

### PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

It appears from all we observe and read that in modern society, there are a number of strains placed on the family unit and that they are alarming. It is probably the woman who is most affected by them.

The causes are roughly a) the complexity of the work situation which involves more mobility than previously.

b) the trend for work to be separated from home by its distance involving many hours away during the day and even at night. Also it may be too complicated for any but colleagues to discuss and understand<sup>1</sup>

b) ~~the improved role of women who are now given more rights and often receive~~ the tendency for women to receive similar education to men which they are unable to use during the years that they are housebound and may cause a great deal of frustration. Misc. difficulties connected with emancipation.

c) the emphasis on material possessions which must leave many disappointed people.

d) the tendency for families of similar backgrounds and age group to live on housing estates, isolated from the town. This makes pressure on people to conform to a pattern and often where there is a lack of facilities causes loneliness.

After the struggles to improve society so that people would be happier if a more comfortable existence does not improve people's enjoyment of life and leisure does not enable people to grow it is serious. Also if people are ~~getting~~ going to suffer more from mental illness

After the struggles to improve man's <sup>better</sup> lot in society, it is unfortunate that improved material conditions and health, have not enabled the majority of people to lead fuller lives than before. I would like to find out if this is as serious a problem as it seems and if so which problems are the most dominant ones.

Although it would be beyond the scope of the survey to do anything to remedy the difficulties, I would like to discuss possibilities. If the findings are in any way outstanding I hope that ~~these will be of use to others~~ ~~that some time they will be of use to others~~

I would like to be reassured that we will not become too like America!

## Aims of Survey.

To discover the extent of isolation and loneliness amongst housewives with young children on some Hertford housing estates: whether this is temperamentally or environmentally produced; and to suggest how the condition, if it exists, might be alleviated.

## Aims of the Husband/Wife Partnership Survey.

As constructed so far the survey concentrates upon the wife's role in a changing society of which some of the new characteristics are:—

- a. greater mobility, which may result in the husband & wife uprooting themselves from their families & lifelong friends & so
- b. resettling upon estates with neighbours more or less homogeneous in income group & perhaps equally isolated from kin
- c. commuting and/or husband's absence on business trips which may leave the wife without adult companionship for long periods
- d. a new ideal of equality in partnership between husband & wife (widely publicised in women's magazines). There may be a great gulf between the ideal & presumed norm of equal sharing of privileges, responsibilities & labour, & what is actually practised in the marriage.
- e. Family planning so that the wife with only one small child, or children all at school, has not enough essential work to occupy her time.

The questions are intended to discover how true is the picture of the commuter wife, isolated with her small children, far from her family, unable

to make friends in the new community housebound because of the children, equally prevented by baby sitter problems from enjoying a evening out with her husband, saddled with more than her share of household decisions & responsibilities.

~~Conversely, where the husband~~ It has been suggested that in this situation the marriage is subjected to new strains, as each partner is forced to look to the other for social satisfactions they would otherwise have found in their families & lifelong friends.

The incidence of mental illness amongst middle aged housewives indicates the strains affecting them. The survey attempts to discover what opportunities there are for social contact, & whether lack of such contact is due to lack of opportunity or whether the interviewee does not seek it. It could investigate how far education can improve a woman's capacity to accept these strains. Is the new "equality for women" really accepted in practise by husbands, and of course wives? Some wives may not want to be "equal". Are the traditional roles of husband & wife really outdated?

## Some Aspects of Husband/Wife Relationship

### Balance of Power.

1. Would you, or your husband, or both of you jointly make decisions about
  - a) children's upbringing
  - b) large purchases e.g. washing machine, carpet
  - c) changing jobs
  - d) moving house
2. Do you consider women should have equal pay for equal work?
3. Which of these jobs do you regard as specifically the wife's, the husband's, the children's, or to be shared by everyone.
  - a) gardening
  - b) washing up
  - c) tidying own room + possessions
  - d) putting baby to bed
  - e) shopping
4. If you & your husband both wish to go out on the same evening (but separately) who is responsible for finding baby sitter?

It would be interesting to know, ~~though I doubt~~ who decided how many children they could afford, or wanted, and also, perhaps easier to discover, whether the children's <sup>upbringing is</sup> ~~are~~ regarded as a joint responsibility or solely the wife's.

## Degree of Isolation

1. How frequently do you see any member of your own family. (Husband & wife separately)
2. Do you have any help in the house  
paid  
unpaid from relatives eg. mother  
[unpaid from husband & children]
3. If there are children under 5  
Are there any nursery schools / playgroups in your area?  
Are these children nearby of the same age that he/she plays with?  
If no, do you feel the lack of them?
4. Do you & your neighbours help each other with  
evening baby sitting  
minding children by day  
shopping  
doing needlework together  
other (specify)

## Some Aspects of Husband/Wife Relationship

Degree of satisfaction found by wife in her role.

1. What minor matters irritate you most?
2. What do you dislike most about housework (keeping house)?
3. Do you think that what you did at school was of any help to you now
  - a) in the housework
  - b) in your spare time occupations?
4. Do you think your children will have a better start in life than you had?
5. Do you think your children take up
  - a) Too much of your time
  - b) too little of your time
  - c) about what you would expect.

[I know I lifted this from the Stevenage questionnaire but I think it could be very revealing]

6. Do you think T.V. is a great advantage in a home where there are children?

- OR How old do you think your youngest child will be when you start work again
7. How soon would you wish to start work again after having ~~a~~ <sup>your</sup> children
    - a) 1 year
    - b) 5 years
    - c) 11 years
    - d) Never

8. What do you think is the size  
of the ideal family?

CONFIDENTIAL

No.../...

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE BOARD OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

Survey of the Wife in the Family 1964/5

1. At what date did you arrive in this house? In 19.. Month.....  
Comment..... Reasons for moving.....

And where were you living before? Attitudes to neighbourhood.  
On the same estate since.....  
In same town since.....  
In other town (specify) since.....  
(If you have moved house within the estate or town state where you were living before that i.e. fill up two spaces)  
Comment..... Attitudes to the problem of moving.....

2. Would you please give details of your household in the table below:

* <u>DETAIL</u> <u>ESSENTIAL</u>	Date of Marriage	Date of Birth	Occupation of wife & husband & type of school or college attended by children or occupation if left school	Age of leaving Full-time education
Wife	24-6-60	2-1-39	Short hand typist pre M. Now part time dentist's receptionist	16
Husband	"	4-9-33	Printers compositor at Stephen Austins Hertford	16
Children 1	M/F	21-5-61	Nursery School	
in order of birth	2 M/F	4-5-63	NAI	
	3 M/F			
	4 M/F			
	5 M/F			

Note It is most important to record full details of wife's occupation before marriage and also now (if any). It is NOT sufficient to record 'engineer' or 'representative' for husband's occupation. Please also include husband's place of work. For children's school specify e.g. State Primary, Private Convent etc. Record also the age at which each member left or is expected to leave FULL-TIME education.

Comments (Note here any others who share the same eating arrangements, giving exact relationship to your family, e.g. wife's mother, etc.)

Do you have car(s) in the household?..... How many? .....  
Are you, the wife, able to drive yourself during the day? .....  
How long, on average, does it take your husband to get to work? .....  
..... and how does he travel?.....

3. How many people, within easy walking distance, do you call on for help - such as bringing things from the shops for you, or looking after your children for an hour ..... Are any of these relatives?.... Did you meet these people (other than relatives)

*No alternatives*

Comment

*omit kin*

1. Over the garden fence.....
2. Out shopping.....
3. At a club (specify).....
4. Through children.....
5. By an introduction (specify).....
6. Other (specify).....

Which of the following people do you entertain in your house?

Hand Card ONE

*meaning?*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

*Index 7  
gregariousness*

(of which  
real friends)  
*Couples or individuals?*

And how many of all these people would you call real friends and in which groups do they fall?

Comment.....  
.....

Would you like to make some further comments on making friends in your area?

Interviewer prompt: Do some people keep themselves very much to themselves? Are some women likely to be lonely during the day? What do you consider to be ideal qualities in a neighbour? And similarly for a real friend. What do you think is the ideal balance between neighbours/acquaintances/friends? Would you like to say a little more about your relations with kin?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

1. Once a week or more
2. Between one and four times a month
3. About once a month
4. Very rarely


And where would you be likely to go?.....  
 .....  
 .....

1. Children and/or baby sitting problems
2. Money
3. Transport
4. Other commitments


Comment - including effect of TV (if any).....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Rarely ☐, Quite often ☐, Every day ☐ ?

Would you like to talk more ☐, less ☐, or about the same ☐ ?

Always ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom ☐ Never ☐ ?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Precise occupation.....Industry.....

Precise occupation.....Industry.....

[illegible]

Under what circumstances will you be prepared to do  
an interesting full time job?

- 4 -

No..../....

5. If you had the chance of doing a well paid and interesting full-time job, how readily would you pay someone to do the following tasks?  
(If wife is working now, amend accordingly)

Not effective

Hand Card TWO

	Very willingly	Willingly	Don't mind	Reluctantly	Never
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

6. How much do you see your home in the following ways?

Hand Card THREE

	Very Definitely	To a certain extent	Hardly at all	Definitely not
1				
2	Place to eat & sleep too ambiguous			
3				
4				
5				
6				

7. (Ask only if children still in full-time education)  
When all your children have grown up how much do you look forward to the following?

Hand Card FOUR

	Very Much	Mildly	Don't mind	Don't look forward
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7	I don't know			

Comment.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. If, after some domestic upheaval (e.g. someone being ill) your time has become limited, how important to you would be the following?

Hand Card FIVE

	Very important	Important	Don't mind	Will likely neglect
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Comment.....  
.....  
.....

9. How important do you think it would be for a daughter of yours to have.....

Hand Card SIX

	Essential	Very important	Important	Don't mind	Not important
1					
2					
3	"wealth"	suspicion of this			
4					
5					
6	Separate	steady income & nice home		from 'kind husband'	
7	Or what	else do you think	wd. be	important?	

Comment..... (eg. 'freedom to be herself'.)  
.....

10. (If Husband is now under 40) When your husband is about 50 How much would you hope he is ....

Good question

Hand Card SEVEN

	Hope very much	Hope mildly	Don't mind	Don't want
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Or what else do you hope he will have achieved?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. If your husband's income was suddenly almost doubled -  
How seriously would you consider .....

Hand Card EIGHT

*Worked Surprisingly well*

N.B. Remind respondent that it would be impossible to do all the things listed and the need for choice should be reflected in the answers (e.g. if present house is too small and a move is urgent this would no doubt take the immediate money and so a new car, say, would be unrealistic)

*Nuts close supervision*

	Consider seriously	Consider less important	Disregard	*
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

\* After all answers have been completed by the wife CHECK whether, in fact, the greater part of the individual decisions would rest with the husband and if so tick end column.

12. If you suddenly became a widow, how would you feel about these.....

Hand Card NINE

*Varied immensely. Maybe shows independence*

	Appalled	Very troubled	Troubled	Don't mind
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

*Not so revealing as to be worth retaining.*

Have you in fact considered what you would do if you became a widow?

.....  
Comment.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13. If your husband wanted to change his job under the following conditions, how would you feel?

Hand Card TEN

	Encourage	Don't mind	Discourage	*
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				

Re-phrase for  
further use.

\* After respondent has answered, check whether wife would attempt to change husband's mind if he was reluctant to move under the same conditions and tick in the end column.

Comment - Including what the respondent would particularly object to when considering a move by her husband. (Prompt for such things as dirtier work, work with the opposite sex, physical danger, excessive travel (define), staying away from home over-night, monotonous work, nervous strain etc. but all with substantial increase in income)

.....if he had private means to live on  
.....would he in fact stay at home?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Would you, in fact, expect him to consult you before changing his job?  
.....  
.....

What do you think is the main purpose of your husband's job?  
(Let wife interpret question in her own way and then prompt -  
purpose for him and purpose for you) .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

14. In what do you find your chief sense of confidence and security?  
(Prompt: own home, parents, religion, children and husband,  
education, husband's job and so on)

..... *Best not to prompt unless obliged to* .....

15. How much do you feel that you have the same attitudes to life as  
your husband? e.g. do you both go to church or political meetings?  
Do you feel it is important to have a 'faith' or basic ideas in  
common?

..... *No good* .....

16. Do you feel that sex should be more than just a means of creating  
children? ..... (If Yes) Do you consider that in your relationship  
with your husband that sex is *No good*.

Overrated ☐, Underrated ☐, A source of satisfaction for both ☐  
Comment .....

Since the birth of your children has sex with your husband become

More meaningful ☐, less meaningful ☐, same as before ☐ ?

Comment .....

Do you think that in the next 10 years or so sex will play a bigger

part in your life ☐, become less important to you ☐,

remain the same ☐ ? .....

17. Would you consider going to friends, relatives, neighbours or  
outside voluntary/official organisations for help or advice in  
your family or marriage? (Specify which and past experience,  
if any)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Questionnaire amendments.

Question 3 - Do you know your father's occupation at your present age.

As above for husband's father's occupation.

Where does your husband work?

What time does he leave home in mornings :

and return at night :

If monetary problems were <sup>relieved</sup> ~~sorted~~, would he continue in the same work?

Question 4(B) -

Do you feel that you have made a great sacrifice in leaving work to look after children?

Do you feel that you have made any other sacrifices and for what?

Question 5 -

Would you see your wife as a similar character to your mother?

Question 6 - WIFE

✓ Do you see eye to eye with your husband about discipline  
a) always b) <sup>usually</sup> frequently c) seldom d) never.

✗ Do you feel that the children are essentially your responsibility, or shared with husband?

✗ Did you ~~feel~~ wish your husband had taken more interest in your pregnancy

In a crisis or problem concerned with the children, would you turn first to a) husband b) mother c) child-rearing books d) sisters e) friends.

## HUSBAND

Should your wife be ill, would you feel able to look after baby/child a) cheerfully b) with careful directions left by your wife c) apprehensively d) not at all.

Do you <sup>ever</sup> feel <sup>responsibility for</sup> ~~the~~ feeding, changing and bathing ~~are~~ ~~essentially a wife's duty~~? Would you distinguish between baby and child in this respect?

Would you consider being present at own child's birth <sup>if possible</sup> ~~and under~~ ~~such conditions~~?

## Question 7 - HUSBAND

What do you like to do immediately on returning from work?

BOTH responsible for -

~~What~~ is ~~the~~ budgeting ~~of money~~ done?

Wife | Husband

House keeping

Clothes - personal

- Savings

- Rent or mortgage.

- <sup>Big</sup> household bills - H.P. etc.

- Children's pocket money.

Are the dividing lines very rigid?

Is your evening meal eaten before or after the children have gone to bed?

WIFE Have you bought any books on child-rearing

Do you take any magazines regularly (or husband).

a) Weekly b) Monthly c) Related to occupations or hobbies

d) Glasses - fashion etc. e) Housekeeping or housewifely

f) Bringing up children

Explain?

?

How did you spend last: Friday evening?

Saturday evening?

Sunday?

If I could

~~Is anything prevent you from going further?~~

Could you have liked to go further afield but were prevented from doing so by a) children and/or baby sitters b) money c) transport.

What would you say was your <sup>most pressing</sup> ~~main~~ problem at the moment

a) Money b) children c) personal ambitions.

If such a problem were solved, would you then be happy.

Which <sup>time of your adult life -</sup> ~~year~~ would you look back on as being the happiest so far. (Before or after birth of children) - This is referring to years of courtship as well as of marriage.

Sally there are so swappers, Ray - am writing them out under some pressure from kids!

Yvonne.

As far as my own personal interests are concerned I would second what Mary said about concentrating on possible difficulties with a wife's frustrations in the home, efforts at equality, inability to adjust to a role in her home and community which in our society today is not set out clearly. The more I think about it, the more I feel that things are going to get worse and worse for a woman educated to the same extent as her husband. Apart from outside pressures (magazine stories, advertisements etc.) which plug love and subsequent marriage, there's no doubt that practically all women are geared physically and psychologically towards child-bearing. The abstract role is clear, but not its practical implications and difficulties - the fact that after years of contact with both sexes, first in school, then in college, where her intellect is respected without any sex barrier, she is deposited neatly and in a completely impractical frame of mind into a vacuum called a home. I can't myself see any solution, short of civilization starting all over again. For instance, in my own case I would not change my role as a mother for anything, and I should say that having babies and guiding them with, I hope, understanding through their first years satisfied 75% of my personality make-up. But it still leaves 25% that's ~~still~~ aching for recognition that as far as I can see is its right, and that resents always getting up at night with teething children. It's bound to put an added strain on a marriage, when conversation and interchange between wife and husband becomes high pressure and essential for the wife's sanity rather than spontaneous, flexible and subject to mood. There have been times when I've felt so much to talk about when we get to bed that the effort to release one's mind in order to make

love is impossible. It seems to me to be a ridiculous situation, but don't get the idea that this is an anti-man and anti-husband attitude. As far as I can see it's completely the fault of our society which educates men and women together and yet in all other respects does its best to emphasise superficial (and non-existent) sexual characteristics. I can't really agree with Alison that it's a basic inferiority complex on the part of men - I'm sure it goes much deeper than that. It still remains a fact that I can think of only one great woman painter, and even she is not known by the layman. Everything seems to point towards the fact that a woman's creative rôle is channelled completely into child-bearing, and yet I know this to be untrue in my own case. It must be a crucial point in any marriage.

Is it possible to move our questionnaire in this direction - to find out just how much dissatisfaction there is amongst wives on, say, Bengo estate?

It's generally regarded that the dumb-blonde image is not all that favourable as a prospective marriage partner, and I'm sure that a great many more men marry their wives for their common interests than for their finesse in dusting. And yet the married state in our society dictates that in practice it is considered quite a crime to the community if a wife neglects her home to go to evening classes, and considered a man's right to have his meal prepared and waiting for him when he walks through the door after a 'hard day at the office'.

Our questionnaire seems to have moved inevitably in this direction, and personally I'm very happy about it. Actually, there are many other aspects of our society which I should be equally, if not more happy to probe, and I think that perhaps I am overestimating this set of problems, since one would think that the power to overcome them lies in the hands of those experiencing them (and their

husbands!). The main point is that the time has come when all but the most basic sexual roles of men and women are interchangeable. And yet men and women refuse to accept this. Do you think? (I'm sure this is an aspect why there's so much concentration on 'things' and looking after them - not so much for their own value, as as a symbol of women's indistinguishability with her house and home and the business of regarding people as outcasts if their ways dont conform with those of all the other housebound wives in the estate). There's such a complete lack of distinguishable sex in our society, so much so that for our sexual personality we have to fall back on the cliches of woman in the home rearing children, man out in the big world providing the food for any recognition of each's sex. The superficial idea of sex which is propagated in all mass media is such that the women who have succeeded in using their definite qualities effectively are considered in general to be 'unfeminine' and yet it would be interesting to know if this was the opinion of their respective husbands - I'm positive it would not be so. Sexuality surely lies nearer personality (if it weren't a gimmick) than perfumery, deodorants and topless dresses (not that any of these aren't very welcome, even if it's only to represent an effort made by one person to attract another). It's only when one is frowned upon, literally, for asking innocently at the Bookworm for the Kama Sutra, and innocently taking a 6-month baby girl out on a scorching hot day with no clothes or nappy on. I feel I'm rambling off the point of the questionnaire a bit, but do you feel this would fit in at all? And if so, do you feel that it is even important enough? Or is there evidence of this sort already? And, finally, does it get us anywhere? After writing out all this I'm inclined to feel that

individuals could take some of the responsibility and that difficulties imposed by society can in a large extent be resolved by individuals.

If we were all agreed on something similar to what I suggest (I haven't spoken to anyone else about it, so I must stress this is only my personal preference and I'll accept happily anything the group as a whole would like), it would be best to cut out the page on employment. However, the question about what one would like to do in the future (I don't remember the exact phrasing) would be relevant. What about a question on interests which a couple shared before marriage, and on whether these are still shared with equal enthusiasm (and whether equal respect is shown to the other's opinions on the subject).

Ken has just read through what I've written so far, and he doesn't really agree with me about the superficiality of our sex 'images' (I'm sorry I keep writing about the old cliches of 'images' and 'roles' but I really can't think of other words to fit). He argues that in all societies one finds adornments of some sort to add to the attractions of one sex for the other. He doesn't seem to think we've gone much further. I do. I feel that in our society there is so little conception of basic sexuality, and such lack of knowledge of or confidence in one's own sex, that it has to be supplemented in order to have any effect. And with our culture centred round courtship then marriage (and not the other way around as in some societies) it all adds to the disillusionment that I'm sure many couples find after marriage, when each is confronted by the other 'in the raw' so to speak.

Ken also feels I'm using you as my private psychiatrist. You'll just have to take my word for it that I'm not. It has stemmed from the way the questionnaire was going <sup>and not the other way round</sup> and I realise that because I've just been writing this down without any sorting out I've got the two points of a)

equality and b) sexuality muddled up a bit. I do feel that they are connected, of course, but if I'd thought about it a bit more before writing, I could have classified it with regard to the questionnaire.