

Call for Papers: The History of Work

Summer Conference 14-16 July 2004, University of London, Senate House.

The theme of the July 2004 conference will be the history of paid work in Britain during the last century. Work has attracted widespread interest in recent years in a wide range of research programmes, monographs and seminars. These have often been preoccupied with assumed changes over time in the experience of work, such as: the end of the 'job for life'; the decline of manual labour; the lengthening of working hours; increasing 'work-life' balance problems. Yet the reality, or otherwise, of these assumptions is rarely subjected to historical scrutiny and the work of historians in this field is fragmented and diffuse. This conference aims to bring together those interested in the past and present of work to look at what has and has not changed over the past century.

The history of paid work covers a wide range of topics, including: the evolution of workplaces and technological change; skills and training; health and safety; labour processes; regulation and labour market institutions; the gender division of labour; trade unions and employer associations; unemployment and labour market legislation; wages and working hours; labour migration; occupational class and status divisions at work; the impact of war on work; the management of work and the evolution of working practices.

We welcome offers of papers from all disciplinary perspectives on such topics as:

- The changing importance of skilled manual work through technological change and industrial restructuring.
- The changing organisation of paid work in different industries, such as mining, engineering, shipbuilding and textiles.
- Agricultural/rural work.
- The role of women in the paid labour force.
- The rise of white-collar and professional staff work.
- Low-paid work in the service sector.
- Relations between the state and work both through legislation and the growth of the public sector.
- Reform of industrial training and its relationship with labour supply and productivity.
- The management, and the managers, of paid work.
- The roles of trade unions and employer associations.
- Status divisions in Britain's world of work.
- The impact of war on the workplace and employment relations.
- Occupational (ill-) health and health and safety legislation.
- Immigrant labour.
- A voluntarist or regulatory approach to employment issues?
- The rise and fall of the 'culture of labour'.
- Representations of work in literature, art, film and TV.

The conference will consist of plenary sessions on broad themes concerning the history of paid work, plus a range of shorter papers (c. 20 minutes) on specific aspects of the topic. There will be presentations of television documentaries and films on the theme of work.

Offers of papers should be sent by **January 9 2004** to Virginia Preston, Centre for Contemporary British History, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, Senate House, London WC1E 7HU, virginia.preston@sas.ac.uk. They should preferably be sent by email attachment.