — I certainly hope they do. They particularly address issues to do with race, gender, sexuality and disability which are barely touched (some not at all) by the Maureen Stone study. Unfortunately the Newcastle researchers had restricted access to those young women who are faced with such inequalities.

In addition to this, important points are made

through the voices of the young women in their study, regarding finances, confidence, attitudes to pregnancy, worker training, service development, and inter-agency co-operation. Again it is clear that the views of the young people should be sought — and that they are able to be objective and constructively critical about the service they receive.

The Newcastle study however fails to address issues of management which, as the first study shows is so crucial to service delivery. The management of projects is one which is often given attention in the voluntary sector by funding bodies particularly when the management is thought to be poor. In the area of housing provision there is often a partnership between 2 or more agencies across the statutory and voluntary sectors. One of the important findings of the Stone research is the link between the management and service delivery — particularly, though not surprisingly, that the project with the most complex structure had the most staffing problems and highest user criticism.

I have some concern about the Royal Philanthropic Society study where it discusses the worries that projects had about being evaluated, and in one case led to restricted access to information. The researchers were also surprised at the way in which their research was received by those being studied. Yet I feel that they can only have prolonged this anxiety by calling the chapter which evaluated 'outcomes'; 'Verdicts (my emphasis) on Leaving Care Schemes' — surely a less threatening title could have been found? This might have gone some way to alleviating the fears that many people have of evaluation procedures. Or possibly this feeling of being 'judged' ran through the whole research?

The presentation and style of the 2 publications are very different. The Newcastle study is by far the easier to read. However its simple presentation and language should not in any way undermine the importance of its conclusions. The Royal Philanthropic Society study, on the other hand, is dense and sometimes difficult to read (not least because of the amazing use of abbreviations and a feeling that it was written for people who already understood the systems). Its descriptions of the management systems were often difficult to understand without the necessary accompanying details (particularly crucial for those of us who are interested in the detail of the differences which affect service delivery).

Despite these latter reservations I would hope that both books are read by policy makers and case workers in social services and by youth and community workers, housing associations special project managers and by any of us who have contact with young people in care. The RPS study of Leaving Care Schemes has an additional relevance for the voluntary sector generally and those interested in the management of such projects. This study is also useful for those of us involved in hostel provision or leaving care schemes, but since homelessness is a growing problem for young people generally its more general points could probably help us to avoid some of the pitfalls of these

schemes when looking at homelessness amongst young people.

**Dr Cherie Knowles**

**COMMON CULTURE: symbolic work at play in the everyday cultures of the young**

**Paul Willis**

**Open University Press**

**ISBN 0-335-09431-7**

**£8.99 (pbk). pp 160**

For a recent conference of the Community Education Association I offered a workshop entitled, *Performing Arts: an alternative model for personal and social education*. The workshop was cancelled three days before the event because it still attracted only one participant (out of 150 delegates). This I found both predictable and puzzling. Predictable because 'the arts' continue to be seen as a 'minority interest'. Puzzling because we all know that the disinterest, de-motivation and hostility that young people display in relation to schooling has its polar opposite in the manifestly energized, intensely motivated interest they show in music, in style and fashion, in aspects of television and film, in the world of images, meanings and identifications often referred to as 'popular culture', in the world, that is to say, of 'the arts'. Word that my workshop lay dead in the water came on the day that I received a copy of *Common Culture* for review, and so it was with something more than my usual interest in its general subject that I opened the book. Am I, I wanted to know, alone in my bewilderment as to why the terrain of cultural activity — the terrain inhabited by the souls and imaginations, the allegiances and alliances of young people — remains an exclusion zone for the professional imagination? I pounced on Willis' text hungry for confirmation and explanation, for an analysis that would re-open the public debate and reset the professional agenda. I was, and was not, disappointed.

I was disappointed because this is not a text for your average punter — i.e. people like me, practitioners in community and youth work, reflective as well as instinctive but, nevertheless, unschooled in the language and idioms of critical theory and materialist aesthetics. Having made several attempts to read Lukacs, Habermas, Benjamin, Williams et al. (and being a life-long Brecht freak), I recognize the conceptual landscape which this book inhabits but am repeatedly lost in the linguistic mists that obscure and deform it. It is, no doubt, true that this is my 'problem', not the text's. But it is equally true that it is an awful lot of other people's 'problem' too, people who could learn (and use) much from Willis' account. This is not an anti-intellectual plea, the practitioner-zealot's anathematizing of 'jargon'. Of course there must be technical languages, theoretical constructs able to model the world in ways that are beyond the reach of common-sense and ordinary language. But if this text is addressed exclusively to professional academics and

cultural theorists, a critical opportunity has been missed. Were the subject of the inquiry, say, the computer modelling of enzyme behaviour, a highly technical conceptual framing would be both necessary and appropriate. But when the book's theme is the effectively named 'common culture', and the potential audience is that bunch of workers stumbling through the semiotic forest of education and culture with only a hand-drawn treasure map, there is an irony at work that is disappointing and unsettling. This irony, this incongruity (or 'contradiction' as the Marxian tradition has it) invades the text itself. Unhappily, this is not the conscious deployment of irony, the Brechtian juxtaposition and sly humour that casts a warm and human, if shocking, light on the contradictory realities of the world. It is the unintended, bathetic irony exemplified in the coupling of case material and authorial commentary in ways that, often, devalue both. It is difficult, for example, to take seriously either the 'young women' or the critical reflections of their interlocutor in the following extract (p.36). The young people are discussing *Eastenders*.

ANGELA: That Gran gets on my nerves.

JO: Michelle's frowning all the time. Moan, moan. She's a right mard that woman is. She's never happy.

The commentary which immediately follows correctly dismisses the trashing of soap opera as trivia but goes on to assert, with some solemnity, that as our quotes show, the young women who watch them are constantly judging them and reworking the material they provide... T.V. watching is, at least in part, about facilitating a dialect between representation and reality as a general contribution to symbolic work and creativity'. Do what? The pity of this is (a) that its very incongruity discredits the text for the reader, and (b) that it works against the obvious (and obviously sincere) intention to dignify the young people taking part in the study. By re-appropriating their actual words in such a drastic way, by ascribing to their modest but authentic critique such grandiose ambitions, Willis manages to undermine these young people, to disempower them in the act of attempting to, as it were, empower their utterances. This is symptomatic of a text that is, as I have insisted at too great a length, 'problematic'. This is a pity because it is, also, an important book, a rigorous and adventurous and, ultimately, inspiring book. It may be 'difficult' but, like the discourse to which it belongs (and which it both explores and extends), it is a hopeful and humanizing text. Its Habermasian themes of emancipation through language and 'symbolic work' in general are highly appropriate in this context and help to reveal a (common) cultural world rich in possibility — the 'hidden continent of the informal' — not least insofar as the 'transitions' of young people in a culturally, ethnically plural, 'First World' context are concerned.

The project from which the book derives was a Gulbenkian-funded inquiry into the 'cultural activities of young people'. The team of researchers, directed by Willis, adopted an ethnographic and interview research model involving

a series of national studies as well as the twelve-month, Wolverhampton-based project which formed the 'spine' of the research. Chapters 2-5 organise the findings of the studies thematically under the following heads: 'the cultural media', music, style and fashion, 'everyday life'. These sections are sandwiched by, at the beginning, a chapter outlining Willis' concept of 'symbolic creativity', and at the end, by a chapter in which he further elaborates what he has in mind by 'common culture'. In the first and last chapters he develops both an illuminating descriptive account of what is happening, 'out there', in the meaning-making, identity-shaping cultural practices of the young, and an analytical framework with which to 'read', to interpret, engage with those practices.

In the tradition of Fischer's seminal *The Necessity of Art*, Willis insists on the absolute centrality of 'symbolic creativity' to the individual and collective identities of young people and, indeed, of all of us. From this premise, he elaborates a cultural anthropology which encourages us to re-conceptualise the arts-culture-society-politics nexus in ways that reject our habitual categories in favour of an altogether more authentic, inclusive and integrated conceptual scheme. Wary (at best) of 'the arts establishment', he redefines that which is essential to 'art-work', thus removing it from the elite frame of 'the official arts' with its exclusions and skewed emphases. In outlining the contours of the cultural democracy for which he argues (and which, he demonstrates, is already unfolding in the cultural activities of the young), he develops a series of key concepts around which the account (the analysis and the hope) is constructed. The general (and generative) notion of 'symbolic work' leads him into the more concretely realized construct of 'grounded aesthetics', a term which he admits is, in many ways, 'clumsy' but which, nevertheless, usefully points to the new and democratizing aesthetic he is attempting to develop, i.e. one that begins and ends not in the inherent properties of the text or artefact or event but in the lived experience and active participation of the 'creative consumer'. On one level, this is entirely consistent with the formulations of, for example, Benjamin and Brecht whose revolutionary aesthetic had very little to do with the 'correctness' of messages embodied in the art-work and everything to do with the degree of control exercised by the 'consumer' over its production and 'reception'. On another level, it has surprising, not to say startling, connotations. The 'consumer', in Willis' account, is the consumer as generally understood, i.e. of the commodities of the market. His pragmatic but critical arguments in favour of the market — 'the great leveller' — constitute, I think, the most challenging and the most fertile aspect of the book, and mark it out from the numerous contemporary texts and practices which, somewhat routinely, proclaim the goal of 'cultural democracy'. This opens up a substantive dimension in a debate that is close to suffocating on its own stale (and, increasingly, un-worldly) rhetoric.

This is, in many ways, a curious book, a provisional book, a book that, in its re-working and re-combining of given analytical perspectives and traditions reflects something of the magpie sampling and expropriation characteristic of the 'youth cultures' discussed in the text. Warts and all, it is all the better for that. It sets old truths and old challenges in a new and revealing light, and it issues new challenges that we would all do well to reflect on. It contains, beneath its not always beautiful or uncluttered surface, some rich seams. Perhaps, Paul, you will help us to quarry some of these by persuading the Gulbenkian to fund a second project — the production of a set of discussion papers which could be 'creatively consumed' by workers in the field. I am not talking about 'how-to' manuals but about your finding an idiom that *communicates* (our 'species distinction', as you remind us) without diluting or deforming what is being said. If Stephen Hawkins can do it for the outer limits of theoretical physics, surely the debate about culture can find its way into, dare I say it, our common language without losing any of its subtlety or force?

*Common Culture* may not have explained why no one opted for my workshop but it confirmed my reasons for offering it in the first place.

**Christopher Nichols**

## **CHILDREN AND TELEVISION: THE ONE EYED MONSTER**

**Barrie Gunter and Jill McAleer  
Routledge, 1990**

**£10.99 (pbk), £30 (hbk), pp 184**

Barrie Gunter and Jill McAleer have written an extremely useful and comprehensive review of the vast research literature examining children's reasons for watching television as well as television's alleged effects on their behaviour. This is a well written book which embraces a substantial amount of new data and evidence about this important topic, within a very clearly structured text.

The research on the television audience, which Gunter and McAleer seek to explore, is extensive and often disparaging of its subject matter. Jane Root for example in her book *Open The Box* offers the image of the television viewer as a Zombie often 'slouched' in front of the television consuming indiscriminately every programme and advertisement with an uncritical relish. Raymond Williams offers a similar, if more erudite, analysis. In *Television, Technology and Culture Form* he argues that viewers, rather than watching discrete programmes, tend to absorb a continuum or stream of interwoven messages of sound and vision. Programmes merge into adverts and previews of other programmes in what he calls an 'endless, amorphous collage'. This is why, Williams observed, we tend to say, 'I watched television' rather than 'I watched a specific programme'.

A second description of the television audi-

ence is hardly more flattering and uses the metaphor of addiction. Television is judged to be a drug on which audiences are hooked. The viewer is presented as helpless to television's influences. Children and young viewers are presumed, for a variety of ageist reasons, to be especially vulnerable to the addictive and powerful messages emanating from the screen; hence the title of Marie Winn's book *The Plug In Drug: Television, Culture and the Family*. The presumed compulsive character of television is often explicitly recognised; for example, in the programme title of a popular quiz show 'Telly Addicts'.

This image of viewers as addictive but passive recipients of media messages is undoubtedly the consequence of early psychological studies of mass communications effects which mirrored the stimulus-response psychology of Pavlov and later Skinner's behaviourism. What came to be known as the hypodermic syringe model, suggested that media messages affected their audiences directly as if they were a drug injected into the vein of a compliant subject. The metaphor of addiction has proved tenacious and resilient. According to this model of media effects, portrayals of criminality, sexual behaviour and violence were sufficient 'stimulus' to trigger similar behaviour in the audience.

There have been a number of research studies premised on the Hypodermic model. Undoubtedly the most influential was the study funded by Columbia Broadcasting Systems (CBS), conducted by William Belson and published as *Television Violence and the Adolescent Boy*. Belson conducted 1600 in depth interviews in London with young men between the ages of 12 and 17. He concluded that 'high' exposure to film portrayals of violence increased, 'the degree to which boys engage in serious violence'. Given this diagnosis the prescription seemed self evident; 'steps should be taken as soon as possible to achieve a substantial reduction in the total amount of violence being presented on television'.

It should be apparent that this kind of patronising and paternalistic thinking still stalks some of the stuffer and more reactionary corridors of power, where the televising of riots in Toxteth and St Paul's were judged to have prompted 'copy cat' riots in other cities. The existence of Rees Mogg's censorial Broadcasting Standards Council and Mary Whitehouse's National Viewers And Listeners Association are testament to the persistence of such a theory of media effects. but it is not only political reactionaries who subscribe to such a view. The hub of the Feminist case against the publication of soft pornography, such as page three in *The Sun*, seems to be that these passive images of women as sexual objects promote physical and sexual violence against women.

But, as Gunter and McAleer, point out there are more positive ways to interpret the relationship between television and the audience. The hypodermic model soon came to be replaced by the more audience centred 'uses and gratifications' approach. Audiences were no longer seen as passive uncritical recipients of

media messages but as individuals who actively use the media to satisfy their own needs. McQuail argued in *Mass Communication Theory* that there were four basic reasons why viewers watched television programmes; for information, to reinforce personal values and identity, for integration and social identity and for entertainment.

There are other uses of television by its audience. Rosalind Delmar in *Parents Talking Television* describes television as 'a third parent or childminder' while Jane Root suggests television as a kind of 'filler' behind conversations which plugs the gaps. Television may be constantly switched on but, as Ehrenberg and Barwise (*Television and Its Audience*) argue, viewers watch with differing degrees of concentration and intensity at different times. More evident, if less theoretically profound, reasons for watching television seem to be the need to dispel loneliness, for relaxation and simply to pass the time if surviving on the limited budget of a pension.

Gunter and McAleer subscribe to this more positive perception of viewers' relationship with television and, armed with an impressive weaponry of new data, seek to destroy some of the myths concerning children's television viewing habits and the alleged deleterious consequences. They argue that children respond to television in a more proactive and critical way than previous research had suggested. Instead of indiscriminate consumers, Gunter and McAleer present children as viewers who consciously choose programmes which satisfy their needs and moods, absorbing information and attitudes which they can use in everyday life. Children, moreover, are very astute viewers who develop, more precociously than previously appreciated, a healthy scepticism about television advertising.

Gunter and McAleer suggest, however, that guidance from school and family is necessary to facilitate children's optimal use of television as a medium for learning and growth; such guidance can also prevent television becoming the 'one eyed monster' which lurks in the undergrowth of parents' worst nightmares about television's effects on young people.

The various chapters address distinctive questions. Does TV influence aggressive behaviour? (chapter 7). Does TV advertising affect children? (chapter 9). Does TV affect children's school performance? (chapter 10). How can parents influence children's viewing? (chapter 11). Different readers will be attracted to different chapters, but for my part I found the first three more general and introductory chapters of particular interest. Chapter one poses and answers some important questions such as, When do children begin to watch television? What is the extent of their viewing? What kinds of programmes do they like to watch? Some of the answers may well confound some expectations. For example, while it is a common complaint of some adults that children spent too much time watching television at the expense of other activities, they watch television for fewer hours each day than virtually all adult age groups. Similarly, while some myths about children's programme pre-

ferences suggest they may be more susceptible than adults to a diet of junk television programming, Gunter and McAleer confirm that they view as broad a range of programmes as adults, are as likely as adults to enjoy soap operas, show no greater propensity than adults to view violent programmes and, 'switch on to news as much as adults do'.

The chapter also contains an interesting and well informed discussion about whether or not television has displaced other media such as books and comics and, by so doing, undermined children's reading and school performance. The evidence is mixed but the authors conclude, 'children and teenagers soon learned how to accommodate large amounts of television watching without sacrificing other activities'. Similarly, they suggest that watching television does not necessarily prevent children and young people from participating in social activities such as dancing, membership of clubs and participating in sports.

What is attractive about this book is that while it is always clearly expressed, Gunter and McAleer never shy away from the complexity of the questions they pose and never patronise their audience by offering generalities. When considering the question of what age children begin to watch television for example, they cite Schramm's research which suggests the age of between 2 and 3 years old but qualify this finding with the evidence from a study of children's responses to Sesame Street which suggested children's attention to television was slight. Three to five year olds looked away from the set about 215 times during the hour with three quarters of their glances at the screen being of only six seconds duration.

In summary, this is a thorough and comprehensive review of research in an important, if not neglected, area of media studies. It is well written, clearly structured and eminently fair in its discussion of the relevant issues.

I can offer only two reservations about the book. First, I felt the book had a rather 'bitty' quality. On occasion the authors display a tendency to become bogged down in the particularity of issues and fail to raise more general concerns. This may, of course, reflect little more than the reverse side of the book's strength of detailed presentation. But I found myself wishing that instead of 'juggling' with statistical evidence they would offer a provocative and general line of argument more in the invigorating style of Jeremy Seabrook's discussion in *Working Class Childhood* where he suggests an important role for television in the increasing privatisation of working class family life.

Second, I felt that Gunter and McAleer failed to underscore children's inability to make free choices in the context of television viewing. David Morley's analysis in *Television and Domestic Power* of the predominance of male adult choices concerning family viewing, reveals with conviction as well as great humour, the battles within families for access to the remote control and regularity with which 'dad' emerges the victor.

But these are relatively minor complaints. If I was asked to recommend a single book to

introduce a reader to the complexities, excitement and interest of debates in this area, I

would certainly recommend Gunter and McAleer's *Children and Television*. That's the acid

test of a good book!

**Bob Franklin**

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# Classic Texts Revisited: Working Girls Clubs

JEAN SPENCE

**Maude Stanley,  
*Working Girls Clubs*,  
Macmillan & Co,  
London 1890**

**(Reprinted in Frank Booton (ed):  
*Studies in Social Education*,  
Vol 1, 1860-1890, Benfield Press, 1985)**

To someone who has been involved in, and interested in working with girls and young women since the mid-1970's when that work seemed very new, exciting and challenging, reading Maude Stanley's *Working Girls Clubs* has been both a humbling and thought provoking experience.

It has been humbling because of the obvious dedication, commitment and unstinting voluntary effort of the author on behalf of young working class women; humbling because methods of work which we thought we had discovered ourselves were being successfully implemented over a century ago and humbling because so many of the issues and organisational problems with which we are currently concerned had also been considered then. I found myself reflecting why I had not read this book before now, even though I have known of its existence for many years and have to admit that I had not really believed that I would find anything in it of relevance to current practice. In this respect, my prejudices were unfounded. The book is a historical document from which we can learn not only about nineteenth century issues but which is also stimulating in relation to the possibilities and limitations it suggests for meaningful youth work with young women today as well as then.

However, my prejudices were confirmed insofar as the book is written uncompromisingly from the perspective of a middle class *lady* philanthropist who has very clear ideas about social order, social hierarchies, right and wrong. It was this which made the reading thought provoking. Practising feminist youth workers today would not suffer Maude Stanley's political views and moral principles. She offers a class and gender based perspective wherein ladies are ladies and work-girls are work-girls (and preferably servants). She shamelessly used the contacts that she had with young women and the success of her youth work methods to not only train young women to become good housewives and mothers but also to provide compliant servants for her own class. In the clubs, it was ladies like Maude Stanley who ran the show; people whom we would find difficult to tolerate in our world of work with girls and women

today, let alone take advice from!

Yet at the same time the book reveals to

us the very real deprivation and suffering of working class girls and young women in a direct, sympathetic and humane way and offers practical methods of intervening. In Stanley's world, a position in service could seem to be very heaven compared to the alternatives on offer and it was in this area of work that she had some power and influence. Stanley understood her efforts in relation to employment in the same way in which she understood the provision of hostels for working girls. She wanted to protect working girls, improve the quality of their lives and in so doing make a contribution towards lessening the inequality between rich and poor. These purposes are listed alongside education, 'ennobling' and 'bringing out the best traits in a girl' as her reasons for engaging in the work.

*Clubs for Working Girls* is riddled with contradictions which are the result of Maude Stanley's position on the one hand and her very real knowledge of and sympathy for the lives of working girls on the other. She wrote the book for an audience of middle-class and upper class people, particularly 'ladies' to whom she is appealing for support and involvement in the work which she herself finds so fruitful. Belonging to that class of ladies herself she is keenly aware of their prejudices, stereotypes and fears about the working classes and her strategy of promoting girls' clubs with these women is to address such concerns. Thus she is at pains to show the differentiated character of the working classes. She allows girls to speak for themselves, using case studies and examples designed to elicit sympathy in the reader. She cleverly acknowledges the underside and less attractive aspects of working class life but seeks to demonstrate that much can be remedied for those girls who become members of clubs and that a great deal of the poverty, squalor, ill-health and drunkenness is a result of misfortune rather than original sin.

However, she is on dangerous ground when she broaches these subjects. No matter how hard she tries to affirm the possibilities of individuals transcending their situations — a possibility to be helped by clubs — she cannot help but recognise the realities of the link between poverty and low wages, the effects upon health of long working hours in uncongenial condi-

tions and the connections between street life, drinking, dance halls, (what she considers to be 'immorality and low life') and appalling employment and housing conditions. Having described these realities and made the links, she then shrinks from the recognition of any class responsibility. Instead, she allies herself with the state, her presumed readership and hoped-for patrons, and turns what would be a logical analysis on its head. She blames early marriage and over-population among the working classes for everything.

Not only does she unquestioningly accept and even promote the social and political status quo but she is clearly only really interested in young women of 'good character'. Stanley would take such girls into her clubs and hostels; she would provide them with recreational pursuits, advice, support and education but most of all, she would keep them from the streets. She would teach them to live a well mannered, ordered existence. She would encourage them to refrain from early marriage and offer them religion plus skill training which would enable them to eventually become wives and mothers in the image preferred by the rich for the poor. In this way she hoped to control working class men through their womenfolk.

Having said all this, Maude Stanley's liberalism, dedication and strength of character obviously did enable her to promote clubs, membership of which offered real benefits to those involved. For those working girls and young women who were in a position to pay the contributions and who had the time and inclination to attend, the conventional social benefits must have been immense. At a very basic level, and one which must be recognised by those working with young women today the provision of female-only space offered both safety and the possibility of self expression and development. For Stanley, it was mainly safety from the moral dangers of the street, gin palaces and dance halls, and, although she does also mention them, Whitechapel murders. It was the possibility of self expression and development under the influence of the 'ladies' and a caring superintendent, although she is also aware of the stultifying effect of work and cramped housing conditions upon the minds of girls and young women. If there were contradictions in the work, those contradictions could undoubtedly allow young working class women to gain some advantages in their own terms. Stanley's welfare and educational agendas might have implied control on the one hand but in their own terms they both supported and provided opportunities for those whose lives might have been worse without them. In discussing education, Stanley is keenly aware that young women will only participate when the curriculum is both relevant and interesting and has meaning in their own terms and at no point does she forget that the agenda of a club must fit the needs and interests of the members, whatever the intentions of the sponsors. The language of class and the social presumptions might have been different a century ago; the emphasis might have also

been different but the terms of reference operating within youth work were very similar to those of today. Indeed, the text of this book raises the question of just how far youth work has advanced since 1890. In terms of work with girls and young women we are undoubtedly more theoretically and politically sophisticated than Maude Stanley and feminist youth workers are today much more sensitive to issues of power and control. Yet paucity of resources, the professionalisation of the work and its institutionalisation at some levels within the statutory sector make some current practice seem significantly inferior to Stanley's work. She insisted that each application for membership to a club should be followed up by a visit to the young women's home. She demanded that clubs be open seven days a week. She suggests that each 'lady' member of the committee should be prepared to undertake work in the club on a regular basis, and more than that, that such women should have a real sympathy and ability to work with the club members. She used her networks and influence to provide holidays, convalescent care, employment, education and homes for working girls. Her educational and welfare agendas were extensive and she constantly sought the means of putting her plans into practice. Indeed, this book is part of that process because through its publication she hoped both to attract resources and voluntary help while at the same time providing a manual of 'how to do it'.

Stanley obviously had a genuine concern to improve the health, well being, ability and opportunity for the young women with whom she was involved. Compared with today, can she be any more blamed for not doing anything to improve working conditions for girls and young women than we can be blamed for doing nothing about the Youth Training Scheme? Then as today a central problem for youth work lies in its recognition of the economic, political and social context defining conditions for young people and the fact that its work is constrained by the sources of funding and management and by the day to day demands of young people themselves. Thus the most enduring and meaningful work is most often undertaken at the level of the individual and small groups. At this level Maude Stanley seems even from today's perspective to have excelled. While it is true that she did not pursue the political implications of her work, she does not pretend to be anything other than ameliorative.

Maude Stanley is at her best when she is talking about the range of the work, about its organisation and its methodology. Her long experience and her clear sense of purpose enabled her to describe with clarity her vision of a well ordered club, its associated residential homes and network of supporters offering country holidays and visits.

Her ideal club was open, as mentioned, seven days a week and, by implication, fifty two weeks a year. It offered opportunities for education ranging from basic

literacy through to school standard certificate work, included typical gender-based practical learning such as plain sewing, mending and laundry whilst providing the means for social improvement through such subjects as elocution and singing. At the same time, Stanley suggests that a range of lectures can be offered in practically any subject which appeals to the young women themselves or was available from 'lady' volunteers. She has a vision of social education which accords with our current principles linking learning to real life while at the same time transcending the limits of everyday existence. It offers an example of young women undertaking a course in local architecture which in its application makes their journeys to and from work less wearying. It is clear that the educational curriculum was an integral and central aspect of club life and this was usually supplemented by a club library. Club members were expected to sign up for courses, attend regularly and sometimes received certificates at the end. However, as with our modern clubs, attendance could not be anything other than voluntary and the offer of education was itself an insufficient attraction. As is the situation today, youth work was then forced to compete with commercial provision. Thus refreshments, gymnastics, musical drill, dancing, Saturday walks and excursions were also offered as well as occasional 'soirees' (parties including entertainment), picnics and inter-club competitions. The impression is of a well structured and timetabled menu of activity, entertainment and social intercourse supplemented by help, support and advice when appropriate.

This impression is reinforced by the description of the organisation and management system. Stanley's system involves a council of ladies, which is the overall managing and funding body. Each member of this council she suggests must be able to create positive relations with the club members and must commit themselves to a rota of monthly responsibility. Beneath that should be a member's committee. The description of such a committee, its responsibility for rules, for refreshments, for running the library and welcoming new members and organising events and the benefits learned regarding responsibility, formal organisation (chairing, minute taking, book keeping) could have come out of the pages of any modern account of a members committee. Stanley has an image of total control by the young women but suggests that the arduousness of their working lives would not leave the girls concerned energy for this and so backs off from its implications. Day to day responsibility, Stanley would hand to a (low) paid superintendent who could be either a 'lady' or working class, 'the essential is to find a woman with great friendliness, love for the girls, warm sympathy, order and liveliness, who will never be tired, or rather who will never let her feelings, mental or physical, interfere with the work of the club'. Do the

expectations sound familiar?

However, all is not order and harmony and Stanley is not afraid to provide us with an account of a situation going out of control which included girls fighting and throwing things, yelling out into the street and boys invading. Some things definitely have not changed! When she branches out to talk about hostels (or homes) for working girls she describes a situation still with us — young people moving into London looking for work and desperate for decent lodgings. Although she admits that those attracted to the lodgings she set up in Soho are generally in reasonable financial circumstances, she does give some accounts of isolation, destitution and homelessness among the young which strike a modern chord.

Maude Stanley was clearly a woman with strength, energy, vision and faith who had a real care, concern and affection for working class young women. Despite her uncritical class perspective, she also had a belief in fundamental human equality. She recognises that underneath the class differences, working girls and women and 'ladies' had mutual experiences and therefore sympathies through their gender. She attempts to build on this and although the form of her understanding is different, the analysis is similar to much of the thinking which has influenced modern feminism. Moreover, although she only touches on race, unlike many published 19th century commentators, she does not indulge in racist invective but instead is pleased that black young women have joined her club.

This book is a passionate appeal for the growth and development of work with girls and young women. It gives us insight not only into the lives of working girls and the clubs which were set up for them but also into the motivations, philosophies and concerns of the liberal 'lady' of the period. It further implies what we have lost by the broken tradition of work with girls and young women. This includes knowledge of effective organisational and participatory practices. It encompasses thinking about social educational methods and formal and informal curricula within clubs — of no small value when considering the current debate about curriculum in youth work. It suggests that resources and funding for work with girls and women have somehow disappeared or have been appropriated by other organisations. Most of all the book tells all those concerned about gender issues in youth work that work with girls and young women has a strong and uncompromising history which had they known about it, might have stood in good stead all those women who have spent (and some are still doing it) countless hours arguing that single sex work can be both attractive and creative and has much to offer not only young women, but all youth workers. I personally would have done well to have read *Clubs for Working Girls* sooner.

# **P**OPULAR FRONT

**Popular Front is a section of the journal devoted to aspects of popular culture and the media**

## **Women and Comics**

**SUZY VARTY**

Once again in the history of comics there are women writing, drawing and publishing graphic art that may swell the readership of comics, and encourage the new images of women that are beginning to appear in this largely male-dominated medium.

The term comics, of course, covers a wide range of formats, including the single frame joke, the 3-framer with a punchline, and the continuous story, with subject matter varying between the political and the banal.

Comics were generally agreed to have emerged as an art form in America at the turn of the century with the publication of R.F. Outcault's 'Yellow Kid', and women were working in the medium from the beginning, generally being published in newspapers and magazines. The best known early cartoonist in Britain was probably Mary Tourtel, who created and drew 'Rupert the Bear'. Funny animal stories, teenage strips, romances and domestic humour were often the province of women artists. The increasingly popular adventure and fantasy stories were mostly drawn by men, and after the second world war very few women were still producing comics.



**Mary Tourtel**

When underground comics emerged in the mid 60s, women were again keen to

be part of the art, but found 'another version of the closed system for completely other reasons on the underground... it was kind of like a boy's club... a closed club...' LEE MARRS.



**Ruth Atkinson**

Women cartoonists in America at this time, however, discovered that, if no one else will include you in their comic books, you can do your own, and in 1969 Trina Robbins produced the first all-woman comic. Trina, Lee Marrs, Sharon Rudahl, Melinda Gebbie, Joyce Farmer, Shary Flenniken and others all contributed to, and in some cases produced, women's comics throughout the 70s and 80s and encouraged other women from around the world to join the comics field. Most of these women continue to draw comics.

Underground comics were a great influence worldwide, and took comics to an adult audience. The graphic arts are very popular in France in particular, and in Europe in general, with women like Clare Bretecher becoming very successful with her personal account subject matter and her harsh satires of social and domestic situations; first time parenthood being a hilarious example. In England, women were slower to



involve themselves with comics as a graphic medium, and when the first British women's comic was produced in Birmingham in 1977, women cartoonists were thin on the group. Britain has no traditional market for women's comic art, and the approach to comics material of both the mainstream super hero creators and the underground cartoonists show similar fantasy images of women in passive roles in their stories. In the 80s some male cartoonists began featuring heroines as well as heroes in their comics, and avoiding the violence of traditional adventure comics. Alan Moore, cartoonist turned scriptwriter set a particularly influential example with his more real images of women, the Halo Jones stories for example, and the Hernandez brothers are very up to the minute with their portrayals of small town family life in 'Love and Rockets' and 'Heartbreak Soup'.



**Trina Robbins**



Sorrell+Me in our ballet tutus. WITH our Ginny dolls. Before she pushed me from the rumpus room window.

**Melinda Gebbie**



**Lee Marrs**



**Sharon Rudahl**

England in the 90s has more women cartoonists than ever before, and publishers seem as willing to publish their work as the work of men. Julie Hollings, Caroline Della Porta, Kate Charlesworth, Posy Simmonds, Corrine Pearlman and Myra Hancock are all regular contributors to British and American comics. Knock-about comics recently published an all-woman book 'The Seven Ages of Woman', and Corrine Pearlman and her co-editor Philip Boys have been active in commissioning comics from women for their 'Comic Book of First Love', published by Virago, and the 'Facts of Life' for Penguin. As the big book publishers begin to acknowledge the growing popularity of comics, their use in the educational field is at last beginning to be explored. Soon even the schools may have to revise their attitudes to comics as second class literature, and appreciate the power of the comic arts.



**Caroline Della Porta**



**Julie Hollings**



**Kate Charlesworth**



**Posy Simmonds**

The London Cartoon Centre, an established college of cartoon arts, runs courses in the basic skills of writing and drawing required for the comics industry, and has started a women only course in order to encourage and nurture women who want to work in the comics field.

On a smaller scale, comics workshops are a wonderful way for young women to look at issues that affect their lives and tell stories and jokes. Comics are a very accessible medium, and can be achieved without huge proficiency in drawing. Young women who attended the 'Girls Own' course during Newcastle's First Wave Festival in 1990 had great fun writing, drawing and producing their own comic. These young women, like the young women at the U.K. Comics Convention 1990 will be looking for and producing comics which show 'sensitivity to relationships and equality of race and sex' ... about time, too.

**Further reading:**

- 'The Seven Ages of Woman'. Published by Knockabout Comics 1990. ISBN 0 86166 087 0.
  - 'The Comic Book of First Love'. Published by Virago 1988. ISBN 0 86068 187 4.
  - 'More Frustration' by Claire Bretecher. Published by Methuen 1983. ISBN 0 413 537609.
  - 'Pure Posy' by Posy Simmonds. Published by Methuen 1989. ISBN 0 413 62530 3.
  - 'The Ballad of Halo Jones'. Published by Titan Books. ISBN 0 907610 63 3.
  - 'Heroine'. Published by Arts Lab Press 1977
- and squillions more available from Timeslip, Prudhoe Place, Newcastle, a specialist comics shop, or enlightened bookseller.

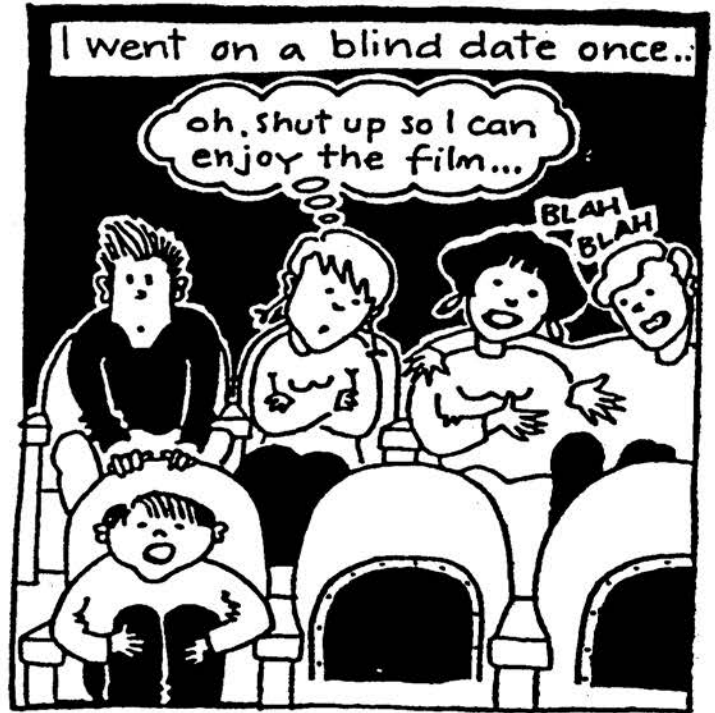
**References**

- 'What do women want?' by Carol Bennett, published in Speakeasy, No. 1990.
- 'Women and the Comics' by Trina Robbins and Catherine Yronwode published by Eclipse Books 1985.

# MY M@d MUM



mum's on one of her nostalgia kicks again!



Suzy Varty

# Working Space

## **The Teesdale Community Bus — Reaching Out in a Rural Area** **SHIRLEY COSTIGAN**

## **Young Citizens, Old Society? Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People in Rural Norfolk** **TIM CAWKWELL**

Young people living in rural areas are a hidden minority whose small voice is often not heard. They are small in number and not seen as a threat, a problem or an obviously deprived group. This has meant that rural youth work is often at the end of the queue when resources and funding are being allocated. Much of it takes place in small one night a week youth clubs based in local village halls or community centres. They are usually run by part time or voluntary youth workers from the local community. The programme of activities on offer tends to be the rather dull and unexciting traditional standbys of table-tennis and pool with records playing in the background. This mundane scenario is not a very inviting and attractive image to tempt young people inside. In an urban environment they would vote with their feet and go to the local leisure centre instead. In a rural area the isolation and lack of other options means that there is nowhere else to go. Young people in rural areas have come to expect little and are therefore easily satisfied. Their one night a week youth club is better than nothing!

When one looks at the amount of funding, support, recognition and encouragement given to the part time and voluntary youth workers that run these village youth clubs it is understandable why there is a lack of exciting and innovative work going on in rural areas. The energy of these workers goes into the practical necessities of keeping a club going — fundraising, hauling out and putting away equipment, encouraging parents to help on the rota, taking subs and keeping the peace with the local management committee. Often they may be running a club alone or with very little support. It is no wonder they have nothing left to put that extra spark into a club.

The Teesdale Community Bus is a mobile youth and community project that has tried to combat some of these stereotypical but sometimes true images of rural youth work. One of the aims of the project was to challenge rural young people's acceptance that all they could expect from the youth service was a dusty church hall and ping-pong! By providing a warm, comfortable and attractive atmosphere with a range of sophisticated equipment on board we were trying to boost their self worth by showing them we thought they deserved the best. The youth workers too appreciated a good working environment where they could get on with what they had been trained to do — youth work.

It would perhaps be helpful to describe the Teesdale Community Bus and say

something of how it was initially set up. It is a double decker Daimler Fleetline *old C* reg. bus. Almost all of the seats have been removed and the interior has been converted to provide a small kitchen, a toilet (chemical and used as little as possible) and a large carpeted area with bean bags, spotlights, fold away tables and seating on the upper floor. Downstairs are work tops, cupboards, tables and benches plus a small room with seats for a quiet room. The bus cost £800 to buy and approximately £2,000 to convert and equip. Funding came from various sources including the Rural Development Commission, District and County Councils and a variety of charitable trusts. It has now been on the road for 3 years during which time it has proved to be a huge success.

The success of the bus can be measured in many different ways. To managing and funding bodies it is both financially and practically viable. It can serve a very large area for a very reasonable financial outlay. The capital costs were a fraction of the cost of a building. The building is also static and therefore can only serve a limited area. The bus is mobile and therefore more flexible — going to the people, where the need is. In a rural area with poor public transport facilities this is vital. The size of the bus could be seen as a constraint but in a rural area groups tend to be small in number so the bus is ideal. Its size means that it is easier to create the right sort of atmosphere, conducive to group work and discussion.

The real success of the bus is the actual quality of youth work that goes on most nights of the week in the various villages it goes to. From the beginning we had made a decision to aim the bus at the 14+ age range during its evening sessions. There are always two workers on the bus, one male and one female. One is the full time bus worker and the other is an experienced part time youth worker. The bus worker has all the skills needed for the job. He has a P.S.V. licence and motor mechanic skills for both driving and maintaining the bus, but more importantly he has excellent youth work skills. The style of youth work that happens on the bus depends on the bond and rapport that the youth workers have built up with the young people. This has taken time and commitment but because the atmosphere is right and the workers are

not distracted by all the usual constraints as described earlier they can devote all their time and energy to working with the young people.

The development of a village bus group goes through several stages. When the bus first goes into a village the fact that it is a bright green double decker attracts young people to it. Once aboard the novelty value of its layout and the activities on offer keeps their interest. Meanwhile the workers are able to talk to them and get to know them a little. This may go on for two or three weeks while word goes around and everyone gets to hear about it. Once a regular group of young people are coming the bus workers will sit down with them to talk about the bus and how the project works. A clear aim of the project is to give the responsibility of the 'programme' to the young people who use it for the night that it is in their village. This means that it can be doing very different things each night of the week, depending on the age and needs of the group. Some groups like to have an active programme using equipment like the computers for graphics or animation or the arts and crafts equipment for jewellery making or candle making. Other groups like to spend time talking over what is bothering them as a group together with the youth workers. Individuals might need a quiet chat over a cup of coffee in the kitchen. The atmosphere is easy going and friendly. There are very few behaviour problems, even though most of the youngsters using the bus would be seen as 'non-achievers' at school, and had been previously labelled by adults in the village as the trouble makers. This was mainly due to the fact that with very little to do they would meet up in the local bus shelter or church corner. In a small quiet village bored young people do not have to make much noise to attract the adverse attention of local people. In a town their behaviour would go unnoticed but in a village there is nowhere to hide. The bus offers them a place that for that one night in the week they can meet together on their own terms. They can mix socially with their peers, play their kind of music, talk about things they want to talk about. The bus workers encourage the young people to look at what else they can be involved in on other nights of the week. Some have joined a Duke of Edinburgh Award Group and others a photography group. They are encouraged to plan trips to the cinema or local leisure centre. A youth worker might drive the mini bus but they are expected to do all the organising themselves. Some of the more established groups have been away together on residential. One group is doing an exchange with a group from London. The development of the groups and of individuals in the groups has been amazing. By widening their horizons and offering them a variety of opportunities they are becoming stronger and more confident.

The evening youth work sessions are not all that the bus does. It works with groups of all ages. In the past it has done welfare rights campaigns in conjunction with the local C.A.B. which proved to be very success-

ful. It works with the local health authority on campaigns such as World AIDS Day or a Healthy Heart Campaign. It has set up parent/toddler groups aboard the bus which have moved into a village hall once they were established. At Christmas it becomes a mobile Santas Grotto for under fives groups and in the Summer organises events like a Teddy Bears Picnic in the local forest. It runs two dinner time drop in clubs at the local comprehensive schools where it has been known for over 70 youngsters to be on board! Recently it has started a Women's Group in a village looking at a range of issues from health and fitness to returning to work. Like the parent/toddler groups this group is moving into a local hall enabling the bus to start a similar group in another village. The list of things that the bus gets involved with is endless. Its main purpose though and its greatest strength is the youth work it does during the evenings.

If anyone would like to know more about the Teesdale Community Bus they can send for the three reports that have been written at different stages of the project: 'A Community Bus for Teesdale' 1987, 'We're on the Road' 1988 and 'Rolling Around the Dale' 1990. They are available as a pack for £6. There is also a video available, made by a group of young people last summer, showing some of what the bus does. Cost £10, available from the Teesdale Youth and Community Office, 7 Birch Road, Barnard Castle, DL7 8RJ. Tel: 0833 690150.

Popular images of a healthy countryside are of the pastoral kind: cows in fields, church spire visible over a belt of trees, the Volvo parked on the gravel outside the country house. Once people are admitted into these pictures our attitudes become more uncertain. Depicting cricketers on the village green would certainly be acceptable, but a group of youngsters joking in the bus shelter is not regarded as a healthy rural image. It is a puzzle why this should be the case and a vivid reflection of what we want our rural life to be.

It is in the nature of villages to throw social issues into relief. Because they are played out among small numbers of people, they assume a starker significance

than in the more complex and diffuse setting of urban communities. For example, a contentious planning application may divide a village into two camps, one seeking to conserve a site in order to retain the picturesque character of the village, the other wanting development in order to sustain the health of the community. This can happen in a way that loses sight of the middle ground: the question of whether to conserve or to develop, rarely a simple one, is reduced to bald answers. Is the same thing happening as the number of children being born falls while the over-sixties are living longer? In the small village, the trend towards longer life and fewer babies will emerge in more obvious terms than elsewhere in the country: the under-twenties will be a small handful, while the over-sixties will be an increasing proportion of the population. To make matters worse, villages are popular as places of retirement and expensive for young couples to live in, therefore discouraging in-migration of the right age-group who might redress the imbalance.

This poses a challenge to bodies concerned with rural community development such as Rural Community Councils. RCCs are independent organisations — registered charities, largely but not wholly funded by central and local government — with close links with a wide range of voluntary and community bodies in the two counties in which they are based. Norfolk RCC is no exception to this. It provides the secretariat to the County Association of Village Halls and the County Playing Fields Association. These links give the RCC an excellent point of contact with grass-roots community activities in a large rural county like Norfolk with (depending on your definition) some 500 villages in its boundaries and half of its population living in communities of under 3,000 people. It is our *impression* that by and large the bulk of people serving on parish councils, village hall committees and the like are over forty and probably over fifty. There are two perfectly sound reasons for this: firstly, age brings experience and it is not unreasonable to seek that experience in the running of local affairs. Secondly, it is usually the case that people whose children are grown up and have left home find it easier to give time to local organisations. However, I feel that we must recognise the imbalance which this situation brings. More people in the twenty to forty age bracket are needed on village committees. Because they have more recently emerged from the experience of being young and their children are still young, they will have valuable knowledge and experience of what the needs of young people are. There is a danger in the present situation of certain points of view going unheard, and more effort needs to be made to integrate the provision of youth clubs, playgroups etc. into the general activities of the community. This is *not* to deny the efforts made by many organisations to do this.

As a result of its extensive links with the county and local organisations, in June 1990 the Rural Community Council took the initiative to run a conference under

the title 'Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People in Rural Norfolk'. While the format of the conference was fairly conventional, being a mixture of main addresses, workshops and plenaries, the RCC used the strength of its links to bring together a variety of agencies with related interests who did not normally have contact, including the Youth and Community Service, non statutory youth groups, community organisations, arts organisations, playgroups, play-schemes and parish councils. While an attendance of 60 people could be considered thin in the light of the number of people in agencies concerned with children and young people in rural Norfolk, those who did attend helped to make the day a particularly valuable and lively one, making new contacts, exchanging ideas and information in a very positive manner. It was a chance too for the RCC to increase its understanding of the needs of the under-20s and add that to its total picture of rural society.

Workshops were run on four topics: Young People and crime, recreation facilities for children and young people, transport, and community resources. The first was led by the police and used primarily as a way of presenting their schools liaison programme and their summer playschemes (known as SPLASH). The second led to a host of issues being raised — the difficulty of access, the need for more facilities, the scope for mobile provision, the role of the parish council as funder — but most notably those present felt they needed to know much more about resources, other agencies in the field and ideas for good practice. The transport group focussed on how mini-buses and school buses could be better used, and the difficulties of getting community car schemes to meet the needs of young people. Finally, the workshop on community resources helped the group to be aware of the large number of activities that do or could take place for pre-school, school and post-school children. One thing to emerge was the need for bicycle/motor bike repair and safety sessions to be run in the village. In addition to those workshops, presentations were held on the Downham Market Under Fives Project, Breckland District Council's Freestyle scheme providing sports and arts activities to villages on a mobile basis, the running of Kirby Cane and Ellingham Youth Club, and the creation of a skateboard park at the Shrublands, Great Yarmouth. The last two were done by the young people involved in taking these initiatives themselves, and showed how much could be achieved when responsibility was allowed to this age-group when they were motivated to organise something for their own benefit.

The RCC was left with a number of points to pursue: firstly, to encourage the use of village appraisals to assess the needs of the 16-19 age group; secondly, to find ways of ensuring that information was shared (backing up the role of the Norfolk Youth and Community Service); thirdly, to continue its programme of training for playschemes (through the Norfolk

Playing Fields Association based at the RCC); fourthly, to lobby District Councils to take on the idea of mobile provision.

Finally funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation had been secured beforehand to allow us to produce a publication following the conference. In doing this, we have avoided the format of a conventional report — these often go unread — but instead we have prepared an information pack in looseleaf form that will encourage community organisations and individuals in villages and small towns to think about local provision for young people and what steps might be taken to improve it. We recognise that the Norfolk Youth & Community Service, uniformed groups and church youth services all operate in this field and have an expertise which the RCC cannot lay claim to. The pack therefore will not seek to provide a comprehensive account of starting youth activities in a rural setting. Instead it is intended to stimulate thinking on

what can be done and to signpost people in the necessary directions, whether for information, money or equipment. The pack is in production and it is hoped that it will be launched in March/April 1991, with a widespread publicity campaign in the villages and small towns using our own mailings and enlisting the help of the media. The pack will be free to those asking for it (donations being invited to cover costs) and will consist of some 20 looseleaf sheets in a plastic wallet. We hope that this will encourage flexible use of the information and ideas, and photocopying for local distribution (available from: Norfolk Rural Community Council, 20 Market Place, Hingham, Norfolk, NR9 4AF).

For a small organisation with slim resources the task of making an impact on the 300,000 people living in rural Norfolk is a challenge. We hope that this initiative will be a small step towards developing and supporting healthy rural communities.

# **I** N SHORT

**In Short is a new section which aims to provide a short guide to selected recent legislation, legislation in progress and miscellaneous information on statistics and new reports. Entries will vary each issue.**

## **CHILDREN'S ACT Child Abuse**

The proposals under the Children's Act, due to come into force in October 1991, for deciding which court should hear a case have been criticised by the Law Society. It is claimed that difficult and complex cases could end up in the hands of lay magistrates and inexperienced judges.

(Source: Guardian 6.11.90).

## **Gay and lesbian rights**

Guidelines for adoptive parents in the Children's Act 1990 will be amended following a campaign by gay and lesbian interest groups to include gay and lesbian prospective parents.

(Source: The Independent on Sunday 3.3.91).

## **CHILDREN AND WORK**

A Birmingham survey carried out jointly by the Low Pay Unit and Birmingham City Council indicated that 2 million children are in paid work, the vast majority illegally. Cases of exploitation were highlighted in the report. Local authorities were said to be lax in enforcing by laws to curb malpractice.

(Source: The Independent 8.3.91).

## **COMMUNITY CHARGE**

Six District Councils have been told to cut their budgets by up to 37% to avoid capping and 15 will have to bring their budgets into line. Amongst those with impending cuts are: Basildon; Bristol; Ipswich; Middlesbrough and Langbaugh on Tees.

(Source: Guardian 9.11.90).

## **April 1991 Community Charge Levels**

Community Charge levels from April 1991 set by most local authorities were announced this week. Some authorities are likely to be charge capped. Wandsworth and Westminster are likely to levy the two lowest charges. Manchester, Brent, Reading, Basildon, South Oxfordshire, Ipswich and Elmbridge are amongst the high 'spenders' so far. Most local authorities with high levies during 1990/91 have made significant cuts.

(Source: The Independent 8.3.91).

## **CUTS IN SPENDING**

Social security, transport and health spending for 1991/2 are forecast to be up in real terms

although higher than expected inflation suggests that the picture is one of severe cuts. The main casualties are the employment training programme, the regional assistance programme and prison building. In justification the Government maintained that demand has fallen.

(Source: Guardian November 9, 1990).

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES YTS and Racism**

Racism is a factor in YTS placements, DOE research involving a survey of two sample groups, one of just under 3,000 young people and one of just under 900 careers officers and employment assistants, found evidence of racism in placements.

(Source: Ethnic Minorities and the Careers Service: An Investigation Into Processes of Assessment and Placement. Cross, Wrench and Barnett. Research Paper No. 73 DOE Research Administration (free of charge).

## **Disability**

Disabled job applicants are likely to be one and a half times less successful in getting a positive response from potential employers. A study by the Spastics Society suggests that the Government's attempts to change employer attitudes have failed.

(Source: An Equal Chance or No Chance? A Study of Discrimination Against Disabled People in the Employment Market. Spastics Society. Campaigns and Parliamentary Department. £2.50.

## **Northern Ireland**

The Fair Employment Commission found that equality of opportunity had not been afforded to Catholics at two of the major employers in Cookstown.

Around 98% of employers registered under the new Fair Employment Act have complied with statutory requirements to monitor the religious composition of their workforce and submit annual monitoring returns to the Commission. The FEC will use the returns to report on patterns of employment in Northern Ireland.

(Source: Equal Opportunities Review No. 33 Sept/Oct 1990).

## **EEC Draft Directives — Part-Time and Temporary Workers**

The EEC published 3 draft Directives on part-time and temporary working on 13 June 1990. The Directives are designed to bring the Social Charter into effect (EDR 29). The purpose of the Directives is to give an estimated 14 million part-time and 10million temporary workers in the EEC the same rights and benefits on a pro rata basis as full time workers.

(Source: European Commission Official Journal October 1990).

## **HOUSING Homelessness**

A Task Force made up of leading charities and other voluntary organisations to tackle young homelessness in Britain's cities was established in December last year. This followed on from invitations sent by the DOE to charity and voluntary groups inviting Section 73 applications to provide accommodation for the homeless in major cities. Both initiatives are part of £96m Government commitment over three years.

(Source: The Mail 16.11.90; Financial Times 19.12.90).

## **The Worst Housing**

Findings from a major housing survey for the reconvened Duke of Edinburgh Inquiry suggest that Britain's worst housing is no longer in inner city areas. Widespread evidence of poverty amongst the low paid and those receiving state benefits was also found. Home owners of former Council houses were frequently facing difficulties and the lack of risk protection in times of high interest was cited by Professor Duncan MacLennan as irresponsible.

(Source: Paying for Britain's Housing, published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 1991 £9.50).

Sources of Useful Written Answers on Homelessness from the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Sleeping rough figures p. 282. Hansard 22.2.91.

Hostels closure p. 268. Hansard 22.2.91.

Court actions for vagrancy pps. 503/4, Hansard 26.2.91.



## LEGAL AID

It is proposed by the Lord Chancellor's Department to further prohibit Legal Aid. The idea is to end the present system of having an upper limit and instead to provide a safety net which would act as a top up after people have made contributions themselves.

(Source: The Guardian 7.3.91).

## LEGISLATION IN PROGRESS MARCH 1991

Disability Allowances Bill — Committee Stage.  
Criminal Justice Bill — Second Reading (Lords).

Employment Protection (GCHQ) Bill — First Reading (Commons).

Census (Confidentiality) Bill — Third Reading

## Draft Social Security Up Rating Order

Draft Social Security (Contributions) Amendment Regulations.

Draft Child Benefit and Social Security (Fixing and Adjustment of Rates) Order.

Draft Statutory Sick Pay (Rate of Payment) Order.

Maintenance Enforcement Bill — Second Reading (Lords).

Courts (Research) Bill — Second Reading (Commons).

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Housing Benefit

Changes introduced in October 1990.

There were two main changes: A Carer's premium was introduced.

Increase in earnings disregard for lone parents not in receipt of Income Support. The amount of the disregard was increased from £15 to £25.

(Source: Welfare Rights Bulletin, February 1991, CPAG).

### Independent Living Fund

The House of Lords agreed by 125 votes to 103 to retain the present system of weekly payments provided from the Independent Living Fund. This represented a defeat for the Government.

(Source: The Guardian 7.3.91).

Sources of Useful Written Answers from the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Staff Days Spent on Fraud p.476. Hansard 26.2.91.

Family Credit Better Off Examples p. 477. Hansard 26.2.91.

Hardship and Number of IS/UB Payments for Hardship by Region pps. 260/1.

Hansard 22.2.91.

## STUDENTS

The Students Loans Company has spent twice the expected estimate. Fewer loans have been taken up by students than were anticipated by the Government, 75,625 as against the 430,000 expected. The unit costs of administering loans has been blamed for the overspending.

(Source: The Independent 2.3.91).

## TAX

The Government intends to publicise and liberalise taxation laws to encourage individuals, in their own time, to study for qualifications outside their trade or profession. The plan is to include all certificates recognised by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and other recognised bodies.

(Source: The Independent 2.3.91).

## TRAINING

### National Vocational Qualification Level 3

The CBI and TUC plan to ensure that by the year 2000 around 70% of young people will achieve skills on a higher level than the old apprenticeship qualification. Targets set for the NVQ Level 3 fell drastically short. Only 30% of young people are currently attaining Level 3.

(Source: The Independent 3.3.91).



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Scraptoft Campus, Scraptoft, Leicester LE7 9SU  
Telephone (0533) 551551  
or direct line 577743

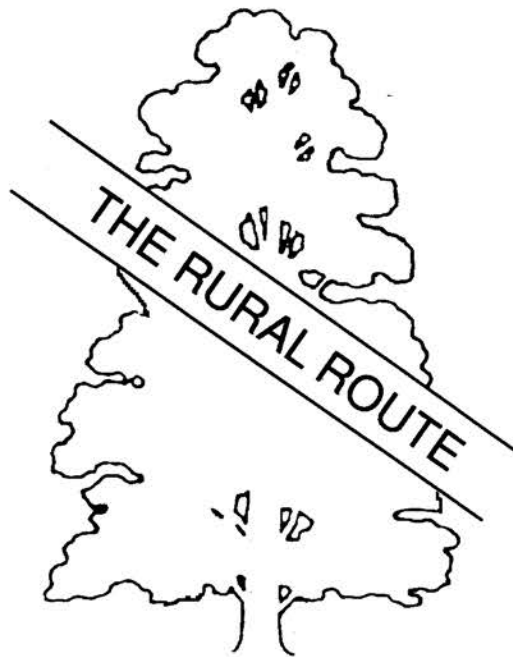
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**Analysis of Youth and Community Service Staffing, the supply and demand for full-time staffing.** CETYCW, May 1989.



For further details and application form contact  
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Scraftoft, Leicester LE7 9SU  
Telephone: (0533) 551551

# YOUTH AND POLICY

## Contributors

**Sarah Banks** is a tutor in community and youth work at Durham University.

**Don Blackburn** is a lecturer at Humberside Polytechnic.

**Tim Cawkwell** is director, Norfolk Rural Community Council.

**Brian Cheal** is a research assistant at Polytechnic South West.

**Linda Clifford** is a chartered clinical psychologist working for Sunderland Health Authority in the Department of Child, Adolescent and Family Psychology.

**Shirley Costigan** is the full-time area youth and community worker for Teesdale. She has worked there for five years and has particular interest and involvement in rural youth work, community arts and training.

**David Dunkerley** is professor of organisational sociology at Polytechnic South West, Plymouth.

**Ray Fabes** is responsible for the rural option on the Youth & Community Development Courses at Leicester Polytechnic. He is also an independent trainer and consultant specialising in work with young people in rural areas.

**Annie Franklin** works for Save the Children Fund in the United Kingdom.

**Bob Franklin** works in the Department of Politics at the University of Keele.

**Andy Gibson** is a youth worker currently studying politics at Newcastle Polytechnic.

**Bob Hollands** lectures in the School of Social Studies, Sunderland Polytechnic.

**Cherie Knowles** is senior lecturer in the youth and community section of Leicester Polytechnic.

**Robert MacDonald** is currently a researcher in the School of Education, University of Durham.

**Lindsey Mean** is a doctoral student at the Social and Applied Psychology Unit, University of Sheffield.

**Christopher Nichols** is a community educator currently working as freelance consultant to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council's Community Education Service.

**Jonathan Roberts** is the youth officer for the Diocese of Durham.

**Les Roberts** is the director of Durham Rural Community Council.

**Debra Roker** is a research associate at the Social and Applied Psychology Unit, University of Sheffield.

**Muriel Sawbridge** teaches community and youth work at Durham University.

**Jean Spence** teaches community and youth work at Sunderland Polytechnic.

**Suzy Varty** produced the first British women's comic in 1977. She now works for Them Wives, a community arts group in Newcastle upon Tyne, and is still drawing comics.

**Claire Wallace** is a lecturer in Applied Social Science, University of Lancaster. She was formerly at Polytechnic South West where the project was carried out.

**Andrew West** is a lecturer at Humberside Polytechnic.

**Patsy Wilson** is a former youth worker now working in the HIV and AIDS field in the North East.

*Classic Texts Revisited in the last issue was written by John Springhall. Youth & Policy apologises for omitting his name.*

## Submission Details

Material for the journal, including correspondence, is welcome within our stated editorial aims.

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Please send articles, of any length up to 10,000 words, to: Judith Cocker.

### FEEDBACK

We welcome letters concerning the journal or on issues concerning youth in society: Maura Banim.

### REVIEWS

Suggestions for future review material and names of possible contributors are invited from the readership: Chris Parkin.

### WORKING SPACE

Working space is aimed at those who may not normally consider contributing an article and may be written in whatever style the individual feels comfortable with: Tia Khan.

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