

Society for the Study of Labour History Bursary Report

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The bursary from the Society for the Study of Labour History provided me with the opportunity to visit the National Co-operative Archives in Manchester on the 10th and 11th January 2018. This allowed me to carry out research for my undergraduate dissertation: *More than just the 'fuddy-duddy Co-op'?: An analysis of the British Co-operative Movement in the 1960s*.

My trip to Holyoake House, the home of the National Co-operative Archives, was principally concerned with investigating official reports on the status of different Co-operative periodicals from the 1960s including *Home*, *Woman's Outlook* and *Co-operative Consumer*. My aim was to find circulation figures and other official records from for these publications from their publishers, in order to give an insight into the success of disseminating co-operative ideals to a wider demographic than merely staunch co-operators.

The Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) and Co-operative Press' board minutes did not frequently mention circulation figures of these smaller publications. However, I successfully found some pertaining to *Woman's Outlook* – a magazine dedicated to female co-operators belonging to the Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG). Even then, these only discussed the success of *Woman's Outlook* in relation to the number of CWS-produced goods they managed to sell through advertising pages of the publication. Although the sources that I found on the topic were from the late 1950s and early 1960s, they provided reasons why these magazines failed to maintain popularity later into the period. The higher echelons of the movement were preoccupied with each publication's economic viability, rather than the important social and political issues that they raised, including co-operative representation in parliament, as well as nuclear disarmament and abortion.

The research undertaken in January complemented earlier work that I had carried out, and allowed me to build a more in-depth picture of the state of the British Co-operative Movement in the period without solely relying on the work of other academics. The bursary has allowed me to establish my work as original within the domain of co-operative history, using periodicals to provide explanations for its economic decline whilst arguing that it maintained staunch ideals regarding politics and society.