

Dr. Ruth Cherrington

Project Title Finding Pleasure under Patriarchy: Women in Working Men's Clubs

This research will be of interest to:
Sociologists/social scientists and historians with an interest in working class leisure and communities
Those interested in gender and leisure
Cultural historians
Social geographers

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Keywords

- 1.
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- 3.

A consideration of the history and development of working men's clubs since the 19th century with a focus on their place in and contributions to local communities. Includes a case study of the establishment of clubs on new, out of town estates in Coventry. The gender theme is one aspect of this work.

Research Methods

This work is based on archive research- local Coventry documents plus the Club and Institute documents and journals going back over 100 years
Interviews with clubs members and officials, past and present, from different generations, have been conducted and several more planned.
Retrospective auto-ethnography based on the researcher's own life time involvement with clubs
Ongoing ethnography and participant observation in clubs and a Coventry local community

Key Findings/Ideas

- **Clubs were central to many local communities across the country, being about more than just 'beer and bingo'**
- **Clubs played important social and welfare roles**
- **The club movement was patriarchal and resisted moves towards equality yet women found a place and space for pleasure**
- **Post-War Coventry council were pro-clubs and assisted the establishment of clubs on new estates**
- **These clubs were often at the centre of local communities**
- **The club movement is now in decline having been negatively affected by social and cultural change, the loss of manufacturing industries plus over-burdening legislation**
- **Recent moves have brought about more equality for women but at a time when many clubs are closing**