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

ESRC PhD CASE award, three years full fees

Supervisors

i. Academic
Dr David Green
Department of Geography
King’s College London

ii. Partner Institution
Dr Paul Carter
The National Archives, Kew

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Eligibility**
Details of eligibility for ESRC doctoral awards are available from the following website:
http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/GUIDANCE%20MARK%202_tcm6-7186.pdf

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

**How to apply**
Students interested in applying for this project must complete an application form which is available on the following website:
http://www.kcl.ac.uk/graduate/apply

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

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

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