

# Bulletin of the Social Work History Network

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*King George's Hospital, Stamford Street, SE: the largest ward (71 beds), J Hodgson Lobley, 1918.*

The hospital depicted is now the Franklin-Wilkins Building, King's College London where, in November 2014, the Social Work History Network discussed Society, welfare and conflicting ideas of social work during the First World War.

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## **Bulletin of the Social Work History Network**

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On the cover: *King George's Hospital, Stamford Street, SE: the largest ward (71 beds)* by J Hodgson Lobley, 1918. © IWM (Art.IWM ART 3821).

John Hodgson Lobley (1878-1954) was the official war artist for the Royal Army Medical Corps during World War I.

## *About the* Social Work History Network

The Social Work History Network (SWHN) exists to explore the nature and growth of social work in order to inform contemporary policy and practice. Founded in 2000, it is an informal network of social workers, historians, archivists, researchers, educators, students, and social work policymakers. The Network meets three or four times a year in the United Kingdom to discuss papers given by invited speakers. Meetings are open to all. The *Bulletin of the Social Work History Network* is an e-journal: it is available on the [Network website](#) and via email to those on the mailing list.

To join the SWHN mailing list or to confirm your attendance at a meeting please contact: [stephen.martineau@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.martineau@kcl.ac.uk)

The Social Work History Network is supported by The British Association of Social Workers (BASW), The College of Social Work, The Open University, the University of Chester, and the Social Care Workforce Research Unit at King's College London.

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# Editorial

## Sarah Matthews

Editor, *Bulletin of the Social Work History Network*



This, our second issue, has again inspired. The wide ranging contributions not only indicate that interest in the history of social work is buoyant, but also it becomes increasingly clear when reading these, that capturing what has happened in the past does matter for today's social work.

During the year which commemorated the start of World War One, the Network was very pleased to host an event led by [Dave Burnham](#) and [Professor Vivienne Cree](#) discussing the war's impact on welfare needs, along with the responses; here, in particular, the impact on the role of women. The resultant moral panic, and Professor Cree's particular interest in this, is a topic to which the next issue will return. Other memories surface also in this issue, not least of the lives of Professors Olive Stevenson and Robert Adams. Olive was well known to many people in the Network and I am not alone in being a former student of hers. Her influence upon social work with children and families is the focus of [June Thoburn's account here](#), and of her talk to the Network, but her legacy is not limited to this. Indeed, Olive did much to contribute as an historian of social work. Robert Adams, too, produced work which, as [Professor Jill Manthorpe comments](#), will be a mirror on contemporary social work for the future. In particular, she commends Robert's work as engaging and accessible, something which resonates fully with my own educational institution, and which I applaud.

The notion that history links inextricably with the present is exemplified in [Terry Bamford's piece](#) in which he introduces his recently published book on contemporary social work history. Here Terry highlights the context for policy issues which remain today; the ever-changing demands on social work qualifying processes and curricula, debates around eligibility, attitudes and approaches to 'proper' families, and continued focus on the relationship between the health and social care sector.

Of course, the Network does not only cover matters pertaining to the United Kingdom. [Geraldine Poirier Baiani](#) and [Joan Rapaport](#) have jointly introduced us to aspects of social work in New Brunswick, a province of Canada. They make comparisons to some past and more recent developments in England, for example in social work education, and with respect to the legal social work title, registration, issues around representation, and practice concerning social work with children and older people; all underpinned by the esteem in which the profession is held in New Brunswick. Geraldine and Joan propose that the environment in New Brunswick has allowed social work values and principles to flourish, and pose a challenge to those currently in practice and those influencing policy to compare notes.

[Mary Baginsky's](#) title for her contribution speaks for itself; [using studies from the](#)

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archives to find messages for today. In a fascinating account of three research projects examining social work education, along with her recent involvement in the evaluation of one current social work education programme, Mary reminds us of the cyclical debates that transpire. These include lack of definition, the call for a core curriculum, the need for research and the application of theory in practice. Mary wonders whether the profession and the task have become one and reflects upon her belief that the loss of CCETSW has impacted negatively upon this.

With a focus upon older people, Professor Malcolm Carey exhorts us to consider the irony of what he believes to be a rapid decline in the provision of social work with older people when this is set against the growing numbers in that very population. As local authorities are now gearing up to implement the changes of the Care Act 2014, it will be interesting to observe this ongoing challenge.

Inspired by my call in our inaugural bulletin for students, educators and researchers alike to use the WISEArchive as a resource to reflect upon developments in social work, Jo Moriarty has done just that and in this issue brings to life some of the influence of the 'imposing, yet kindly' Sybil Clement Brown. I hope this is the start of many such instances and use of this archive. It also inspires me to do something similar for those 'pioneers' of today and I wonder if any reader cares to join me in this endeavour? Do please get in touch if so.

Last, but not least, there are two separate contributions which we hope to make an ongoing feature of the *Bulletin*. The first, a

journal digest. In this issue Jill Manthorpe and Stephen Martineau have collated and discuss journal articles on the history of social work, not all located in the social work journals one might naturally expect. It is clear from this collection that the debate about what social work is remains a healthy one, but, of particular relevance here, is the sense that capturing an understanding of social work's history and development should influence current education, practice and research. I could not agree more. Of the books referred to in these articles, one is Clement Attlee's book, *The Social Worker*, which coincidentally is this issue's classic text reviewed by Dave Burnham. Attlee's view of social work is that it pioneers, investigates and agitates. As Dave comments, this is invigorating, especially when you consider the 'idea' of social work today. Reprinted by Forgotten Books, this perhaps ironically needs to be remembered, which is where this issue begins and the *Bulletin's* purpose remains.

A collaborative effort, this publication is only made possible by its contributors and contributions. I give them my particular thanks for their time and efforts and look forward to future editions. If you too have been inspired by its contents, do please contact me with your ideas, however large or small. In particular, I would like to give my thanks to Stephen, whose unassuming input is indispensable, thank you!

*Sarah Matthews, Co-ordinator of the SWHN, is a qualified, registered social worker and currently heads the Social Work Degree programme for The Open University in the North West of England and in Yorkshire.*  
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# In brief

## In Scotland

Following the first issue of the *Bulletin* Prof Stephen Webb and Ian Brodie of Glasgow Caledonian University were in touch and flagged up the significant archives related to Scottish social work history located within the university, including those that formed the Heatherbank Museum of Social Work. Ian Brodie drew on the archives of the Association of Directors of Social Work in an article he co-wrote on Scottish social work history, published by *BJSW* in 2008. Prof Webb's work includes a two-part article in the *European Journal of Social Work* on social work, modernity and late Victorian England.

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## Discussing the impact of World War One



At the SWHN meeting of November 2014, Viv Cree and Dave Burnham led a discussion about the

impact of World War One on social work, concentrating particularly on the changing role of women. Slides from the two speakers are available on the website. We will return to this subject in our next issue.

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## Special Interest Group at ESWRA

The recently established Special Interest Group on Social Work History at the European Social Work Research Association will be at ESWRA's conference in Slovenia in April. The Group is co-ordinated by John Gal, Professor at the School of Social Work and Social Welfare at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Prof Stefan Köngeter from the University of Trier. Ian Shaw, SWHN member, is Chair of ESWRA; Sarah Matthews, SWHN Co-ordinator, plans to be in Slovenia.

## 'On their own – Britain's child migrants'



Four children bound for Fairbridge Farm School, Molong, Australia in 1938. Photo: Molong Historical Society.

This major exhibition, which has already toured five venues in Australia, opened in Liverpool in 2014. SWHN plans to dedicate a meeting to the history of child migration later this year to coincide with the exhibition's transfer to the V&A Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green in October 2015. We will have a review of the exhibition in the next issue.

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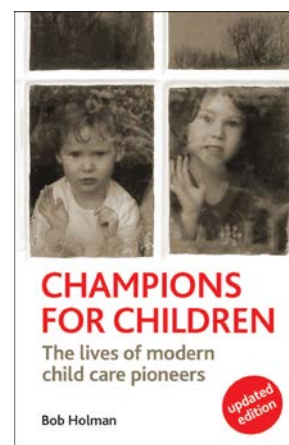
## The Child Care History Network

CCHN is holding a conference, *Children's Homes, Past, Present and Future. Learning from the past to improve the future for young people*, on Friday 3 July 2015, in Leeds.

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## Champions for Children

Bob Holman's assessment of Eleanor Rathbone, Marjory Allen, Barbara Kahan, John Stroud, Clare Winnicott, and Peter Townsend was first published in 2001. This revised edition has a new epilogue. Bob Holman spoke at SWHN in October 2013.



# Upcoming Network meetings

SWHN is planning at least three more meetings this year. We want to look at the history of integrated health and social care, including the Northern Ireland experience; we are planning a meeting based on two major inquiries—the North Wales inquiry into child abuse and the Cleveland inquiry; and we hope, towards the end of the year, to look at the history of child migration, linking with an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Keep your eyes on the [website](#) for dates and venues for these meetings.

Network meetings are arranged by the [Steering Group](#). Two new members recently joined: June Thoburn (Emeritus Professor at the School of Social Work, University of East Anglia) who represents The College of Social Work, and Maris Stratulis (BASW Manager, England) who represents the British Association of Social Workers on the Group.

The rest of the Steering Group is made up of the three co-founders of the Network, Joan Baraclough, Keith Bilton and David N Jones, and: Terry Bamford (Chair), Thomas Bray, David Burnham, Mike Burt, Jill Manthorpe, Stephen Martineau (Administrator), Sarah Matthews (Co-ordinator), Judith Niechcial, Barbara Prynne, and Peter Simcock.

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## Robert Adams 1944-2014

Professor Robert Adams died on New Year's Eve 2014. He will be well known to many social workers and educators as the author of several textbooks, and to some social work teachers on programmes at Humberside University, University of Lincoln and latterly Teesside University. He produced readable social work texts in which 'empowerment' as a social work goal featured prominently. [Prof Malcolm Payne's blog post](#) is an informative and moving reflection on working with him, perhaps revealing to many that Robert was not only a prolific social work writer, but wrote fiction and had wider interests in the activity of writing and self-publishing.



Future historians of social work may use Robert's texts as a mirror on the world of today's social work or at least its aspirations. His career as an acting governor of a youth

custody institution, director of a Barnardo's project and university lecturer and author, which followed jobs as a gardener, hotel cellar man and prison officer, further reflects changing times. Robert worked also as a consultant and wrote about this activity too. Within

the locality of Humberside, Robert was collegiate in social work education and a pioneer of open learning and producing materials that were engaging and accessible.—*Jill Manthorpe*

# Olive Stevenson's past and continuing contribution to child and family social work

June Thoburn



Prof Thoburn spoke at SWHN in February 2015 about social worker and academic Olive Stevenson, 1930-2013

*British child welfare practice has suffered from a lack of historical reflection: to acknowledge the distinctive and unique problems which we face today does not invalidate comparisons with the past.*  
(Stevenson 1998)

There are few who can equal Olive Stevenson's outstanding contribution to social work research, education, policy and practice. Although her practice experience and much of her published writing focused on child and family social work practice and policy, she also wrote about: practice with older people and those with disability, models of service delivery, team work, collaborative practice, and, the relationships between social work and law, social work and psychiatry, and social work and social security (now disparagingly referred to as 'welfare'—what a distortion of the meaning of one of the great post-war achievements).

Olive (pictured right, in 1976) was the founding editor of the *British Journal of Social Work* (in 1971) and continued to review, to write and to lecture until a stroke in 2010 limited her mobility and sight. Happily for us, and characteristically, she continued to work with Harry Ferguson and Phyllida Parsloe to bring her *Reflections on a life in social work: A personal & professional memoir* to fruition.

My contribution to the Social Work History Network (SWHN) discussion in February 2015 draws on that illuminating, challenging, sometimes ironically humorous, beautifully written and deeply moving book. It also says much for Olive's generosity with her time that she provided today's social workers, researchers and historians with the rich resource of a website ([olivestevenson.com](http://olivestevenson.com)) containing all her published papers and 30 unpublished papers as well as keynote lectures, starting with reflections on her training at the London School of Economics and her days as a child care officer in Devon.

In her early days as a student, practitioner and social work/ educator she 'rubbed shoulders' with John Bowlby, Eileen Younghusband, Elizabeth Irvine and leading psychoanalysts and psychosocial caseworkers of the day. She pays tribute in her writing especially to Donald and Clare Winnicott (whose contributions to the Barnett House Child Care and Probation Officer course are amongst my treasured memories as one of the 14 students on the second year of that Home Office postgraduate programme, which Olive set up and led for 14 years).



In my contribution to the SWHN afternoon I largely use Olive's own words to illustrate her contribution to social work's history, focusing particularly on child and family social work, practice and policy, but also on her own contribution as an historian of social work.

*June Thoburn is Emeritus Professor at the School of Social Work, University of East Anglia. She sits on the SWHN Steering Group and spoke on 24 February 2015.*

## References

Stevenson, O. (1998) 'It was more difficult than we thought: a reflection on 50 years of child welfare practice', *Child & Family Social Work*, 3(3): 153-161.

Stevenson, O. (2013) *Reflections on a life in social work: A personal & professional memoir*, Buckingham: Hinton House.

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# On writing social work history

## Terry Bamford



*A contemporary history of social work* by Terry Bamford, Chair of SWHN, is published this month

Attempting to write a history is a tricky business. There are multiple perspectives—a top down view of the evolution of public policy, a view from a client perspective of the changes in social work, a socio-political analysis. These problems are compounded when one tries to write about the immediate past. In looking at the last 50 years of social work I tried to set the context both for some of the major changes in that period and for issues which remain at the forefront of debate.

The moves towards the job-specific training exemplified by *Frontline* and *Think Ahead* have to be seen in the context both of the development of specialisation in the delivery of local authority services and the development of

competences geared to a particular role. The welfare policies of the coalition government go further back to 'less eligibility', the belief that nobody in receipt of Poor Law assistance should be better off than the average labourer. The restrictions on child benefit and the cash limit on benefits have Malthusian echoes of hostility to large families. The relationship between the National Health Service and local authority social care is today a source of public debate as there is widespread recognition that cuts in social care have a direct impact on hospital services.

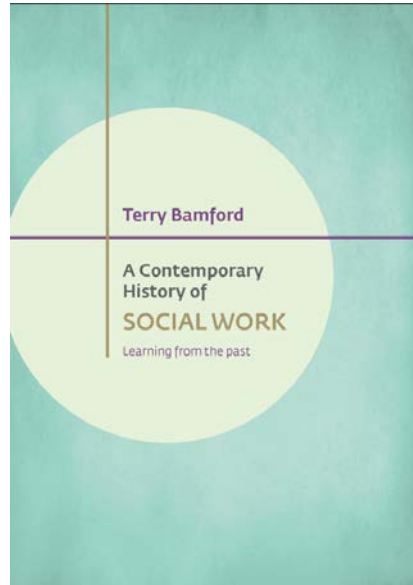
Taking the long view is a useful corrective against the advocates of quick-fix solutions. The much trumpeted Better Care Fund is a flimsy fig leaf designed to conceal the impact of cuts in adult social care, cuts which will continue unabated on current financial plans from the Treasury. Long term solutions will require revisiting the post-war settlement, which established a universalist National Health Service free at the point of delivery, but selective social care provision on the basis of



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need, which was chargeable. The Barker Commission has pointed the way, but the financial implications of such radicalism have scared off politicians of all parties.

I tried to guard against allowing free rein to my own biases. In the introduction I tried to list them—in favour of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), the best professional association we have, and against the dominance of managerialism, politicians who respond to the demands of the tabloids rather than think for themselves, and those social work teachers whose impenetrable language creates a bias against understanding. Despite my best efforts I suspect that some of my prejudices have crept into the text.



But the biggest issue facing the profession is the continuing dominance of neo-liberal thinking in the political sphere. When seen as a passing phase associated with the swinging political pendulum it could be dismissed with the label 'Thatcherite'. That is no longer true. The belief in the superiority of the market has led to outsourcing of much public provision, although the prison system, the collapse of probation and the recent withdrawal by Circle from hospital provision illustrate the deficiencies of uncritical belief in the private sector. And consensus thinking about the impossibility of increasing taxation means that

the option of campaigning on the basis of social justice seems to be restricted to the Scots! The threat in social work is real. It would be foolish to suppose that only probation will be subject to competitive tendering processes. The concession over the outsourcing of children's services won following *The Guardian* letter from Ray Jones and other academics was

welcome, but the inventive minds behind Serco, Capita and others will create not-for-profit arms to bid for potentially lucrative social work contracts. That will pose difficult issues for a profession which is increasingly fragmented—do we seek to protect public sector provision, or do we compete and win on both quality and cost against the corporate predators?

The answer from the leading thinkers of the Left would be that we should resist any such outsourcing and refuse to engage in a rush to the bottom designed to cut costs and drive down wages. I take a more positive view of the capacity of social work to flourish outside a local authority environment. While the findings of the social work practice pilots are not clear cut, they may offer a prototype of an organizational form which will enable social work to combine professionalism, humanity and its long standing concern for social justice.

*Terry Bamford is Chair of SWHN.*

*Terry's book, A Contemporary History of Social Work: learning from the past, is published by Policy Press at £22.99, epub £20.99. A 30% discount is available for BASW members:*

*[policypress.co.uk/promo.asp](http://policypress.co.uk/promo.asp) with the code WEX7413EGW.*

# A Canadian encounter

## Geraldine Poirier Baiani and Joan Rapaport



Geraldine Poirier Baiani (left) and Joan Rapaport report from New Brunswick

Who would imagine that whilst holidaying in North America, through a surprise invitation from family and friends, I should meet a Canadian social worker? Furthermore, that the person in question had recently retired from the post of Assistant Deputy Minister in New Brunswick, Canada, with responsibility for the delivery of social services in this Canadian province, including adoption, child care, foster care, child protection, adult protection and services for ‘seniors’<sup>1</sup> and disabled adults, plus ‘social assistance’ (welfare benefits) and housing. Although the party was in full swing, we decided that the opportunity to compare notes was too good to be missed. Communications have continued apace ever since. Here the main focus is on advances in the Canadian province of New Brunswick and comparisons drawn with reference to some past and more recent developments in the United Kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> The term used in Canada for ‘older people’ and used hereafter.

### New Brunswick: a brief overview

Canada is composed of ten provinces and three territories. The province of New Brunswick, in the east of the country, is about the size of England. Its population of about 755,000 is mainly concentrated in the three southern cities of Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton. Most are descended from British (largely Scottish and Irish) and French Acadian settlers. First Nation Settlements are reserved for people descended from the aboriginal Mi’kmaq and Maliseet nations. In recent years, New Brunswick has experienced a decline in its population, especially in the sparsely populated northern communities, as educated young people have moved to western Canada and elsewhere to seek better employment opportunities. English and French are spoken; New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province in Canada. Each province has considerable autonomy to run its own ‘home’ affairs.



### Social work profession

Social work training arrangements vary throughout Canada. For instance, Alberta still accepts the two-year college programme, apparently due to retention and recruitment pressures. However, New Brunswick, like most of the other provinces, requires graduate and postgraduate attainment as minimum education requirements. The province has two schools of social work: the francophone programme is a five-year Bachelor of Social Work course. The anglophone school has a fifteen month post-bachelor's degree programme. There is the option of a further post-qualifying eighteen month Masters course. PhD courses are available in the larger provinces. Social workers with doctorates tend to pursue careers in teaching at university level, research or private practice.

The control and practice of the title 'social worker' became law under the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers Act 1988, which took immediate effect. This is much earlier than the protection afforded to social workers in the United Kingdom that came into force in 2005 under the Care Standards Act 2000. The government of New Brunswick recognises the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers (NBASW) as the legal voice of the profession. In contrast to the current separate arrangements in the United Kingdom, under the terms of the 1988 Act, the NBASW is the authority for professional registration. It should not be forgotten that two former health-related professional associations in the United Kingdom, the Institute of Medical Social Workers and Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, had much earlier also held professional registers. These and other social work accreditations disappeared following the implementation of the Seebohm Committee

recommendations (Seebohm 1968), the introduction of generic social work and the amalgamation of seven professional social work organizations into the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) in 1970 (Dedman 1996). Although BASW, in its infancy, started the campaign for professional registration to be instated (BASW 1977), this important objective was to take many years to come.



*L' Association des Travailleurs Sociaux du Nouveau-Brunswick / The New Brunswick Association of Social Workers*

However, reverting to the New Brunswick scene, to be able to work as a Registered Social Worker in the province, those eligible must by law, register with the NBASW, have attained the minimum education requirements, have a clean criminal record check and provide two references. New graduates and returnees are required to accept supervision for a period of time by a member of the NBASW (NBASW 1989). The NBASW is a partner in and supporter of government initiatives. Poirier Baiani confirms that the Department of Social Development (DoSD) regularly consults the organization regarding the development of new social programmes and services. In this respect, the NBASW holds an unrivalled position, unlike BASW since the advent of the government sponsored College of Social Work (TCSW) launched in 2012—a development which has potentially weakening consequences for the profession. How this situation came about in

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England and the failed attempts to forge a union are too complex to detail here. However, suffice it to say, social workers in New Brunswick are fortunate in that they are represented by a single professional organization.

Of note is the fact that, in September 2014, a social worker from New Brunswick (*Rina Arseneault, pictured*) received the Order of Canada, the second highest honour for merit in the hierarchy of national awards, for



her work in education, research and also social activism. The award suggests that both national and provincial governments hold the social work profession in high esteem.

### Employing agencies and administration

The Department of Health (DH) and the DoSD are the two main employing agencies of social workers in New Brunswick. The DH employs social workers in the areas of mental health and hospital services. The DoSD is responsible for child and adult care and protection and community services and is the largest social work employer. The two departments were once combined. Given trends to integrate health and social services in the United Kingdom (Glasby & Littlechild 2004; Rapaport 2005; Lamb 2014), the DoSD's separation from the DH in 2000 may come as a surprise. Poirier Baiani recalls that the decision to separate was taken as experience had shown that health priorities such as cancer treatment, surgery and medications always dominated, leaving social development the poor relation.

This departure allowed the DoSD to have its own budget and has thus strengthened its position. Although now a separate entity, collaboration with health at political and practitioner levels has been critical to the development of adult and child protection services and social work support to people with complex needs.

The DoSD has a close working relationship with provincial universities, particularly in respect of the selection of appropriate fieldwork placements for students. In addition, the universities undertake research in areas highlighted by the government in consultation with the New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network (NBSPRN). Of significance is the fact that, whilst in England the Professional Capabilities Framework adopted by TCSW identifies research as a core activity (TCSW 2012), official attempts to encourage social workers to undertake research has been light touch (Rapaport 2012). This current state of affairs inevitably diminishes the availability of practitioner scientific evidence to further change and innovation. However, by way of contrast, the NBSPRN has the mandate to advance an evidence-based approach to policy development. Key to this is identifying occasions for collaboration between governments including decision-makers, public servants, municipal officials and regional development practitioners, and involving informed communities such as non-governmental organizations, community leaders and citizens and finally, researchers, academics and students, in the area of social and economic development.

Thus the DoSD is superbly placed to argue its case based on the findings of research in

which the government is actively engaged, and to influence political will to respond to identified needs and initiate change. The DoSD has been intimately involved in developing anti-poverty initiatives and better services for families such as those described below.

### **Anti-poverty and family welfare**

New Brunswick's anti-poverty initiative was started in 2008. At the time, it was the sixth province in Canada to develop a plan to address the issue. New Brunswick introduced a different approach to the other provinces by enlisting the help of social workers' clients, non-profit bodies, businesses and government to devise strategies to reduce poverty. The goal was and still is to reduce income poverty by 25 per cent and 'deep income' poverty by 50 per cent (Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation 2014). The anti-poverty initiative is now enshrined in law under the Economic and Social Inclusion Act of New Brunswick, adopted in 2010 to reduce poverty. The government is required to report on progress in the legislative assembly in 2015. Some of the notable anti-poverty initiatives include a 'vision' and dental care programme for children of low income households, a prescription 'drug' programme for New Brunswickers who lack one, increased funding to homeless shelters and more learning sites (Economic and Social Inclusion Plan 2014). However, contrary to the general direction in the United Kingdom, social assistance rates and rental supplements have been raised and the initiative is backed by a strong anti-poverty awareness campaign: no whiff of 'bedroom tax' or derogatory 'scrounger' mantra associated with benefits' recipients here!



*Legislative Assembly Building of New Brunswick*

In respect of direct personal services, New Brunswick differs from the United Kingdom in that one law, the Family Services Act 1980, covers both children and adult care. This law has been subject to multiple amendments in recent years. As in the United Kingdom, New Brunswick is conscious of the need to ensure timely hospital discharge. The DoSD has resisted pressure to transfer some of its adult services, such as residential and institutional care, to health, choosing instead to collaborate with the DH and the 'Healthy and Inclusive Communities' initiative to design the 'Home First' model ([gnb.ca/socialdevelopment](http://gnb.ca/socialdevelopment)). This focuses on making sure that seniors stay healthy, have the services to stay at home and that the community supports them, whether at home or in residential care.

### **Family Group Conference**

The Family Group Conference (FGC) emerged from Maori culture in New Zealand in the 1980s and has since been implemented in many countries. In the United Kingdom, the Family Rights Group (FRG) is one of the umbrella organizations to have actively championed the model (Holland & Rivett 2008). Three quarters of local authorities in England and Wales now offer the service ([frg.org.uk](http://frg.org.uk)). By way of contrast, New Brunswick is one of the few Canadian provinces to have adopted the FGC.

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In 2006 the DoSD consulted Mike Doolan, a renowned child welfare expert formerly associated with the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, to redesign the New Brunswick child welfare system. The main aim was to provide a better service to families and reduce the number of days children spent in 'stranger' (foster) care. Doolan helped in the development of services to promote family conferencing based on the New Zealand model, kinship care, family enhancement and immediate response services, and a culturally respectful process. Innes (2014), also endorsed by Marc Gagnon, Director at the DoSD, highlights the far reaching benefits of the initiative—since 2008, a mandatory service incorporated in the Family Services Act. Families are actively participating in decision-making and children are arguably safer. The FGC has helped to improve family relationships, and enabled family members to talk about and face the 'unspoken' and to find solutions to their problems. It has drastically reduced the need to go to court to obtain involuntary orders and thus avoided the damaging effects of separation for some. Within the first year of implementation, the number of children in care had decreased by almost 20 per cent. Over the past five years, numbers of children in 'temporary' care have decreased by 26 per cent and in 'permanent' care by over 30 per cent. This made tremendous 'dollar' savings and has enabled the province to employ more social workers and reduce caseloads. Amidst stories of variable FGC standards (McNab 2008), unsustainable workloads and mounting care applications (Unison & Community Care 2014) in some parts of the United Kingdom, child welfare social workers in New Brunswick have enviable caseloads (a family is counted as one case) of just **seven** (Innes 2014), well below

15, as proposed by the Child Welfare League of Canada. Claude Savoie of the NBASW confirms that caseload size is no longer an issue with its members! Social worker job satisfaction has increased with the result that turnover in these positions is very low and pride in professional achievement very high.

The FGC model in New Brunswick is apparently so successful that representatives from Australia, and now even New Zealand, visit to observe the province's practice. Mike Doolan has commended New Brunswick's progress:

*'New Brunswick is a Shining Light in Child Protection ... [and] is one of the few places in the world that is using family group conferences in a comprehensive program'* (in Innes 2014)

Developments in New Brunswick support the FRG's campaign (2011) for legal entitlement and its claim that FGCs could save the United Kingdom millions. The secret to New Brunswick's apparent super success may lie in the prized intensive Competency Based Child Welfare Training System—incorporating areas such as solution focused training, interest based conflict resolution and family therapy—developed by the DoSD and mandatory for everyone working in child welfare. Given the content of this training, provided on an ongoing basis, New Brunswickian practice arguably supports the theory that FGC outcomes might be further improved if also combined with family therapy (Holland & Rivett 2008).

***A personal and professional success story:*** Overhearing our discussions, our hostess volunteered a very personal account of past

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social services experiences. Her parents, who had raised five children of their own, undertook to foster a family of four who had been abandoned by their parents and subsequently unsatisfactorily fostered elsewhere. The children settled in their new home and soon became an integral part of our hostess' family. Fifty years on, this remains the case to this day.



*Swallowtail Lighthouse, Grand Manan, New Brunswick. Photo: André Gallant*

### Concluding reflections

As the evening drew to a close, we agreed that New Brunswick had been able to make strides in social development in part due to its relatively small population and freedom from the usual pressures of crowded inner cities. However, the DoSD's independence and new relationship with the DH has had several benefits: it has been able to use its autonomy to develop strategic links with government, policy and research forums and has driven the political will to implement change to services now enshrined in law. The psychosocial and financial benefits of robustly implemented Family Group Conferencing have been clearly demonstrated. Monetary savings have been ploughed back into the DoSD's budget to enhance social work input, and not hived off elsewhere! In respect of anti-poverty initiatives, the department's success in influencing change, especially at a time of

economic constraint, is noteworthy. However, these achievements apart, social work presence at Assistant Deputy Minister level has undoubtedly also helped to oil the wheels of progress and change. Perhaps some may reflect on the demise of the Social Services Inspectorate and what might have been, in this respect?

If social workers in the United Kingdom had been able to follow the New Brunswick example, would their professional history and present-day standing have taken a different course? New Brunswick social workers are arguably in an enviable position: they have a single professional association that is enshrined in law and the centrality of professional registration has long been recognised. Of fundamental importance to their practice, a seemingly Utopian ethos allows the values and principles of social work to flourish. It is fortunate that the province is in such a golden position to demonstrate to others its recent initiatives, founded on well-connected overarching frameworks and professional and research informed government-backed strategies. With the big achievements of this little gem in mind, are there lessons and opportunities here for the United Kingdom and if so, how might these be taken forward? As a first step, might those proactively implementing Family Group Conferences in the United Kingdom wish to compare notes with their New Brunswickian counterparts? Anyone wishing to do so should contact Marc Gagnon. Email address: [marc.gagnon@gnb.ca](mailto:marc.gagnon@gnb.ca)

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# Three studies from the archives with messages for today

## Mary Baginsky



Mary Baginsky spoke at 'The History of CCETSW' in 2014 about being a researcher at the organization

In the mid to late 1970s the Department of Health awarded the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) a series of research grants to investigate various aspects of social work education. I seem to remember that there was one that looked at student units, but I was more closely involved in three others, particularly the one on which I worked for over two years. These focused on various aspects of the then relatively new Certificate of Qualification in Social Work.

One project, *A Fair Assessment*, was led by a psychologist Dr Christine Hayward and focused on the criteria used to assess students for assessment and the report included a theoretical and practical discussion of the reliability and validity of marking and grading. The report (Hayward 1979) explored issues that still challenge the profession today. Christine found that social work educators talked of 'a body of essential knowledge'. Even though educators frequently qualified this by adding that social work was not clearly defined at that point she found it very difficult to get a clear picture of what that

'essential knowledge' comprised. She debated the need to achieve a more explicit definition of skills, knowledge and values while avoiding the adoption of a rigid and unhelpful approach. She concluded there was little danger of too much rigidity and that more explicitness would be valuable. This led her to reflect on whether or not there should be a common core, with students being required to pass all the elements. She also reflected on how students could be nurtured to keep up to date with research so they were able to adopt an approach that meant they absorbed this into their normal professional practice! And finally she explored how best to develop the analytic skills of students—and how these would differ at the outset according to their backgrounds.

The report probably raised more questions than it answered—and I am not sure the debate on how to address them continued in a structured-enough way. However, the same issues reverberate through the debates that took place during the deliberations of the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) and its report (SWTF 2009), and are ongoing.

Another project was *Social Work courses – their structure and content*, and that was also led by a psychologist, Dr Peter Casson. He sampled 25 of the 140 courses that were then approved by CCETSW and examined in great detail the documentation submitted by them. The

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variety of ways in which course content was selected and sequenced was evident, and again Peter identified a dilemma that still runs through contemporary debates—are social work courses designed as a form of liberal education or are they concerned with training for practice? He concluded that both philosophies were evident, but that it was not clear how the two were separated in the design of courses or what the relationship was between the two (see Casson 1982). For me the strongest message from Peter's research is that if practice theories are to be effectively translated into professional practice the practice educator has to be informed, knowledgeable and skilled in the transmission of these theories.



*Derbyshire House, CCETSW's London base*

It will come as no surprise that when I examined the views of trainees on the *Step Up to Social Work* programme (Baginsky & Teague 2013; Baginsky & Manthorpe 2014) about the integration of theory and practice, that the role and importance of their practice educator were paramount. This is a route into social work that is, more than any other, based on a partnership between employers and universities. For a range of reasons it was difficult to achieve a true partnership. The dangers of discontinuity identified some 30 years earlier continue to exist. Peter's conclusion that practitioners taking students needed to be selected on the basis of their

expertise in specific areas of social work theory would be supported by the views of the *Step Up to Social Work* trainees. Whatever our personal views on the *Frontline* training route might be, it will test this aspect of training, as will the implementation of teaching partnerships (see Department of Health 2014). With the rapid growth in social work courses and student numbers, too many practitioners without these skills have had students—and the Practice Educator Professional Standards for Social Work (PEPS) are not the answer alone to addressing this underlying deficit.

The third project, *Learning to Practise – a study of practice placements*, was the one I worked on under the leadership of Lucy Syson. We looked at 41 placements across eight courses and interviewed the student, practice educator and university tutor involved in each one. Overall expectations were met in 24 of the 41. Where there were problems they were usually linked to unrealistic or poorly defined expectations, poor supervision, personality clashes, and sickness—of students and practice teachers, as they were then known. But there was also a philosophical split, not unfamiliar for those of us involved with placements in 2015, between those who viewed taking students as a professional duty and commitment to the profession and those who saw it as an unnecessary burden. However, the reality was that most practice educators did not have a clue about the curriculum of the courses from which they were taking students. Not surprisingly the recommendations wrote themselves (see Syson with Baginsky 1981).

When I was looking back over the reports I could not help but be struck by how many

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issues continued to be as live today as they were then. But when I looked at the main themes that emerged from our work especially around clarifying expectations and roles, at least in those areas—if not in others—practice has improved. CCETSW played a part in that. If we look at social work over the past 15 years there has been so much churn. My concern now is that it is not the profession shaping the profession even though there may be an illusion that it is. At least as far as social work in the children’s sector is concerned the profession and task have become one—the drivers sit in the Department for Education, Ofsted, large consultancies and voluntary organizations. CCETSW no doubt had its faults, but as an organization that had social work at its mind and heart it is missed.

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*Speakers at ‘The History of CCETSW’, 25 June 2014 at King’s College London: (left to right) Hugh Barr, Mary Baginsky, Jill Manthorpe, Jenny Weinstein, Simon Biggs and David Lane. The event was presented jointly by SWHN and the Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King’s College London. A podcast of this meeting is available on the Social Work History Network website.*

# Brief encounters: The re-marginalisation and ongoing decline of social work for older people

## Malcolm Carey



The recent SWHN meeting in Chester debated social work with older people. Malcolm Carey was one of the speakers

In the United Kingdom, at least, social work with older people is disappearing. It is either diminishing as political priority or is being reconstituted as a minimal, and often reactionary, risk-averse adult safeguarding or largely passive administrative role in many localities; or integrated within inequitable (and at times muddled) discursive domains such as ‘health and social care’. Core policy initiatives such as Personalisation have tended to omit a clearly defined or tangible role for qualified social workers (Lymbery 2010), and activities, once monopolized by professional social workers, such as assessments of need, are now either shared with professionals in other sectors or are franchised out to auxiliary and voluntary staff. Increased and often unrealistic expectations are now placed upon informal caregivers—predominately women and families—and limited support is now provided by formal support workers, much of which tends to be unreliable, inadequate or sometimes a risk to health. The extensive privatization and subsequent fragmentation of core social care sectors, such as domiciliary and residential care, have invariably played a role in these

tendencies; especially with regard to the depletion of employment rights, pay and status for ever more transient care workers.

The cumulative reforms of the neo-liberal inspired New Labour and Coalition governments in the United Kingdom have in my view carried an implicit ideological presumption that many responsibilities fulfilled by adult social workers can be provided just as effectively by unqualified staff, or welfare professionals in allied sectors such as health care. The existence of such prejudice was first mooted by Colin Brewer and June Lait (1980) as part of their polemical critique of social work, yet as Hall and Scragg (2012, p. 1) have more recently noted, such views also prevail within the social work profession. As they note: ‘regulators and some managers question the need for qualified social workers to work with older people, seeing it as an unnecessary and expensive use of qualified professionals’. Richards *et al.* (2013) also stress the scarcity of material on ageing included in many social work taught programmes, which strongly suggests that similar views may not be uncommon within a number of social work education sectors and departments.

Yet, social work with older people has always tended to constitute a marginal, almost invisible pursuit, which nevertheless carries a tacit stigma of low-skilled non-professional work that anyone can do with a little training. More than three decades

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ago Phillipson (1982) highlighted how such common assumptions then prevailed; that organizing routine auxiliary support or practical tasks is all that is required for older people, and this demands little foresight or training. Ironically, such views are not uncommonly held about social workers involved with other user groups, not least by some members of the public and many medics or health care workers (see Bywaters 1986). Perhaps unsurprisingly, since adult social work's past advocates have tended to be few and far between within social work, so its ongoing decline has generated only a murmur of resistance.

Parsloe's (1981, p. 85) extensive interviews with practitioners in 33 social service departments in the United Kingdom discovered that older clients were often passed to unqualified or administrative staff, whilst childcare-related casework was viewed as 'real social work' by practitioners. Such ageist viewpoints—common also in fields such as medicine or law—have been challenged as ignoring the complex and diverse needs of older people. They tend also to privilege the needs of the labour market and also, perhaps subconsciously, link to a supposed Western fear of the ageing body and death (see Twigg 2006). Blaikie (2006, p. 13) also stresses the significance of myths and prejudice in provoking inter-generational conflict, in that '[s]o long as fourth-agers remain perceived as a "burden of dependency" on the welfare system and third-agers as "greedy baby-boomers" enjoying their leisure, tensions of the workers-versus-pensioners type will persist'.

Yet, social work with older people has also consistently attracted a 'small and silent' group of intelligent, committed and passionate 'converts' (Marshall 1989, p. 109), many of whom within the generic social service departments of the 1970s and 1980s were eager to specialize in order to overcome process-driven de-skilling. More recently, such skills are increasingly being assimilated within health care, arguably as a consequence of ideological policies that promote integration. For example, new health care and science orientated branches of social work have emerged, including 'clinical', 'forensic' and now 'gerontological' social work. Ever more, 'social care' concerns are focused upon treating illness and pathological conditions such as dementia or strokes, often whilst couched as being part of providing hospital-based, rehabilitative, intermediate, residential or end of life care. While such integration may promote less fragmented, more co-ordinated and cost-effective provision, this tendency also risks neglecting further an already limited recognition within praxis of the true impact of structural disadvantage, poverty, poor housing, class, and much else upon later stage ageing. Indeed, Estes *et al.* (2003, p. 82) add that what they term the 'biomedicalisation of ageing' struggles to accommodate other paradigms, and instead tends to 'seal itself off from other explorations'. In describing studies of the work of almoners in hospitals such as those by Bell (1961) and Stacey (1983), Paul Bywaters (1986, pp. 663-665) has detailed their 'struggle for survival in what were experienced as hostile environments'. Ultimately, almoners were encouraged to perform low skill practical support tasks for patients and discouraged (or not trusted)

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to do much else. They were seemingly viewed as largely being incapable of undertaking skilled work, and one might assume that such prejudice towards social workers carries on today.

More recently Deacon (2000) has stressed the viewpoint and promotion by the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that welfare states and programmes should be opened up to private sector providers wherever possible, ideally within the potentially more profitable domains of health or education sectors alone (alongside greater emphasis being placed on self-help and volunteering). State provision, in contrast, should continue to narrow in focus.

The retrenchment of social work with older people within 'post-Welfare' domains largely ignores societal needs and complex ongoing trends. Indeed, policymakers and politicians—as well as key players within the social work profession—may rue any decision not to increase or promote further the number or role of qualified social workers for an ageing population. Alongside the (regularly cited) increasing proportion of 'oldest' older people and declining fertility rates, there also continue to be important changes taking place with regard to the lifestyles and attitudes of older people. Differences invariably emerge across generations as a collective entity, and many of the current 'baby boomers' remain much more aware of their rights, and also have more access to new resources and technologies such as higher education facilities and the internet. Provision of higher quality and reliable social care is likely to increase as an

expectation—if not a basic human right. Despite this, increasing inequalities among ageing populations mean that access to welfare support now differs significantly across social classes, especially as citizenship relies ever more upon ownership of sufficient financial and corporeal capital.

As sociologists such as Bauman (2000) note, societies have also become more atomized, and this trend is unlikely to reverse. Diversities in ethnicity, sexuality, lifestyles, inter-generational relations, care giving, health, ability or otherwise—among other constructs—are also increasing; and such trends invariably generate more diverse and complex needs, which challenge many of the implicit assumptions made by policymakers, pedagogues and welfare professionals in the past about (passive or homogenous) older people. The ongoing retrenchment of welfare services under a sustained austerity programme, alongside the retrenchment of pensions for many employees in some sectors, suggest that rates of inequality and poverty for older people are likely to increase. The need and demand for higher skilled and more knowledgeable social workers to accommodate such greater needs, alongside a growing heterogeneous proportion of older people, occur just at a point when ironically, if not bizarrely, such social work continues to remain in rapid decline.

*Professor Malcolm Carey is Head of the Department of Social Work at the University of Chester. Together with Robin Means he spoke about social work with older people at SWHN, Chester on 16 September 2014.*

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# Sybil Clement Brown – a very practical pioneer

Jo Moriarty

In the first issue of the *Bulletin of the Social Work History Network*, Katie Graham reported on the launch of the WISEArchive Cohen Interviews (Graham 2014) and Sarah Matthews highlighted the archive's importance as a resource for reflecting on developments in social work (Matthews 2014). This was exactly what Angie Bartoli, Joanne Westwood and I did when we ran a workshop at the UK Joint Social Work Education Conference with the UK Social Work Research Conference (JSWEC) in 2014. Using examples of interviews from the archive, we sought to highlight some of the changes and continuities that seem to exist within social work today. I used the example of Sybil Clement Brown (1899-1993) to illustrate how she was no stranger to debates about the extent to which social work should tackle social inequalities, either through work with individuals or by seeking wider societal change, and to discuss her lasting influence on social policy and social work education.

Sybil Clement Brown is arguably one of the better known of Alan Cohen's interviewees. She wrote a number of journal articles and reports and is considered to have been very prominent in the development of mental health social work. She knew many influential people, a fact illustrated most clearly perhaps in her memorable description of her office in the London School of Economics as being next door to that of the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and opposite Hugh Dalton's (Clement Brown 1980-1981, p. 17). Dalton later served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1945-1947. Clement Brown even featured in one of the first books looking at the history of social work (Walton 1975).

However, when she went to Bedford College (now part of Royal Holloway, University of London) in 1919, she was one of a very small minority of women and men who went to university. Bedford College itself had been founded in 1849—the first higher education institution at which women could study. She studied philosophy, but was also interested in psychology and sociology. She described herself as particularly influenced by the work of Leonard Hobhouse (Clement Brown 1980-1981, p. 2), the first professor of sociology in Britain. Hobhouse was a Liberal who was strongly critical of the socio-economic conditions prevalent in Britain in the early twentieth century.



*Sybil Clement Brown*

While studying at Bedford College, Clement Brown was introduced to the world of social work through her visits to a settlement in Bermondsey. She says in the Cohen interview:

*I was horrified by the sordid inequalities in standards of living and the kind of efforts which had to be made to provide the barest necessities of life to families.*

(Clement Brown 1980-1981, p. 2)



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After a period of further study in Birmingham, she was awarded a scholarship to look at social work in the United States where she visited New York, Boston and California. Her experiences there provide evidence of the influence of ideas from the United States on the development of Child Guidance Clinics and the role of the 'psychiatric social worker' in the United Kingdom.

After returning to England in 1927, she undertook various jobs and eventually, in 1932, she was asked to develop a mental health course at the London School of Economics. Echoing debates about content of the social work qualifying curriculum today, Clement Brown had to negotiate the teaching content with those who felt the course should be based on Freudian approaches and those who wanted more input on child development. Caught between the two competing schools of thought, she was 'aware of criticism of my own emphasis as being too much concerned with the relationship between social circumstances and individual problems' (Clement Brown 1980-1981, p. 7).

Perhaps her most testing times running the mental health course occurred towards the end of the Second World War when Hitler launched the V-2 rocket attacks on London. Whenever the air raid sirens sounded, she and the students retreated to the basement and the students ended up taking their examinations between the book stacks (Clement Brown 1980-1981, p. 9).

Clement Brown was one of 17 members who served on the influential Curtis Committee, which was set up in 1945 as a result, in part, of the public outcry about the case of Dennis O'Neill, a 12 year old boy who died after brutal treatment by his foster carers. The Committee reported in 1946 and many of its recommendations were enacted in the

Children Act 1948. This established a children's committee and a children's officer in each local authority, giving it a lasting importance in the history of British child care legislation.

In her book on women's influence on British public life, Helen Jones (2014) argues that successive governments between 1914-50 ignored the expertise of social workers in shaping welfare policies and that social workers were themselves divided in their attempts to achieve influence. This makes Sybil Clement Brown's achievements seem all the more exceptional. However, her contribution was not always recognised in her lifetime. She described how in one job interview, she was asked if she had read the Curtis Report, leading her to reply she had been a member of the Committee (Clement Brown 1980-1981, p. 12). She was described by Clare Winnicott as 'imposing yet kindly' and this is the impression that emerges most from her interview.

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# Journal digest

## Jill Manthorpe and Stephen Martineau

Social work history journal highlights from 2014 (and thereabouts)

**Jones, R. (2014) 'The best of times, the worst of times: social work and its moment', *British Journal of Social Work*, 44(3): 485-502.**

This article by Ray Jones (Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education at Kingston University and St George's, University of London) first appeared online in 2012, but is now in hard copy as 2014. So it relates to events and debates a couple of years ago, but is still fresh and indeed controversial. In the article Jones considers social work over a 60 year period. Proposing that social work has manifested a highly contested identity in this time, he cites as evidence six fundamental internal debates, for example the tussle over the relative virtues of genericist and specialist social work. Jones argues that this has left the profession weak in the face of external trends and players, and he characterises the worst of times as a phase when social work's 'roles have come to be restricted to a focus on rationing and risk and on assessment rather than action'. But, on the other hand, social work's identity has been bolstered since 'social worker' became a protected title earlier this century, in what is now a graduate-entry, regulated, registered profession. Jones is clear that this has to be built on, that what he regards as social work's special characteristics (he isolates five 'golden threads') need to be protected and championed by an independent professional association, and indeed by social workers with a surer sense of what they themselves are about.

**McGregor, C. (2014, online) 'History as a resource for the future: A response to "Best of times, worst of times: social work and its moment"', *British Journal of Social Work*. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bct197**

For Caroline McGregor, of the School of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland Galway, what social workers are about, that is to say what constitutes '*the* continuous feature of social work that defines it' is the practitioner's 'expertise in "mediating the social" and balancing care and control'. Working out of a general approach to history informed by Foucault and a specific perspective on social work adumbrated by Mark Philp, among others, McGregor argues that social workers' regulatory function, their mediating between individuals and systems, is insufficiently acknowledged by Jones. This leads her to make some interesting remarks about how best to view social workers' role in risk management and their work in the face of a widely acknowledged problem of over-proceduralism. In a certain sense McGregor is arguing that the social worker is much more powerfully implicated in regulation and procedure, in organizational governance, than Jones allows.

This is a tale of two approaches to social work history, with their differences exhibited especially in their theoretical stance. Both articles, though, argue for the usefulness of history in the task of working out social work's future direction, the *raison d'être* of the Social Work History Network (SWHN). McGregor, in particular, in her 'what now?' section argues

for ‘the promotion of history not as an ‘add on’ contextual dimension, but as a core and central element that informs social work research, education and practice’. One of the works she commends as an object of study is Clement Attlee’s *The Social Worker*, discussed by Dave Burnham elsewhere in this issue.

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**D’Astous, V., Manthorpe, J., Lowton, K. & Glaser, K. (2014, online) ‘Retracing the historical social care context of autism: A narrative overview’, *British Journal of Social Work*. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcu131**

Another *BJSW* article by PhD student Val D’Astous and colleagues from King’s College London (Manthorpe included) tracks the history of social care and social work support for people with autism. One source of evidence was a small set of contributions from members of the SWHN for which we were very grateful. While we did not receive many replies to our calls for social workers’ recollections of their practice, it was useful to add personal experiences to the largely clinical and carer based literature. The other often neglected resource used in this review covers the origins of the influential carers / parents advocacy groups—surprising in being so recent.

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**Manthorpe, J. (2014, online) ‘The dement in the community: Social work practice with people with dementia revisited’, *Dementia*. doi:10.1177/1471301214554810**

Also from King’s is Jill Manthorpe’s article on the contribution of Muriel Bree to social work with people with ‘dementia’, a term applied to people who had incurable syphilis and who were being supported by Bree’s outreach work from the Mott Clinic. Jill used Bree’s

small report of her case work as a resource (serendipitously found in our Unit library) to identify commonalities and disparities in social work with people with dementia. There are also references to the role of social workers in a largely forgotten service; social work with people with neuro-syphilis has virtually disappeared in the UK (although there are still many cases in the developing world). This resembles other previous specialisms, such as social work with people with tuberculosis (see Burnham 2012, *The Social Worker Speaks*), for whom there were detailed plans for specialist services and village settlements prior to the Second World War and no indication that these would soon be deemed unnecessary. Jill wonders if these stigmatising conditions, with syphilis particularly morally stigmatising, may help in current understandings of the stigma underlying some people’s reactions to dementia. Interestingly, Bree did not report much direct experience of stigmatising experiences among her clients, but she was evidently aware of the likelihood of this and a few others are mentioned in her later interview with Alan Cohen (Bree 1980-1981, pp. 26-27). We think this is the first academic article to draw on the Cohen archives—readers may recall these were launched at King’s College London on 28 November 2013—although our colleague Jo Moriarty discussed them at the Joint Social Work Education Conference last year. See: Bree, M. (1980-1981) ‘Interview No. 5’, *Social Workers Speak Out: Interviews with Alan Cohen*. Edited by Tim Cook & Harry Marsh, Modern Records Centre, Coventry, University of Warwick.

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**Storø, J. (2015) 'From superintendence to transition and self-determination. Historic view on policies and practice towards Norwegian care-leavers', *Practice*, 27(1): 5-20.**

In his reading of policy and practice in relation to Norwegian care-leavers over the last 100 years, Jan Storø (Oslo and Akershus University College) discerns the care / control dynamic discussed in Caroline McGregor's article (above). In 1900 Norway implemented 'the first child welfare Act in the world'. This ensured, for example, that young people had money for clothes and travel on leaving care; a growing concern, though, about the poor quality of follow-up led to the development of what Storø terms the 'superintendence' of care-leavers—he characterises this as having to do with control and the protection of society. On the other hand, the best interests of the child came to the fore in 1950s legislation, Storø argues. A further major phase of legislation in the last decade of the twentieth century put policymakers in contention with the organization for young people in care (LFB, started in 1997), which argued for care-leavers' rights to services. Then again, in 2009, new regulations meant that, '[c]hild welfare services now had to state the reason why they did *not* provide after-care services to people over 18 years'. Storø wrote about the Norwegian picture in Mike Stein & Emily Munro's (Eds.) *Young People's Transitions from Care to Adulthood: International Research and Practice* (2008). Mike Stein spoke about the rights movement of young people in care in England (which started in the 1970s) at the February 2015 meeting of SWHN.

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**Goodey, C.F. (2015) 'Why study the history of learning disability?', *Tizard Learning Disability Review*, 20(1): 3-10.**

In this example of the history of concepts, written with a view to informing current practice, Christopher Goodey (University of Leicester) draws on his 2011 book, *A History of Intelligence and 'Intellectual Disability': The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe*, to throw light on the semantic instability of the term 'learning disability' over time.

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**Dahle, R. (2012) 'Social work: A history of gender and class in the profession', *ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, 12(3): 309-326. Open Access**

Finally comes an article by Rannveig Dahle (Oslo and Akershus University College) that explores gender and class in Norwegian social work. Taking a feminist and historical perspective, Dahle considers developments before the Second World War as well as subsequently. While social work in Norway celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 2010, Dahle suggests that there existed a school of social work pre-Second World War that is generally neglected. Her sources include government policy documents, annual reports, biographies, and conference reports. While this article was published in 2012, we have added it to this research note as it may be easy to miss, being in a non-traditional social work journal.

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# Book review

## Dave Burnham



Our book review re-examines classic texts. Here, Dave Burnham discusses *The Social Worker* by Clement Attlee (1920)

Although ascribed to him, Churchill never said ‘an empty taxi arrived at 10 Downing Street and Mr Attlee got out’. But the jibe plays into the reputation of Attlee’s unobtrusive style. He was a collegiate prime minister, using the strengths of his cabinet rather than grandstanding himself. This style was at the heart of the success of his administration, especially its ‘signature’ achievement, the establishment of a United Kingdom wide safety net of health and financial support for all.

From an affluent family, Attlee went to Haileybury School, his political and social commitment finding form as a young man through his work as a Poor Man’s Lawyer at Toynbee Hall. *The Social Worker* was published in 1920 and soon afterwards he became an MP. After that his public service was entirely political, possibly explaining why he is not celebrated today as a social worker. The book is an explanation of what social work is and who social workers are. It is a straightforward and easy read, carefully argued. What strikes a modern reader is the breathtaking scope he claims for the idea of

‘social work’. On one level this may seem paradoxical because he accepts that the term ‘Social Worker’ has traditionally referred to affluent volunteers (‘who dress in drab clothing and take their pleasures sadly’). On the other hand, paid workers, or those traditionally employed in such roles as ‘enquiry agents’ or ‘Relieving Officers’, he mostly refers to as ‘officials’. So for Attlee, William Beveridge is a ‘social worker’ for the investigative work he did which influenced the establishment of Labour Exchanges in 1909. The Webbs he regards as social workers. And as well as a long list of paid roles he includes as ‘social workers’ employers committed to the welfare of employees and counts Trades Union educational activity, the Co-operative movement, Friendly Society and Workers’ Educational Association work as social work. He claimed for social workers, among other things, roles as pioneers, investigators and agitators.



*Mayor Attlee of Stepney (right), with other East End mayors, walking to 10 Downing Street in 1920 in a protest against unemployment*

This seeming confusion is probably the result of the timing of the book. In 1920 Attlee claimed that, '[t]he local authority has...become the chief agency for the organisation of social work' (p. 87), because 'charity organisation has been tried and has failed' (p. 107). Attlee's determined confidence that the Ministry of Health Act would lead to the demise of the Poor Law, and that 'continuing education' would enable young working class people to enter citizenship was probably because he was writing in that brief time of optimism between the armistice and the economic downturn of the early 1920s. For his underpinning argument is that the war and enfranchisement of women and working men have changed everything, that 'in social service...we...emphasise the position of men and women as citizens'. He claimed the 'essence of social service is the desire to share with others advantages that they have not been able to attain' (p. 285) and suggests that all classes could contribute.

He details what he obviously sees as a crucial turning point for social work. For instance he says '...the COS [Charity Organisation Society] has come...to hold rather a minor place in social service' (p. 67) but the future for volunteers will be to 'seek... partnership in the undertakings of the local authority, supplementing the paid official with the personal service of the volunteer'. Attlee means two things here. First of all, by 1920 what we regard today as key local authority social work functions were all in place (admissions to care, neglect investigation and surveillance, after-care support visits, removal of lunatics and so on) and paid workers with such responsibilities used many volunteers, co-ordinating and directing them. This was a shift in the parity of esteem from before the

war in visiting charities in which paid workers worked at the behest of 'Social Workers' and were not trusted to 'take cases'. Attlee carefully argues that this post-war 'partnership' is necessary, while Elizabeth Macadam, his contemporary, referred to this sharing of responsibility as 'The New Philanthropy'. The second meaning is Attlee's call for volunteer social workers to carry out work of 'personal influence'. State financial provision for the old, the unemployed and so on had curbed the desperate poverty of the Edwardian era, shrinking the 'market' for visiting charities. This shift heralded, with the emergence of Psychiatric Social Workers and 'Family Casework', the change in the meaning of 'casework' from merely recording work in individual files to something more analytical and therapeutic—an idea which developed into the 'method' so celebrated by teachers of social workers into the 1950s and '60s.

Not only does this book capture an optimistic moment for social work, and arguably a crucial turning point, but its breadth and ambition is oddly invigorating, especially when you consider the 'idea' of social work today—a narrow set of state prescribed activities undertaken by a tightly prescribed and regulated bunch of people. Where are pioneering, investigation and agitation?

My only beef with *The Social Worker* is that he refers to South Lancashire, somewhat sniffily I thought, as 'hideous and befouled'.

*Dave Burnham's latest book, The Social Worker Speaks: A History of Social Workers through the Twentieth Century was published in 2012. Attlee's The Social Worker was reprinted by Forgotten Books in 2012.*

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