

A Caring County? Social welfare in Hertfordshire from 1600

Social welfare in Hertfordshire from 1600

A CARING COUNTY?



Edited by Steve King & Gillian Gear

This comparative study gathers together new research by local historians into aspects of welfare in Hertfordshire spanning four centuries and focusing on towns and villages across the county, including Ashwell, Cheshunt, Hertford, Pirton and Royston, amongst many others. In so doing it makes a valuable contribution to the current debate about the spatial and chronological variation in the character of welfare regimes within single counties, let alone more widely.

As well as viewing poor relief geographically and chronologically, the book also considers the treatment of particular groups such as the aged, the mad, children and the unemployed and shows how, within the constraints of the relevant welfare laws, each group was dealt with differently, giving a more nuanced picture than has perhaps been the case previously.

The over-arching question that the book attempts to answer is how effectively Hertfordshire cared for those in need. With chapters on madhouses, workhouses, certified industrial schools, the Foundling Hospital, pensions and medical care, the book covers a very broad range of topics through which a

complex picture emerges. Whilst some officials seem to have been driven by a relatively narrow sense of their obligations to the poor and vulnerable, others appear to have tailored welfare packages to their precise needs. Naturally self-interest played a part: if the weakest citizens were well-managed, vagrancy might be lessened, the spread of disease contained and, perhaps above all, control maintained over the cost of looking after the poor and sick. It seems that Hertfordshire was relatively nimble and sensitive in discovering and treating its people's needs. Evidence is beginning to emerge, in other words, that Hertfordshire was in essence a 'caring county'.

Prof. Steven King is Director of the University of Leicester Centre for Medical Humanities. He is a co-editor of *Poverty and Sickness in Modern Europe: Narratives of the Sick Poor* (2012) and edits the journal *Family and Community History*.

Dr Gillian Gear completed her PhD at the University of London in 1999 on the subject of Certified Industrial Schools. She is co-editor of *Herts Past and Present* and also the archivist for Barnet Museum.

Buy your copy online at www.herts.ac.uk/UHPress or return the completed order form below

Please supply:

A Caring County?: Social Welfare in Hertfordshire from 1600

edited by Steven King and Gillian Gear
UH Press ISBN 9781909291126, paperback, 368pp
November 2013
£16.99 / US\$33.95

(+p&p UK £2.75, Europe £5.00, rest of world £8.00)

Payment method:

- Cheque enclosed (payable to **University of Hertfordshire**)
- Credit card Type: _____
- Number: _____
- Expiry date: _____ Issue no: ____ 3-digit security code: _____

Please invoice - institutional orders only

Please tick this box if you are happy to receive further information from UH Press.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel. _____

Email _____

Send to:

Gill Cook, Information Hertfordshire
University of Hertfordshire Press
College Lane, Hatfield
AL10 9AB, UK

Tel: 01707 284654

Fax: 01707 284666

Email: UHPress@herts.ac.uk

Web: <http://www.herts.ac.uk/UHPress>

Find the ebook in Kindle, ePub & PDF editions at most major online retailers