Calculation and Compassion:

Caring for the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Battersea

Submitted by Jane Saul, to the University of Exeter

as a dissertation for the degree of

Masters by Research in History,

April 2022

This dissertation is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the dissertation may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and that any material that has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University has been acknowledged.

Signature: 

Abstract

Most studies of poor relief in the South-East of England under the old poor law have concentrated on either rural agrarian areas or on London. This dissertation focuses on the experience of Battersea, a semi-rural parish in the London hinterland. Battersea's predominantly rural economy and its Thames-side location, only a few miles from the centre of the metropolis, gave it certain distinctive features.

Throughout the late 1770s and 1780s the vestry provided both indoor and outdoor relief to the poor of the parish, but the workhouse remained the central feature of the relief on offer. In Battersea, as elsewhere, the period saw an increased demand for poor relief, which was reflected in the rising number of inmates in the workhouse. This dissertation examines the nature and extent of poverty in the parish, the response to it of the parish authorities and the generosity of the relief which they offered. At the heart of the parish's provision lay the workhouse; and its operation, day-to-day regime and material culture are examined in some detail.

Above all, the dissertation seeks to demonstrate that Battersea's geographical position determined both the type of poverty found in the parish and the response of the vestry to it. The biographies of active vestry members are examined and it is demonstrated that their interests and networks of contacts were instrumental in shaping their attitude to poor relief. These networks extended far beyond the parish boundaries and were formed through their business, professional and charitable interests, and through their involvement in other aspects of local government.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Illustrations

Acknowledgements

During the course of writing this thesis I have incurred numerous debts of gratitude. Many people have answered my questions and generously shared their knowledge with me.

Three people, however, deserve particular thanks. The first of these is my supervisor, Henry French, without the benefit of whose expertise and guidance I could not have written this thesis. Secondly, I owe an enormous amount to Christopher Whittick, who has answered my endless questions about documents with unfailing patience. My greatest debt is to my husband, Nigel, who encouraged me to embark on this venture and who has given me unfailing support. He now knows more about the poor than he would ever have imagined. Thanks are also due to Dominic and Louise who have encouraged their mother's interests.

The staff at Essex Record Office, London Metropolitan Archives and Surrey History Centre have all assisted with this research. In particular Emma Anthony and her staff at Wandsworth Heritage Service have provided a service over and above that which any archive user has a right to expect.

Jane Saul, Egham

Abbreviations

BP	Battersea Parish
ERO	Essex Record Office
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
TNA	The National Archives
WHS	Wandsworth Heritage Service

1. Introduction

Lying as it does, some three and a half miles south-west of Charing Cross, the parish of Battersea affords a rare opportunity to examine the nature of poor relief in the late eighteenth century through the lens of a ‘suburban’ London parish. The years covered by this study, 1778-85, encompassed a period which saw a significant rise nationally in the cost of poor relief. Battersea, at this time, was a largely rural parish, which lay in the ‘London hinterland’. Previous local studies have tended to focus on either urban or rural locations, and an empirical survey of a ‘suburban’ location will offer a different perspective.

Much recent debate has focused on which groups of people received relief in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and how patterns of spending on poor relief were changing. The extent of poverty in Battersea and the vestry’s response to it will feed into this debate. The nature and depth of poverty in the parish was in part determined by the parish’s geographical location and the fluid local labour market. Where the sources allow, this study will identify who the recipients of relief were and how their needs were met by the parish. It will also examine who administered relief, and the patterns of spending which they adopted. Battersea’s position poised between the metropolis and the countryside influenced the support which the poor were able to access, and the study will exploit the sources to explore their experience of poverty and how generous the relief on offer was.

It is clear from the surviving primary sources that the workhouse played a central role in the delivery of poor relief in Battersea at this time. Its continued

success and dominant role are significant at an important period in the development of the poor relief system. The day to day operation of the workhouse and the regime which operated there will be evaluated, both in comparison with nearby parochial workhouses and in the context of more widespread contemporary debates about indoor relief versus outdoor relief. The detailed workhouse accounts and parallel committee minutes give an insight into the inmates' daily lives which can be compared with what we know of life in the workhouse elsewhere in the country.

The composition of the vestry, and the identity of those vestry members who took an active role in administration, were central to the type of relief on offer. This study considers the background, interests and connections of these men in some detail, and shows how these factors influenced decisions about the allocation and nature of relief in the parish. An examination of the connections of the more active members of the vestry allows their decisions regarding poor relief to be set within a wider context of policy formation. It will be shown that many of them operated in a larger arena than the Battersea vestry alone and that many of these external ties were a reflection of the 'suburban' nature of the parish in which they lived and operated.

Battersea's position in the 'London hinterland', a previously under-researched geographical area in terms of poor relief, invested it with it certain marked features. The survival of a rich and largely untapped archive covering a period which saw an upsurge in the demand for poor relief both locally and nationally offers the chance to make a distinctive contribution to the study of poor relief in the late eighteenth century.

2. Historiography

The historiography covering poverty and the poor law in this period is both well established and wide ranging in scope. In the expansion of scholarly historical research in the last fifty years or so, four main lines of investigation have been pursued. These are studies of the administration of poor relief; its institutions; its economic impact and the experience of the poor themselves. In parallel with these broad themes, a focus has emerged on regional differences of policy and more recently on localised parish studies. Within these areas of study attention has also focused on the gendered and life-cycle aspects of poverty. A detailed study of poor relief in Battersea fits into these recent trends, but Battersea's location at the intersection of rural Surrey with the metropolis gives it some unusual features which will be examined later.

Economic historians have focused primarily on the impact of subsidies in a rural economy in which unemployment was high and wages depressed, a particular feature of areas where wheat growing predominated.[1] The use of child allowances in addition to wage subsidies has also attracted scrutiny.[2] Although the revisionist work of Blaug and Baugh is now half a century old, the importance and timing of wage subsidies and child allowances in the wider package of poor relief is still a matter of debate and local studies are throwing further light on how they were used by vestries. More recently, Samantha

[1] Mark Blaug, 'The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New', *Journal of Economic History,* 23 (2) (1963), 151-84; Mark Blaug, 'The Poor Law Report Reexamined',*Journal of Economic History,* 24 (2) (1964), 229-245; D.A. Baugh, 'The Cost of Poor Relief in South-East England,1790-1834', *Economic History Review,* 28 (1) (1975), 50-68.

[2] Thomas Sokoll, 'Families, Wheat Prices and the Allowance Cycle: Poverty and Poor Relief in the Agricultural Community of Ardleigh 1794-1801', in *Obligation, Entitlement and Dispute under the English Poor Laws* ed. Peter Jones and Steven King (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015),pp.78-106.

Williams has considered the prevalence or otherwise of the allowance systems in Bedfordshire and has demonstrated that these were a short-term response to high prices. Moreover, as she makes clear, the increase in spending on poor relief had already begun in the late 1770s and 1780s.[3] The rural economy in Battersea was different from that of the major wheat growing areas, and consequently if any use was made of subsidies and allowances there it is likely to present a very different pattern to that prevailing in the areas studied previously.

A complementary and parallel approach to the problem has been taken by historians who have examined the relationship between central and local government in the implementation and administration of the old poor law. Notable work has been done in this area by both David Eastwood and Joanna Innes. Eastwood, writing in the 1990s, has argued that the vestry enfranchised ratepayers, with a group of substantial ratepayers, often major local employers, becoming the governing elite of the parish and exhibiting oligarchical tendencies. The vestry also offered the opportunity for men of modest means to aspire to public life with local offices often shared out in rotation amongst a limited group of ratepayers, leading to a sharp demarcation between the class of office holders and the lesser ratepayers and the poor.[4] At the same time, however, Eastwood has argued that the ability of parishioners to appeal to the magistrates about the level of rates to be raised and type of relief to be granted tended to limit the independence of the parish as an unit of administration, allowing magistrates to develop a role as an interface between central government and the county elite and the parish. Magistrates were able to urge

[3] Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law 1760-1834* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), p.63.
[4] David Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces 1700-1870* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997).

common policies on the parishes, and the Quarter Sessions thus acted as an important forum for developing and exchanging policy.[5] Much of the research underpinning Eastwood's argument is drawn from agrarian counties such as Oxfordshire with a traditional social structure. In the light of Eastwood's arguments, the role and influence of the magistrates within the rather different economic and social structure which prevailed in Battersea will repay further investigation. It seems that there may not have been such a clear cut demarcation between the social groups which comprised the Battersea vestry as was often to be found elsewhere. Furthermore, although the vestry and the local JPs operated within the structure of local government which covered the whole county of Surrey, many of the influences felt within the parish came from the metropolis.

Like Eastwood, Joanna Innes has examined the links between central and local government, and has shown how JPs spurred the parishes into implementing legislation, and how the localities in turn influenced the development of policy through their Members of Parliament. Meanwhile alongside these processes of interaction judges and lawyers developed a body of explanatory case law. In examining the operation of these links Innes has demonstrated the inclusive nature of policy making.[6] More recently Samantha Shave has picked up the theme of links between central and local government and the transfer and sharing of policy initiatives. She discusses the recent emphasis on writing history from below and the problems raised by creating an

[5] David Eastwood, *Governing Rural England, Tradition and Transformation in Local Government 1780-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1994).

[6] Joanna Innes, 'The State and the Poor Eighteenth-Century England in European Perspective Rethinking Leviathan', in *The Eighteenth Century State in Britain and Germany* ed. John Brewer and Eckhart Hellmuth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.225-280; Joanna Innes, *Inferior Politics, Social Problems and Policies in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

'administrative-experiential' divide, and goes on to make a case for a new approach to the study of the administration of the poor laws based on ideas borrowed from the social sciences, bringing the concept of 'policy process' to bear on specific aspects of the poor law and using this approach with its emphasis on policy making, policy transfer and policy implementation to provide a framework for exploring developments in pauper policies. [7] Shave argues convincingly that parish officials were 'part of a broader network comprising their fellow welfare administrators', showing how contractors, land stewards and pamphlets all played their part in the national dissemination of best practice.[8] She is able to demonstrate that the transfer of policy did not rely on connections made at the national level but was instead made through direct contact between localities. The 'policy process' approach with its close examination of policy thus has the benefit of refocusing attention on neglected areas of research. Shave's geographical focus is on the rural counties of southern England and in her concluding pages she makes a case for the 'policy process' approach to be applied elsewhere. Again, Battersea's geographical location and the ties of association of the members of its vestry sets it apart from the areas which have so far been studied and offer the prospect of a new perspective on this question.

In his book *Poverty and Welfare in England 1700-1850* (2000), Steven King, approaching the subject of poor relief from a very different angle, also makes a plea for more detailed local studies.[9] King argues for the regional study of poverty and welfare, drawing a distinction between the type of relief offered in

[7] Samantha Shave, *Pauper Policies: Poor Law practice in England 1780-1850 (*Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp.22-24.
[8] Shave, p.182.
[9] Steven King, *Poverty and Welfare in England, 1700-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.4.

the north and west, and that offered in the south and east, as pressure on the old poor law system rose in the last decades of the century. King's book ranges widely and engages with a number of topics which remain live areas of debate such as the extent, timing and generosity of pension provision, the gendered and life-cycle nature of poverty and the importance of alternative forms of welfare provision. In the years since Steven King wrote a number of historians have risen to the challenge of undertaking detailed, 'micro' studies of the operation and impact of the old poor law and addressing this gap in the historiography. Among these are John Broad, Henry French, Richard Smith and Samantha Williams.[10] Williams's detailed exploration of poverty and poor relief in Bedfordshire for example shows how factors such as gender, age, life-cycle events, economic pressures and local circumstances all interacted to determine the nature and extent of need and the relief offered by the parish. Williams uses 'micro-history' to examine wider issues: in her case, those affecting agrarian, south-eastern England. Such an approach could usefully be applied to different types of settlement and economies, particularly in those areas lying outside the agrarian heartland which until now has attracted most attention, and it would offer a template for further case studies.[11]

Williams has highlighted the importance of charitable provision to the poor and in her concluding pages she quotes John Broad's words, 'the range of resources available to any individual or family reflected the particular

[10] John Broad, 'Parish Economies of Welfare, 1650–1834', *Historical Journal,* 42 (4) (1999), 985-1006; Henry French, ''How dependent were the 'dependent poor'? Poor relief and the life-course in Terling, Essex, 1762–1834'. *Continuity and Change,* 30 (2) (2015), 193-222; Richard M. Smith, 'Ageing and well-being in early modern England, Pension trends and gender preferences under the English Old Poor Law c.1650-1800', in *Old age from Antiquity to Post-Modernity*, ed. Paul Johnson and Pat Thane (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.64-95.
[11] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle.*

circumstances of the parish community in which they lived'.[12] Joanna Innes, in an essay published in 1996, examines contemporary debates about the form that eighteenth-century welfare provision should take and argues that although the level of rate based relief grew dramatically it never entirely replaced voluntary charity.[13] However, the balance between charity and parish relief can be seen to have changed as the demand for welfare increased in response to the economic pressures of the last decades of the eighteenth century. Perhaps as important as the operation of 'the mixed economy of welfare' in individual parishes was the involvement of individual vestry members in charitable provision, and the influence that this exerted on their attitude to poor relief. Significant work has been undertaken by Donna Andrews in tracing the changing pattern of donations to London charities through the eighteenth century, and the background of those who donated.[14] Crucially the example of these charities and their modes of working can be seen influencing the attitudes of the men who administered both parish charity and poor relief in parishes adjacent to the metropolis.

In any consideration of the changing balance within the 'mixed economy of welfare' the role of the workhouse necessarily plays an important part, particularly in those metropolitan parishes which built large workhouses. Consequently a particular strand of the literature covering the old poor law is devoted to the experience of the poor admitted to these institutions. Jeremy Boulton applies the detailed analysis of poor relief at parish level to the large

[12] John Broad, 'Parish Economies of Welfare'.

[13] Joanna Innes, 'The "mixed economy of welfare" in early modern England: assessments of the options from Hale to Malthus (c.1683-1803)', in *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past* ed. Martin Daunton (London: UCL Press, 1996),pp.139-180.

[14] Donna T Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

metropolitan parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and examines how the provision of a workhouse and outdoor relief co-existed.[15] Boulton demonstrates the fluctuating balance between indoor and outdoor relief, and suggests that those in receipt of relief may have moved between a package of total care provided in the workhouse, long-term support provided by a regular pension, and short-term relief provided by casual payments, and that the balance between the three categories may have been driven by changing perceptions of local need. In an examination of the role of the workhouse, Tim Hitchcock's work on the workhouse movement and the role of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPCK) must also be central.[16] The influence of the SPCK can be seen in the spread of workhouses both in and around London, and the Battersea workhouse needs to be viewed in the light of this movement, both by virtue of its location and the date when it came into existence. The central position of the workhouse in the provision of relief in Battersea and the way in which it was utilised by the vestry and the poor bears similarities to the patterns of relief found in London parishes.

In collaboration with Leonard Schwarz, Boulton has made a more detailed study of the particular experience of the elderly poor of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Together they demonstrate both that the elderly used the workhouse flexibly and that the chances of admission were relatively low for most of the elderly poor. Outdoor relief continued to play an important role in provision for the elderly as did other forms of support including assistance from friends and

[15] Jeremy Boulton, '"Indoors or Outdoors?' Welfare Priorities and Pauper Choices in the Metropolis under the Old Poor Law, 1718–1824", in *Population, Welfare and Economic Change in Britain, 1290-1834*, ed. Chris Briggs, P.M. Kitson and S.J. Thompson (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), pp.153-88.

[16] Timothy V. Hitchcock, 'The English Workhouse: A Study in Institutional Poor Relief in Selected Counties, 1696-1750' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1985).

family.[17]The elderly poor were widely recognised as being amongst the categories of poor most deserving of relief by their parish. In her wide ranging book, *The Decline of Life, Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (2004), Susannah Ottaway discusses many aspects of how old age was defined in the eighteenth century and shows the importance of this stage in the life-cycle of the poor.[18] She demonstrates the increased dependence of the elderly on the poor relief system at the end of the century and the accompanying fall in the quality of care as the aged were hit by economic crises, and by unemployment and under-employment, drawing attention to how the numbers in receipt of relief began to rise in the 1770s and 1780s. Ottaway uses the evidence to assess the gendered nature of ageing, especially the challenges faced by older women, and to discuss how the elderly negotiated with the vestry from a position of relative strength because of shared ideals about the community's obligation to assist those in that age group. She goes on to argue that community relief was vital in providing subsistence for a substantial minority of the elderly, as many families lacked sufficient resources to fulfil their legal responsibility to care for blood relatives. Ottaway's work emphasises that the elderly formed a core group amongst the recipients of parish relief and that their experience was shaped by both contemporary expectations and regional practice. The extent to which families or communities were expected to provide support for the elderly has been the subject of much debate, with historians placing varying degrees of

[17]Jeremy Boulton and Leonard Schwarz, ''The Comforts of a Private Fireside'? The Workhouse, the Elderly and the Poor Law in Georgian Westminster: St Martin-in-the-Fields,1725-1824', in *Accommodating Poverty The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c.1600-1850* ed. Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.221-245.

[18] Susannah R. Ottaway, *The Decline of Life, Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

emphasis on the level of community involvement.[19] An examination of the treatment of the elderly in a parish such as Battersea and of the relative generosity or otherwise of the relief granted to them during a period of economic pressure, will add to our understanding of the experience of the elderly poor at large.

While the provision made by the old poor law made for the elderly has been the subject of considerable discussion, its impact on children has received much less attention. Alysa Levene has set out to rectify this omission. Building on the research of Jeremy Boulton, Leonard Schwarz and David Green amongst others, she examines the experience of child poverty and welfare responses to it in eighteenth-century London.[20] *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London* (2012), locates the practical reaction to childhood poverty within the context of contemporary debates about the nature of childhood and more general attitudes to poverty.[21] Levene argues that, even if parish officials did not specifically articulate their thoughts, they came to see children as a distinct category of those in need: deserving of support, to be accommodated separately and to be trained so as to become productive citizens. She suggests that the policies developed in London may have been disseminated through the practice of sending children to nurses in country areas, which included Battersea. In an earlier article she examines the impact of the settlement laws on families and children at the turn of the eighteenth

[19] David Thomson, 'The Welfare of the Elderly in the Past. A family or community responsibility?', in *Life, Death, and the Elderly*, ed. Margaret Pelling and Richard M. Smith (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.194-221;Pat Thane, 'Old People and their Families in the English past', in *Charity, self-interest and welfare*, ed. by Daunton, pp.84-103.
[20] David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2009).
[21] Alysa Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

century.[22] The likelihood of incurring future costs appears to have been an important factor in deciding whether to remove children and their families from a parish, with the local labour market and economic conditions influencing who was drawn to a particular parish and the type of families who were encouraged to stay or who were subsequently removed. Levene cautions, however, that these conclusions may not apply outside London as different rates of survival for children applied, as did differing migration patterns and local economies. The actions of major philanthropic institutions such as the Foundling Hospital also influenced attitudes to child poverty: through the dissemination of the ideals that underpinned their work, the type of care they offered to children and the contacts of their patrons.[23] The employment of women in Battersea as nurses by several of the London parishes, and the role of some of the parishes' better off parishioners as patrons of charitable institutions such as the Foundling Hospital, may have exposed members of the vestry to the latest attitudes to child welfare circulating in London. These ideas may in turn have influenced the nature of the relief extended to poor children in the parish.

A sharp contrast with the examination of the administrative aspects of the old poor law and its impact on the economic fortunes of various social groups is provided by the more 'experiential' approach of historians in the last couple of decades. In a path-breaking, edited volume, *Chronicling Poverty: The voices and strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840* (1997), co-contributors have endeavoured to explore new sources and reveal the voices of the poor from

[22] Alysa Levene, 'Poor families, removals and 'nurture' in late Old Poor Law London', *Continuity and Change,* 25 (2) (2010) 233-262.
[23] Helen Berry, *Orphans of Empire: The fate of London's Foundlings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

below.[24] In a chapter examining letters written by non-resident paupers to their parish of settlement Pamela Sharpe explores how the poor saw relief as a right to be negotiated, and how the provision of relief involved parish and pauper in a set of reciprocal rights and responsibilities.[25] Thomas Sokoll, the editor of a volume of Essex pauper letters, uses the letters to show the significance of the role of the family in caring for the elderly. He demonstrates how old age was depicted in the letters, with emphases on the inability to work as a result of increasing age, pride in work itself and the need for subsistence to supplement what was earnt. The right of the poor both to retirement and to relief when they were too old to work is shown to be a feature of the letters.[26] In the same volume Peter King discusses the use of pauper inventories by parishes, examining their legal basis and using them to shed light on the material circumstances of the poor. [27] Building on the foundations laid in this volume, Joseph Harley has undertaken further work on a large sample of inventories arguing that they were a creative means by which the parish helped the poor before the 1770s, but that in the later eighteenth century, as the cost of relief rose, there was a tendency to use them to dissuade the poor from applying for parish assistance.[28] It is clear that where sources such as pauper letters and inventories survive they can throw light on what the experience of poverty

[24] Tim Hitchcock, Peter King, and Pamela Sharpe, *Chronicling poverty: The voices and strategies of the English poor, 1640-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997).

[25] Pamela Sharpe, ' 'The bowels of compation': A Labouring Family and the Law, c.1790-1834', in *Chronicling poverty,* ed. Hitchcock, King, and Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997), pp.87-108.

[26] Thomas Sokoll, 'Old Age in Poverty: The Record of Essex Pauper Letters, 1780-1834', in *Chronicling poverty* ed. Hitchcock, King, and Sharpe, pp.127-154.

[27] Peter King, 'Pauper Inventories and the Material Lives of the Poor in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', in *Chronicling poverty* ed. Hitchcock, King, and Sharpe, pp.155-191.

[28] Joseph Harley, 'Pauper inventories, social relations, and the nature of poor relief under the old poor law, England, c.1601–1834.', *Historical Journal* 62 (2) (2019) 375-398.

meant for the poor and the nature of the relationship between those who received relief and those who dispensed it.

A significant aspect of paupers' experience of the poor law was mediated through the provision of clothing to them by parish officers. Peter Jones has shown how aware paupers were of the kind of relief likely to be available, and how this is reflected in their approach to parish overseers and vestries.[29] Clothing formed the largest category of expenditure for the poor after subsistence and the last quarter of the eighteenth century saw an upsurge in formal and informal charitable bequests of garments. Vestries used the provision of clothing as an instrument of policy and displayed a willingness to provide sufficient good quality clothing to help the poor into employment. In so doing they undertook an informal cost benefit analysis, weighing the considerable outlay on clothing against the future charge on the rates of maintaining the pauper. Steven King has argued that under the old poor law parishes devoted a considerable portion of their resources to clothing both for the indoor and outdoor poor, and that they clothed them well as a matter of civic pride.[30] Vivienne Richmond has set out to test King's argument, questioning his proposition that the clothing provided would have been have been of good quality and sometimes fashionable.[31] In the light of this debate, there is clearly a case for examining local clothing sources, where these exist, and the fortunate survival of sources for Battersea offers the opportunity to make a contribution to this discussion. Clothing and shoes for the poor formed an important element of

[29] Peter Jones, '"I cannot keep my place without being deascent": pauper letters, parish clothing and pragmatism in the south of England, 1750-1830', *Rural History* 20 (1) (2009).
[30] King, *Poverty and Welfare* p.158.
[31] Vivienne Richmond, *Clothing the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp.186-190.

relief in kind in Battersea, and there is scope to examine this aspect of vestry policy in greater detail.

Although much has been written about the policies pursued by eighteenth-century vestries, and the relationship between central and local government, relatively little attention has been paid to the composition of the vestries themselves and the influences which operated on their members. These themes have received greater attention from historians of the early modern period, notably Steve Hindle, who has examined the balance of power within vestries and the influence of nonconformity on the exercise of discipline within the parish.[32] Likewise, Paul Seaward has examined the activities of the London vestries through the lens of religious policy.[33] Once we reach the nineteenth century, David Green has undertaken important work on the role of the London vestries in the administration of poor relief and as an arena for the political ambitions of men of modest means. For the eighteenth century an examination of the role of the vestry presents a lacuna in the historiography. Henry French has led the way with his work on the social identity of those vestry members who held parish office, and has examined the part that poor relief played in shaping this.[34] For parishes in the environs of London, however, the social composition of the vestry and the influences on its decision making process, remain a relatively under-explored area of research in the eighteenth century. It will be shown that the Battersea vestry in the last quarter of the century exhibited a strong sense of identity, and was active and administratively

[32] Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c.1550-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[33] Paul Seaward, 'Gilbert Seldon, the London Vestries, and the Defence of the Church', in *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* ed. by Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie (Oxford :Basil Blackwell,1990), pp.49-73.
[34] H. R. French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England, 1600-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

efficient. As such, a detailed examination of its membership and their connections will shed light on the vestry members' attitude to poor relief and the influences on it.

At first sight a survey of the scholarship on the poor law reveals a bewildering array of issues and seemingly an ever broadening agenda, as it expands to encompass interdisciplinary research. However on closer examination several key points emerge. Firstly, local variations in the implementation of the old poor law stand out, as does the flexibility of parish officials' response to local needs. Secondly, the 1770s and 1780s were decades which saw low wages and unemployment in the rural south and east, combined with increasing population and rising expenditure on poor relief. A number of the issues engaging the attention of historians such as the level of pensions, the point in the life cycle at which these were granted and to whom, the strategic use of the workhouse and the balance within a 'mixed economy of welfare' can all be seen to respond to these economic pressures. Taking these points together it is clear that there is a need for the broad national or even regional generalisations made by historians to be underpinned by more local, detailed research. It is noticeable that the recent local studies which have been undertaken have concentrated on central and eastern agrarian counties such as Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex. A separate and in many ways unique area of research has focused on the poor law in London: Steven King proposed eight sub-regions which experienced distinct patterns of poor relief, the last of these being the 'London hinterland', incorporating parts of those counties bordering the metropolis. He suggested that in such communities pensions were relatively generous but entitlement was restricted, with the focus on casual

relief, and welfare directed mainly to elderly women.[35] Samantha Shave has also suggested that her 'policy process' approach could be fruitfully applied to urbanising areas. The parish of Battersea offers a good opportunity to examine questions raised by recent historical scholarship in a contrasting economic and demographic context.

Little has been written about the extent of poverty in the late eighteenth-century in Battersea or about the relief offered by the parish to its residents. Daniel Lysons writing in 1792 offers a contemporary description of the parish and its inhabitants in his *Environs of London,* which provides some insight into employment and wages.[36] In the next century Battersea was covered by Manning and Bray in their multi-volume *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*, and then by the Reverend Henry Simmonds in his volume *All About Battersea,* which merely mentions in passing the location of the workhouse.[37] In the early twentieth century a short account of the history of Battersea was given in *The Victoria County History of Surrey*. Concentrating chiefly, however, on manorial development, this neglected the social and economic development of the parish and exploited few local sources. The most comprehensive survey of the role of the vestry and of poor relief in Battersea is provided by J. G. Taylor in *Our Lady of Battersey*.[38] Ostensibly a history of the parish church, this makes extensive use of the extant parish records and encompasses the role of the churchwardens and overseers in providing for the poor, while making no attempt to set the actions and decisions of the vestry within a wider framework. Since Taylor wrote, most academic writing on

[35] King, *Poverty and Welfare,* p.265.
[36] Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London*, 4 vols. (London: T Cadell, 1792-96), I (1792), pp.26-48.
[37] Henry S. Simmonds, *All about Battersea* (London: Ashfield, 1882; repr. London: British Library).
[38] John George Taylor, *Our Lady of Battersey* (London: George White, 1925).

Battersea has focused on the development of the built environment with much scholarship contributed by Keith Bailey[39]. By far the most thorough, recent treatment of the buildings of Battersea, including the Battersea workhouses and alms houses, is to be found in the Battersea volumes of *The Survey of London.*[40] Although these are primarily concerned with buildings, their scope is far wider and the introduction provides many insights into the history and development of the area.

The rich primary sources for the parish such as the vestry minutes are held by Wandsworth Heritage Service, and remain largely unpublished and unexplored. The vestry minutes at first sight appear to be a fairly comprehensive series covering the period 1778-1785, but an additional sub-committee minute book, covering the years 1779-1780, has recently been discovered in private hands and has been deposited with Wandsworth Heritage Service.[41] A careful analysis of the surviving vestry minutes suggests that not every meeting was recorded or minuted in detail. For the period under consideration no overseers' accounts survive, limiting our opportunity to analyse extended series of payments to poor parishioners. An extensive series of workhouse accounts does exist, however. In the last decades of the eighteenth century the manor of Battersea was held by Earl Spencer as was the manor of Wimbledon. In 1964 the Surrey Record Society published the Wimbledon vestry minutes for 1736, 1743-1788 with a scholarly introduction. This volume provides

[39] K. A Bailey, 'The Metamorphosis of Battersea, 1800-1914: a building history' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, The Open University, 1995).
[40] *Survey of London: Battersea*, *vol. 49 and 50* ed. Andrew Saint and Colin Thom (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013) 49 ed. Andrew Saint (2013), pp.73-5.
[41] This Minute Book was identified by the author of this dissertation and Mr John Titterton.

an interesting and accessible comparison with the Battersea vestry minutes for the same period.[42]

As a largely rural community on the fringe of metropolitan London and outside the major grain growing areas, Battersea might be expected to exhibit different patterns of expenditure and different policies in response to the demands of its poor to those seen elsewhere. Until now, late eighteenth-century Battersea has been a largely under-studied parish. A detailed examination of its treatment of the poor offers us the opportunity to increase our understanding of the 'London hinterland'.

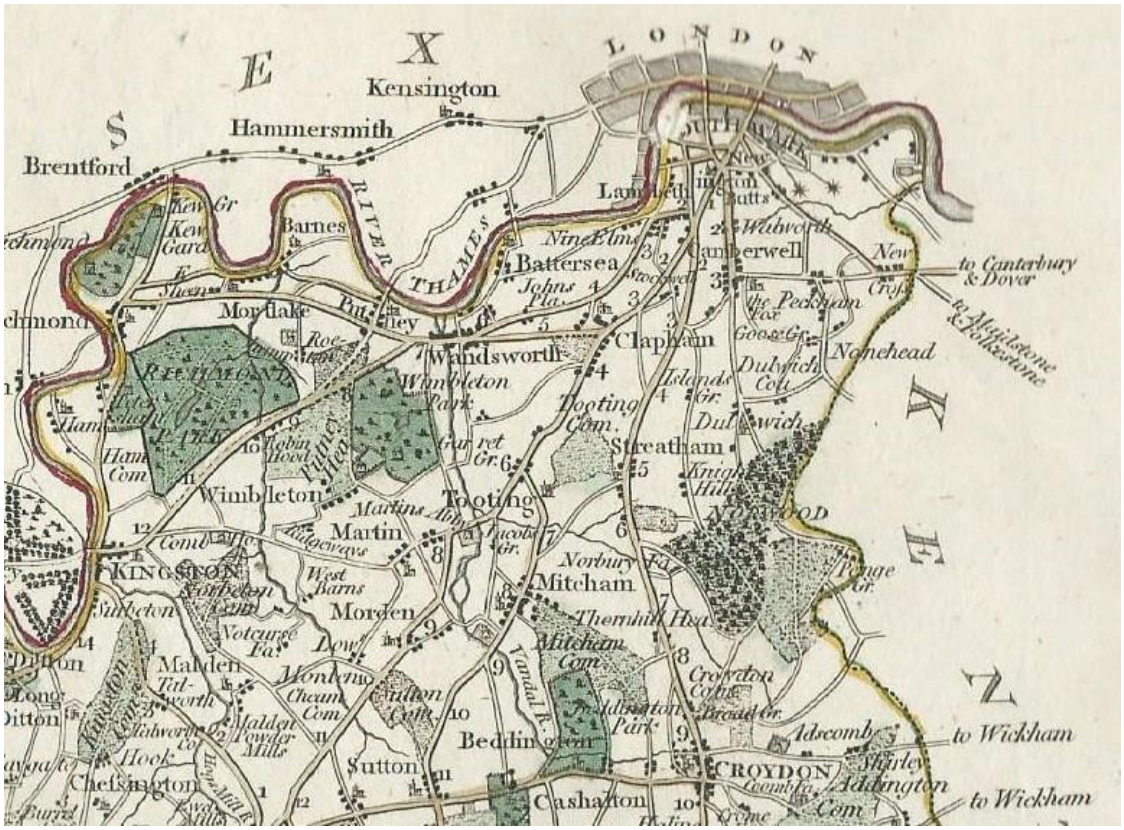
[42] *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes 1736, 1743-1788*, ed. F. M. Cowe (Guildford: Surrey Record Society, 1964) 25.

3. Late Eighteenth-Century Battersea

The parish of Battersea consists of 2164 acres, with the River Thames forming both its northern and western boundaries. To the south-west lies the parish of Wandsworth, to the east the parish of Lambeth and to the south-east that of Clapham. In the eighteenth century the parish also incorporated the outlying hamlet of Penge in Kent.

The development of Battersea was primarily determined by its location on the banks of the Thames.[43] The village area known as 'the Town' grew up adjacent to the river, whilst the church and manor house occupied another riverside site near to the river crossing to Chelsea. An early settlement had developed to the west at York Place and a later settlement developed to the east at Nine Elms. The Thames provided many Battersea residents with their livelihood and was an essential transport artery. The main road which ran westward from London to Wandsworth and on to Putney and Kingston lay to the south of the main settlement, effectively bypassing the village. Road communications were improved in 1771 when a new bridge across the Thames between Chelsea and Battersea, to the north-east of the church and the village, was built on Earl Spencer's initiative, but even then there was no direct route from the bridge to the turnpike on the Battersea side.

[43] The following discussion draws heavily on the two *Survey of London* volumes which cover the parish of Battersea. These outline the general history of the parish and trace the development of individual areas within the parish.



1.Detail from a map of Surrey, by John Cary, dated 1787, showing the location of Battersea

Much of Wandsworth and Clapham Commons lay within the parish of Battersea, with the boundary between the parishes of Clapham and Battersea running down the centre of Clapham Common. Both commons were gorse covered heath used for the extraction of gravel, and in the case of Clapham Common for grazing. In 1768 a preservation committee, led by local resident Christopher Baldwin, was formed to stop the enclosure of Clapham Common. The enhanced landscape which resulted proved attractive to the merchants and bankers whose villas came to line the edges of the common.[44] As we shall see, a number of the more active members of the Battersea vestry were drawn from amongst this class of men. By the mid-1770s the population of Battersea

[44] *Survey of London: Battersea*, 49, p.243.

probably comprised between 1,843 and 2,328 inhabitants.[45] The men who moved to Battersea and established themselves on the northern fringes of the commons, such as the London glass merchant, Isaac Akerman, built substantial villas set in extensive grounds, which benefited from the ease of communication with London. In 'the Town' the housing consisted of close-packed, small houses interspersed with a few larger houses, a number of which were again occupied by leading members of the vestry, whilst Nine Elms was predominantly industrial. The proximity of the metropolis exerted its influence on both the middling sort and the poor within the parish. It is clear that many of the better off members of the vestry held property in London, often in the City, as well as in Battersea. Likewise a number of the poor appear to have sought employment in London or in neighbouring parishes.

Although Battersea lay within the orbit of the metropolis, in the late eighteenth century it was still a predominantly rural community and had yet to see the rapid expansion of housebuilding which took place in the nineteenth century. Writing in the introduction to the Battersea volume of *The Survey of London*, Andrew Saint and his co-authors note "In 1841 most of the parish was still given over to market gardens, field strips and open farmland."[46] This impression is reinforced if we look at the prints of Battersea held in the *King's Topographical Collection* at the British Library. The views are mainly rural, although it is clear that the river frontage had become heavily built up with both housing and industrial buildings. By the eighteenth century land ownership in the parish was concentrated in the hands of two major landowners, the archbishopric of York, and the lord of the manor, who from 1763 onwards was

[45] This figure is extrapolated from the 1776 Rate Book and a list of recipients of bread in 1777.
[46] *Survey of London: Battersea*, 49, p.1.

Viscount Spencer and his heirs. Battersea Fields, the low-lying area to the east of the village, was owned freehold by the lord of the manor and leased in strips. The fields were organised in 'shots', consisting of between six and thirty strips, which after the harvest were opened up for grazing.[47] Market gardens accounted for approximately 300 acres of cultivation in the hands of around twenty gardeners who rented between five and sixty acres each. These gardens were famed for their asparagus and other vegetables which they supplied to the London market, receiving urban manure in return.[48] Lavender was also grown, and on the higher ground the land was used for pasture, whilst a crop return of 1801 showed that approximately 300 acres were given over to cereals.[49] Another lucrative crop was the cultivation of osiers which supported a basket making and mat weaving industry. Pigs were fattened on an industrial scale on the by-products of the distillery owned by vestry member, Mark Bell and his partners, who took advantage of their riverside location to supply the London market.[50]

By the mid-eighteenth century some industry had developed along the Thames shoreline, particularly at Nine Elms and at York Place. Nine Elms had developed as an industrial area since the seventeenth century and was noted for its three windmills which ground corn, white lead and colour. It was also the site of limekilns, whiting works and timber docks which formed the basis of a boat building industry.[51] The presence of these manufactories was reflected amongst members of the Battersea vestry who included a miller, a timber

[47] *Survey of London: Battersea*, 49, p.16.
[48] Lysons, I pp.26-48.
[49] *Survey of London: Battersea*, 49, pp.18-19.
[50] Thomas Almeroth-Williams, 'Horses & Livestock in Hanoverian London' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2013), p.74; Peter Mathias, *The Transformation of England Essays in the economic and social history of England in the eighteenth century* (Methuen: London, 1979), pp.252-264.
[51] *Survey of London: Battersea*, 49, p.326.

merchant, a lime burner and a boat builder. Further along the foreshore were the sugar houses of the Smith family where they refined molasses shipped from Barbados.[52] Nearby at York Place, the site of the former residence of the archbishops of York, was Bell's distillery. The Thames played a major role in the development of these industries, providing power for manufacturing processes, a source of water extraction and a means of transporting heavy goods to the London market. Contemporary views of the river show a bustling scene, with working boats plying their trade, and industrial buildings with smoking chimneys fronting the river between the open fields. Taylor made use of the parish registers to analyse occupations in the parish around 1700, although his figures should be treated with some caution.[53] His list is headed by forty-five gardeners, thirty-six agricultural labourers and thirty-two watermen reflecting the importance of the Thames as a means of transport and the site of boat building and fishing industries.[54]

By the end of the eighteenth century Battersea occupied a liminal space. Its landscape and predominant employment were essentially rural, yet a significant industrial base had developed in the course of the century, and the metropolis exercised its influence over Battersea's residents, both middling sort and poor alike. In the next chapters we will endeavour to establish whether the nature of poverty in Battersea followed patterns which have been identified in other areas of the south-east or whether it had more in common with its metropolitan neighbour - or indeed whether it exhibited distinct characteristics of its own.

[52] S*urvey of London: Battersea*, 49, p. 350.
[53] It has been suggested that Taylor double-counted. Survey of London: Battersea, 49, p.7, fn.43.
[54] Taylor,p.221.

4.The Nature of Poverty in Battersea

The poor in Battersea are revealed to us in a variety of sources: through the formal records of the poor relief system in which they are enumerated, categorised and sometimes named; through their interactions with the local rating system; as recipients of charity; and finally, in the documents of the church at the moment of their departure from life.[55] The records of the relief disbursed during our period are supplemented by the rate book from 1776, the burial register for the village church of St. Mary's, Battersea covering the years 1778-1786, and a list of those poor who received Bibles in 1779 under the terms of the will of the late vicar, the Reverend William Fraigneau. The glimpses these sources afford us allow us to learn something of the circumstances of the individuals whom those in authority in Battersea regarded as the poor.

Historians have highlighted the differing levels of poverty experienced by the poor and have shown how easy it was for economic or domestic pressures to upset their fragile financial equilibrium.[56] Meanwhile, in his examination of the incidence of poverty in seventeenth-century Warwickshire Tom Arkell has explored the relationship between rate paying and poverty, and has shown how exemption from local taxation was triggered by different poverty thresholds.[57] More recently Samantha Williams has demonstrated that the dividing line between those paying rates and those receiving relief could at times be

[55] Steven King has shown how a wide range of sources can be interrogated to illuminate the extent and depth of poverty in a community. King, *Poverty and Welfare,* pp.129-134.
[56] Paul Slack, P*overty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London and New York: Longmans, 1988),pp.39-40; King, *Poverty and Welfare,* p.111;Jeremy Boulton, 'Indoors or Outdoors?'.
[57] Tom Arkell, 'The incidence of poverty in England in the later seventeenth century', *Social History*, 12 (1) (1987), 23-47.

blurred.[58] In Battersea the ratepayers chosen by their fellow parishioners to dispense relief were constantly alert to the identity of its recipients, and of those who were excused from payment of the poor rate. The minutes of the vestry and the workhouse committee contain regular calls to examine lists of names, both of those who had failed to pay the poor rate and of those who were in receipt of occasional outdoor relief or resident in the workhouse.[59]

The poor rate was collected twice a year and the ratepayers are listed in the 1776 rate book according to the area of the village in which they lived.[60] Crucially, the list records those not able to pay, who are marked either as 'poor' or as 'NC', perhaps 'non-contributors' or 'not-chargeable'. The 'NCs' may have been those whom the workhouse committee referred to 'as objects of charity', when it reviewed the poor rate book periodically and declared that, 'The Vestry having examined the Overseers List of those Persons who have not paid the Poor Rate for the last year, they who were thought Objects of Charity were excused and those who were thought refractory ordered to be summon'd before the Justices'.[61] A further small group are 'excused' from paying the poor rate, amongst them the vestry clerk, Robert Coram, and it seems likely that this exemption was granted as the parish paid his salary. No distinction is evident between the value of the property occupied by those described as 'poor' and those classed as 'NC'. All of them occupied properties valued between £2 and £6, with the single exception of a property occupied by one of the 'NC' group which is valued at £9. John Jones, the occupier of the last named property, pays the poor rate in the first half of the year but is classified as 'NC' in the second half. John Martin is similarly reclassified as 'NC', whereas Mary Davis

[58] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle*, p.78.
[59] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (6 October 1778), WHS, BP/3/1/4 (1October 1778).
[60] WHS, BP/2/2/2.
[61] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (6 October 1778).

moves in the opposite direction and begins to pay the poor rate in the second half of the year. Clearly to be classified by the overseers as ‘not-chargeable’ was not an immutable condition.

The rate book for 1776, which recorded 306 householders, affords us a snapshot of poverty in the parish in that year, in which the ‘poor’ represented 12.8% of the householders in the first six months, rising to 14.8% in the second half of the year. Those who were deemed ‘not-chargeable’ formed a further 4.6% of the householders in the first two quarters rising to 7.7% in the third and fourth quarters. Eleven of those classified as ‘poor’ or ‘NC’ subsequently appeared in the records of the poor relief system between 1778 and 1785. Most of this group were drawn from the ranks of the ‘poor’ but two of them came from amongst those deemed ‘not-chargeable’. The ‘poor’ from the 1776 rate book who subsequently engaged with the poor relief system did so for a variety of reasons including illness and unemployment, and in turn received a range of relief comprising charity, benefits in kind, casual relief and weekly payments. The two people listed as ‘NC’ were a beneficiary of the Henry Smith charity and the deceased father of orphan children who were subsequently returned to his parish of settlement. This small sample perhaps lends further support to the view that the condition of those deemed to be ‘not-chargeable’ was slightly less desperate than that of their neighbours who were deemed to be ‘poor’.

Amongst those who were assessed for and paid the poor rate in 1776 were a small group who in later years were to find that they or their families needed support from the parish authorities. They were mainly people who paid modest rates on properties assessed at £10 or less. Several of these were later to be found as inmates of the workhouse, including the children of the late

William Macbeth, whose mother sought admission for them in 1784. The other members of this group received small casual payments or benefits in kind. The case of William Macbeth's widow and children shows just how easily an event such as the death of the main breadwinner could transform a family from being contributors to the relief system to being recipients of its support.

Meeting the costs associated with the death of a family member could place an additional burden on already stretched family budgets, and this was another point in the life-cycle when families might seek parish assistance. Battersea reimbursed Putney for the cost of the funeral of William Whithorn's wife, and Stephen Hayes was granted half a guinea for help with the cost of burying his mother-in-law.[62] When setting the burial fees for the parish church, the vestry recognised the strain that the cost of funerals placed on the poor, and made a distinction between the fees for children of parishioners renting property below £10 and those renting property above £10.[63] The burial register for the period further defined the economic status of parishioners, identifying those who were deemed poor and those who came from the workhouse. The register also recorded those from outside the parish who were buried at Battersea and these burials have been removed from the calculations in Table 1.[64] The dip in the number of burials emanating from the workhouse after 1781 may reflect the changing age profile of the workhouse population, or it may suggest that the previous years had seen a particularly high death rate within the workhouse. As would be expected, some correlation can be detected between those deemed

[62] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (14 March 1780), BP/3/1/5 (31 March 1781).
[63]WHS, BP/1/1/3 (4 March 1779), Steven King*, Sickness, medical welfare and the English poor, 1750-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp.223, 229.
[64] London, England, Church of England Baptism, Marriages and Burials 1538-1812 Wandsworth, St Mary Battersea 1778-1812 www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed13 February 2020].

to be poor at the time of their death and those who had been in receipt of assistance from the parish during their lifetime. The burial register would need to be analysed over a longer period of time for true extent of the correlation to become apparent.

Table 1. Workhouse Inmates and Poor as a percentage of Battersea burials, 1778-1786

Date	**WH inmates as % of Battersea resident burials**	**Date**	**Poor as % of Battersea resident burials**
1778 (October-December)	4.76%	1778 (October-December)	33.33%
1779	17.72%	1779	11.39%
1780	10.94%	1780	7.81%
1781	4.00%	1781	26.00%
1782	0.00%	1782	18.03%
1783	0.00%	1783	18.67%
1784	1.61%	1784	19.35%
1785	2.56%	1785	26.92%
1786	2.94%	1786	14.71%

The poor of Battersea also appear as beneficiaries of the will of the former vicar of the parish, the Reverend William Fraigneau. Under the terms of his will, proved in 1778, a sum of money was bequeathed to provide Bibles to sixty poor parishioners. The names of fifty-seven recipients, together with their addresses or places of residence, were entered in the workhouse committee minutes.[65] Approximately one sixth of those who received the Bibles also received poor relief for themselves or their families over the seven year period under consideration. Thirteen of them appear in the 1776 rate book identified as 'poor', one as 'NC' and eight as ratepayers, while the remaining thirty-five do not appear in the rate book at all. It should be noted, however, that a third of the recipients of the Bibles are women and that some of their spouses were probably listed in the rate book for that year. It is noteworthy that when distributing the Reverend Fraigneau's Bibles the parish authorities' definition of the poor expanded to take in some of the ratepayers and a group of people who appear to have made no financial claim upon the parish, but who were none the less regarded as fitting recipients. Whether their suitability to receive the Bibles was determined by their economic marginalisation, by a perception of their moral worth, or simply by the need to distribute a set number of Bibles is by no means clear.

Operating through the workhouse committee and the overseers, therefore, the Battersea vestry decided who should receive a weekly pension, who was entitled to casual relief and who should enter the workhouse. They also decided who should be excused from the burden of paying for such relief and who was regarded as poor at the time of their death. Lastly they determined whom the late vicar had in mind when he thought of the poor of the parish. In so

[65] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (10 April 1779).

doing they defined who the poor were in Battersea and what sort of assistance they could expect from the parish. Some individuals might find themselves in each of these categories as their circumstances changed, while others might find that the only recognition of their poverty was the gift of a Bible.

The negotiation of relief was a contested process, conducted face to face and shaped by personal relationships between those distributing relief and those in receipt of it, by moral considerations and local custom and precedent. An attempt had to be made by the vestry and its officers to match the demand for relief to the available resources which were limited by the sum which could be raised from the poor rate.[66] Their decisions regarding who should receive relief indicate whom the parish officers deemed deserving; and conversely the occasions on which they turned applicants away indicate those whom they regarded as unworthy of communal support. Some of those turned down may have been poor in a strictly economic sense, but doubts about their moral worth, and the priorities of local officials with regard to the social groups that they were prepared to support, barred them from the receipt of parish relief. The decisions taken by parish officers did much to shape the nature of the community in which they lived, defining those who were seen as belonging to the community and those who were seen as outsiders.[67] Lynn Hollen Lees argues that 'mechanical divisions between insider and outsider were routinely blurred by judgements about usefulness in the local labor market, by pragmatic calculations about time and trouble, and by compassion. Overseers and claimants daily beat the bounds of the parish as they negotiated the distribution of relief.' The burgeoning costs of relief made questions of settlement and

[66] King, *Poverty and Welfare,* p.90.
[67] Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.46.

entitlement important in a parish such as Battersea, bounded by the expanding metropolis but with a need for seasonal labour to service its market gardens. Through the deliberations of the vestry and the workhouse committee we see entitlement to settlement called into question and examined, and relief allocated accordingly.

The vestry's strong sense of the physical boundaries of the parish, the cost of providing relief and its moral implications are well illustrated by the case of John Emre.[68] In November 1778, Emre of South Lambeth, placed his heavily pregnant servant Mary Agar in a cart, and despatched her to Battersea. There she was admitted to the workhouse by the overseer and delivered of a son. The Battersea vestry was outraged by Emre's conduct and ordered that he be prosecuted immediately. The letter sent by the vestry to Emre warning him of their intention to prosecute describes his conduct towards the parish as 'injurious and illegal' and served notice that 'the Vestry have Ordered you to be prosecuted for such Conduct as the Law directs without delay first giving you the opportunity of calling on the Committee at Battersea Poor House…. to make satisfaction to the Parish for such conduct…'[69] It was not just Emre's conduct that caused the parish officers concern, but also the unwelcome burden of an illegitimate child being born in the parish. In line with contemporary commentators and charitable institutions the vestry were alert to the perceived moral standing of applicants for relief, and scattered throughout the records of their decisions we find references to those not deemed a 'proper object' of relief. [70]

[68] K. D. M. Snell, 'The Culture of Local Xenopobia', *Social History,* 28 (1) (2003), 1-30
[69] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (22 December 1778); Tim Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth Century London* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), p.142.
[70] Joseph Townsend, *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws* (London: C. Dilly, 1786), Google ebook.

Widely held concerns regarding the idleness of the poor, and the potential role that the workhouse could play in containing costs, certainly do seem to have influenced the Battersea vestry.[71] Long after it became clear that manufacturing undertaken by the inmates of the workhouse contributed little to covering its running costs, the vestry remained committed to the ideal of providing work for the poor residing there. However, as we shall see, the relatively benign regime within the workhouse must in part have offset the deterrent effect of the vestry's emphasis on the importance of work. The vestry also employed other means of deterring applicants for relief or at least of reminding them of their debt of gratitude to their benefactors. As late as 1779 the vestry ordered that the great coats worn by the poor of the parish, probably those granted annually under the Henry Smith charitable bequest, should be badged BP in red cloth.[72] As Steve Hindle has argued, the parish badge could serve not only as a reminder of the wearer's poverty, but also of their entitlement and sense of belonging to the parish.[73] If there were tensions inherent in the vestry's wish to limit the burden on ratepayers on one hand and the desire to offer adequate support to deserving parishioners, members of the vestry nevertheless had a clear idea of who should benefit from their support.

Recent research has shown how able-bodied, working-age men came to increasing prominence amongst the recipients of relief in the rural south and east of England in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[74] The right of the elderly and infirm to relief was largely uncontested, as was that of orphans and

[71] Joanna Innes, 'The State and the Poor Eighteenth-Century England in European Perspective', p.251.
[72] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (19 June 1779).
[73] Steve Hindle, 'Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c.1550-1750', *Cultural and Social History,* 1 (1) (2004), 6-35.
[74] Henry French, ''How dependent were the 'dependent poor'?'; Richard M Smith, 'Ageing and well-being in early modern England'.

abandoned children. Even Edmund Burke, a critic of the role of the state in the relief of the poor, recognised the right of these groups to relief.[75] Single parents also seem to have elicited the sympathy of parish overseers. The vulnerability of particular groups - children, abandoned and pregnant women, and the elderly - has been well attested by historians.[76] When the Battersea vestry allocated poor relief and defined the poor of the parish, it was these groups who received their attention, rather than able-bodied men of working age.

A possible reason for this may have been that in Battersea wages seem to have been relatively buoyant at this period. Lysons commented on the high wages paid to the migrant labourers in the market gardens, and early nineteenth century agricultural surveys note that wages in Battersea and other areas bordering London were considerably higher than in the rest of Surrey.[77] It would seem reasonable to assume that wages in the various local manufacturing enterprises were comparable.

We know relatively little about the occupations of the recipients of poor relief, as they are generally not working as a result of age or infirmity. In the relatively small number of cases where we are able to identify their employment it falls within the main occupational groups identified by J.G. Taylor from the parish survey. Three men were fishermen, one woman was a fish seller and three absent husbands had gone to sea, perhaps fulfilling the Navy's increasing demands for manpower. Members of one family involved in market gardening on a small scale sought relief, and several women were provided with baskets to sell fruit from. Seven recipients of relief, of whom all bar one

[75] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf; Toronto: Random House; London: Faber and Faber, 1984), pp.68-9.
[76] Williams, *Poverty Gender and Life-Cycle,* pp.12-16.
[77] William Stevenson, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Surrey* (London: The Board of Agriculture, 1809), p.542 Google ebook.

were women, had been employed in or were found employment by the parish in some form of domestic service. Only one recipient can be identified as a factory labourer and one was a returning soldier. The indications are that the poor relief system in Battersea provided relief to those groups traditionally regarded as vulnerable, together with occasional relief at times of crisis, rather than regular relief to able-bodied men. Yet the number of inmates in the workhouse rose steadily in this period and the next chapters will examine how much was spent by the vestry and on whom.

5. Poor Relief in the Workhouse

The workhouse at Battersea had come into existence by 1733 at the latest, and it is the records generated by its administration and the parallel system of outdoor relief that provide the basis for any study of poverty in the parish. The surviving primary sources covering the last decades of the century are asymmetrical in their balance and focus. The workhouse journal, a monthly record of expenditure, provides a run of figures which enable us to identify consistently the number of inmates in the workhouse: no comparable figures, however, exist for those in receipt of outdoor relief in our period. Alongside these an intermittent series of figures recorded in the workhouse committee minutes allow us to go some way towards analysing the inmates of the workhouse by age and gender. Additional detail is found in the inmates register, which covers the period 1753-78. Our knowledge of those in receipt of outdoor relief is much more fragmentary and impressionistic and is formed by the decisions recorded in the committee minutes. This was the forum in which most decisions regarding relief were discussed, with only the most serious or unusual being referred to the full vestry for consideration. The workhouse journal, which covers the period 1771-86, and the workhouse expenditure journal, which covers the period 1770-78, together provide a record of expenditure in the workhouse at this time.[78] From 1780 the workhouse journal records payments for casual and weekly relief at irregular intervals, sometimes as a combined figure and sometimes as separately identified amounts. The nature of the

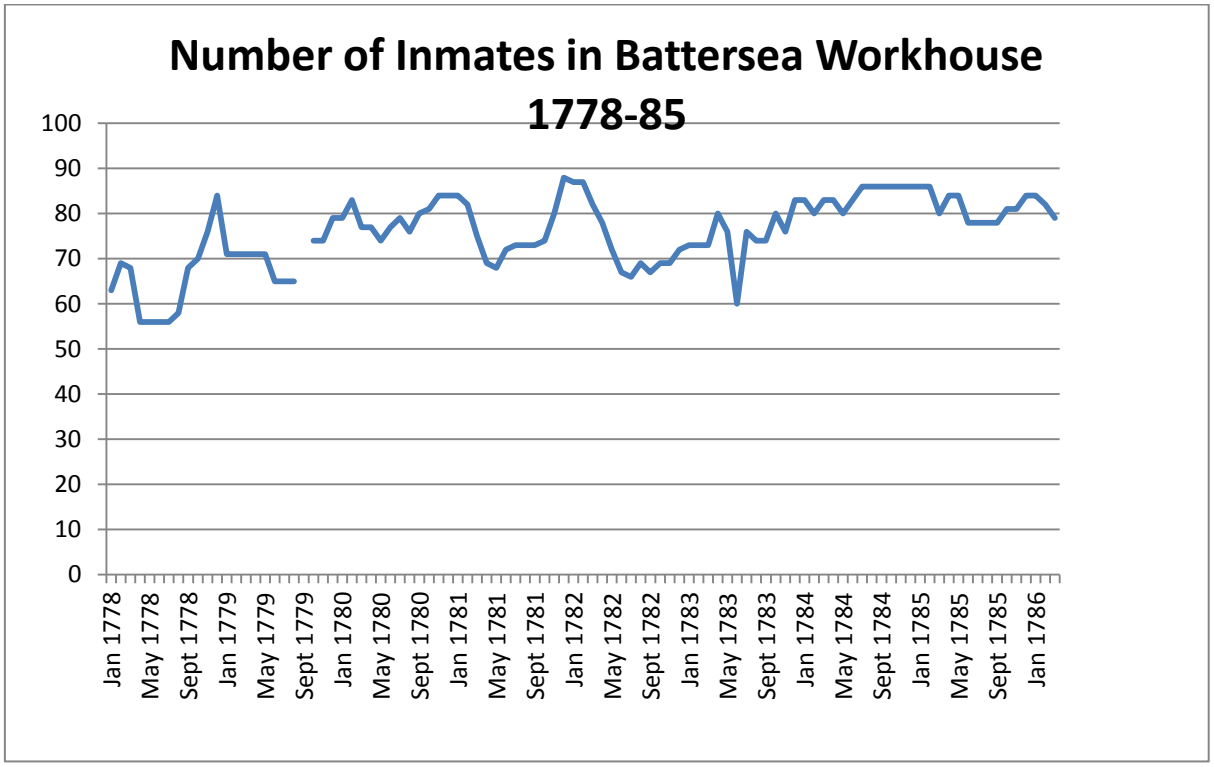
[78] For a discussion of double-entry accounting see Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press,1998), pp.29-91.

surviving source material constrains our ability both to compare the number of poor in receipt of indoor and outdoor relief and to quantify the respective costs to the parish. It also raises the question of whether the surviving records reflect the pre-eminence and importance of the workhouse or whether their survival is merely accidental.

The workhouse journal records monthly figures for the number of inmates in the workhouse and the cost of maintaining them from January 1778 to March 1786 with the exception of September 1779 when the clerk omitted to enter any figures. It is not clear whether the entries represent the mean number of inmates in the workhouse during the month or whether they reflect the inmates present on a particular day. Subject to this qualification, the figures are broadly consistent with those recorded in the minutes of the workhouse committee. The lowest number of inmates in the workhouse was in spring and summer of 1778, the figures being fifty-six in April and fifty-eight in August that year, but thereafter the overall trend was upwards (Fig.1). For the next five years, the number of inmates peaked during the winter months and fell again in the spring and summer, suggesting a pattern of local employment closely aligned to a rural economy and subject to the vagaries of the weather. In January 1780 Mary Dutch applied for relief, ‘due to the severity of the season’, and was granted 1s per week. Similarly John White applied for assistance for himself and his wife in December 1784 on account of the extreme weather and being unemployed and was granted 2s 6d. Their cases suggest that both the applicants and the committee considered extreme weather a valid reason for

relief to be granted, although in these two cases it did not result in admission to the workhouse.[79]

Figure 1. Inmates of Battersea Workhouse 1778-85



In the winter of 1783 the number of inmates rose to its customary seasonal peak, but this time it remained high throughout the following summer, only falling slightly in the summer of 1785. An examination of the workhouse population shows that the rise in numbers was accompanied by a shift in its composition. In addition to the monthly records of the number of inmates in the workhouse journal, there are intermittent figures in the workhouse committee minutes for the number of inmates broken down into men, women, boys and girls. As we have already noted these are not identical to, but are compatible

[79] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (15 January 1780, 18 December 1784).

with, those in the workhouse journal. Where an analysis is possible, the percentage of men in the workhouse can be seen to have fluctuated between 21.8% of the total inmates in 1778 and 20.5% in 1780 before falling to 15.9% of the total inmates between May and September 1784. It should be noted that figures are not available for every week and they therefore represent a snapshot in time. The percentage of women in the workhouse also fell noticeably in 1784 to 32.9% of the total inmates, as compared with 43.6% in 1778, 47.8% in 1779 and 46.2% in 1780. Concurrently the percentage of children in the workhouse rose to 52.4% in 1784 compared with 34.6% in 1778, 31.9% in 1779 and 32.1% in 1780. The split between boys and girls was not significant, varying by only a few percentage points at any one time. The change in the composition of the workhouse population is accounted for not simply by a fall in the number of adults but by a rise in the number of children resident in the House. In 1784 the mean number of men in the workhouse was thirteen compared to twelve in 1778 and sixteen in 1780. In 1784 the mean number of women was twenty-seven compared with twenty-four in 1778 and thirty-six in 1780. In contrast the mean numbers of boys rose from nine in 1778 and eleven in 1780 to twenty-one in 1784. The number of girls saw a similar increase with the mean number in 1784 being twenty-two compared with ten in 1778 and fourteen in 1780.

Our ability to explain the rise in the number of children in the workhouse in 1784 is constrained in several ways by the source material. It is at precisely this time, for reasons which are unclear, that the minutes of the workhouse committee become uninformative, often recording no more than the names of those attending the meeting. We are, however, still able to gain some insights into why children were accommodated in the workhouse during this period and

to examine the choices made by their parents. An examination of the inmates register suggests that until the age of sixteen young people were regarded as children. In the lists of inmates for 1778 James Reculest, recorded variously as aged fourteen or sixteen, headed the list of boys, while Mary Whithorn was the oldest girl in the workhouse aged thirteen.[80] Absent fathers and the death or incapacity of either parent seem to have been amongst the most common reasons for children to enter the workhouse. Mary Whithorn and her younger siblings had entered the workhouse prior to the death of their mother, Mary Archer and her three children entered the establishment in 1780 when her husband left them to go to sea, and the three Wright children entered in 1781 after the death of their mother and while their father was recovering from a fever.[81] The cases of the Archer and Wright families point to the different ways in which those in need of support might encounter the workhouse. Mary Archer and her children regularly sought relief from the parish and received outdoor relief as well as being admitted to the workhouse.[82] In contrast James Wright, when he found himself unable to care for his three children, actively sought admittance to the workhouse for them. Other children were admitted to the Battersea workhouse by order of the Justices, Battersea presumably being their place of settlement: George Bass was admitted from the neighbouring parish of Lambeth and William Stables was admitted by order of the Justices of St Leonard's Shoreditch.[83]

It is clear that both the authorities and parents used the workhouse with a degree of calculation. Once within the workhouse the children seem to have been reasonably well cared for and received a basic education before being

[80] WHS,BP/3/7/2.
[81] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (8 April 1780 and 8 September 1781).
[82] See below p.56.
[83] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (22 January 1780 and 10 August 1782).

apprenticed.[84] On a number of occasions children entered the workhouse either alone or with their siblings while their mother remained outside. Similarly mothers sometimes left the workhouse accompanied by their youngest child, intending to return and collect the older children later. In September 1779 Hannah Palson departed to the lying-in hospital promising to collect her other child when she was able to care for it. Two months later, having returned to the workhouse, she again left with the youngest child, promising to return for the older child as soon as possible.[85] In 1784 Richard Emre abandoned his family, and his wife applied for relief. The officers agreed to take one child into the workhouse while the mother and second child remained outside and were granted 6s.[86] In the same year the two elder children of William Macbeth were admitted while their widowed mother remained outside with the youngest child for whom she was granted 1s 5d.[87]

An examination of the names in the inmates register suggests that the majority of the children who entered the workhouse and remained there were unaccompanied by an adult or were accompanied by only one parent, in most cases a mother. If we assume that adults and children bearing the same surname formed a family unit, the child population of Battersea workhouse in 1778 can be broken down as follows. In January there were twenty-eight children inside ranging in age from eleven weeks to fourteen years old. Of these, fifteen children formed five sibling groups only one of which was accompanied by an adult. The other children consisted of one boy with his father or grandfather, two unaccompanied boys, two boys with their mother, six unaccompanied girls and two girls with their mothers. The breakdown of the

[84] See below pp.118-123.
[85] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (11 September 1779) and BP/3/1/5 (27 November 1779).
[86] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (17 July 1784).
[87] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (19 June 1784).

child inmates remained similar in June and July, the other months for which we have a list of inmates. In this sample there do not appear to be any cases of two-parent families entering the workhouse with their children. The experience of childhood and the use made of the workhouse by families in Battersea accords with the patterns identified by Alysa Levene in the workhouse of St Marylebone and Jeremy Boulton in St. Martin-in-the-Fields.[88] It is possible that the rise in the proportion of children amongst the workhouse population in 1784 is of no particular significance, the data after all being drawn from a relatively small sample. It is also likely, however, that it represents a deliberate response to increasing economic pressure, and that the parish authorities and hard pressed families saw entrance to the workhouse for some of their offspring as a means of coping with that pressure.

A comprehensive analysis of the inmates register falls outside the scope of this dissertation, but the register does provide a convenient starting point from which to examine the composition of the workhouse population in our period. In January 1778 there were fifteen men in the workhouse and by July the number of male residents had fallen to twelve.[89] As can be seen from the graph below, the majority of male residents were over sixty years of age (Fig.2). Amongst the younger men, one spent barely a month in the workhouse, while the others were long term residents who appear to have had a specific reason for remaining there. Daniel Smith, aged twenty-nine in 1778, first appears in the register in 1753 at the age of eight, possibly alongside his brothers, and in 1764 it is recorded that he was 'dropt' as a child. Nathaniel Smith entered the

[88] Alysa Levene 'Children, Childhood and the Workhouse: St Marylebone, 1769-1781', *The London Journal,* 33 (1) (2008), 41-59; Jeremy Boulton, '"It Is Extreme Necessity That Makes Me Do This"; Some "Survival Strategies" of Pauper Households in London's West End During the Early Eighteenth Century', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (2000), 47-69.
[89] WHS, BP3/7/2.

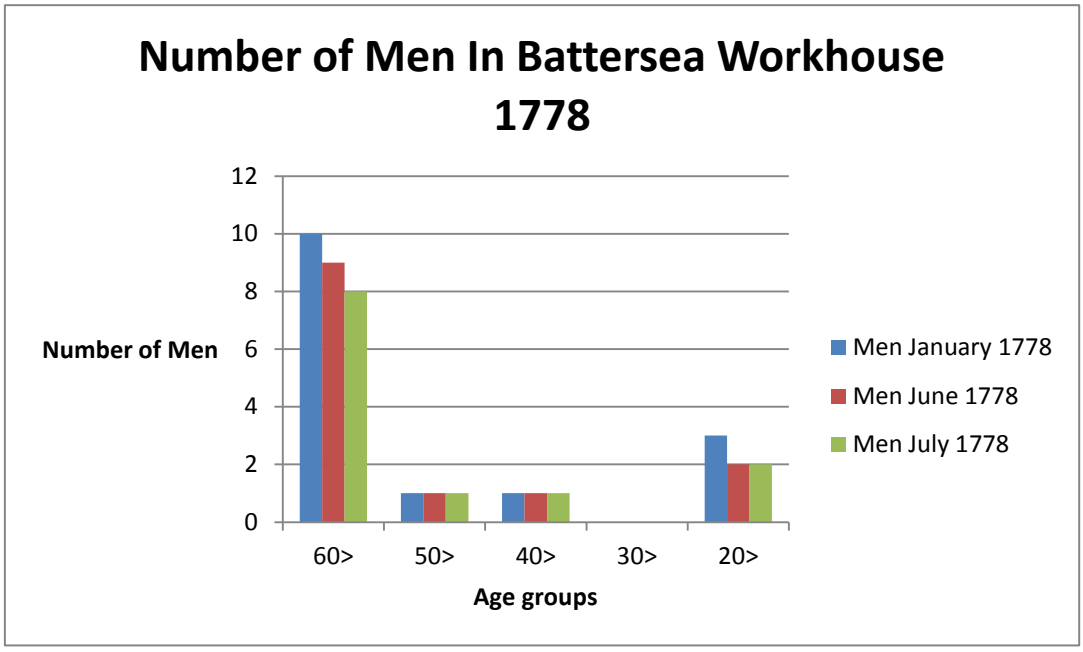
workhouse in 1771 at the age of thirty-five and was sent to St. Thomas' Hospital. He subsequently returned to the workhouse and continued to reside there, perhaps suggesting that he was in need of medical care. The remaining ten men living in the workhouse in 1778 were over the age of sixty: of these, one was to die in the workhouse and three were to leave, with one returning only a fortnight later.

The sources do not allow us to plot movements into and out of the workhouse with any accuracy or to discover the names and ages of all those who gained entrance, but the minutes of the workhouse committee do shed some light on their reasons for seeking relief. Some of the fluctuation in the number of male inmates can be accounted for by a small group of men who entered and exited the workhouse with a degree of regularity. Representative of this group is William Hawkins, who left the workhouse at the age of sixty-six in April 1778.[90] A year later he was discharged from the workhouse again only to be readmitted a few days later having been found lying in the street.[91] Seven months later in November 1779 Hawkins was again admitted to the workhouse.[92] In other instances the workhouse seemed to be providing medical care: John Butcher was admitted after having been released from hospital as incurable and his wife and children were allocated out relief of 1s per week.[93] Similarly, Thomas Craft, previously a regular recipient of out relief, was admitted in 1785 as he was ill and unable to work.[94] A further group of men were recorded as being admitted to the workhouse by order of the Justices of parishes other than Battersea. In only two instances did men gain admittance to

[90] WHS, BP3/7/2 (1778).
[91] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (10 April 1779).
[92] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (20 November 1779).
[93] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (26 February 1780).
[94] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (4 December 1784).

the workhouse with their wives and children. One of these, Thomas Miller, was a returning soldier, admitted by order of the Justices of Streatham, who was subsequently examined by the workhouse committee to ascertain his settlement.[95] The male population of Battersea workhouse at this time seems to have been comprised of a stable group of predominantly elderly men, supplemented by a few younger men who became long term residents for a specific reason. These in turn were augmented by a floating population who required medical care or who were in short term need, and by a few residents who seem to have entered and exited the workhouse regularly.

Figure 2. Number of Men In Battersea Workhouse 1778

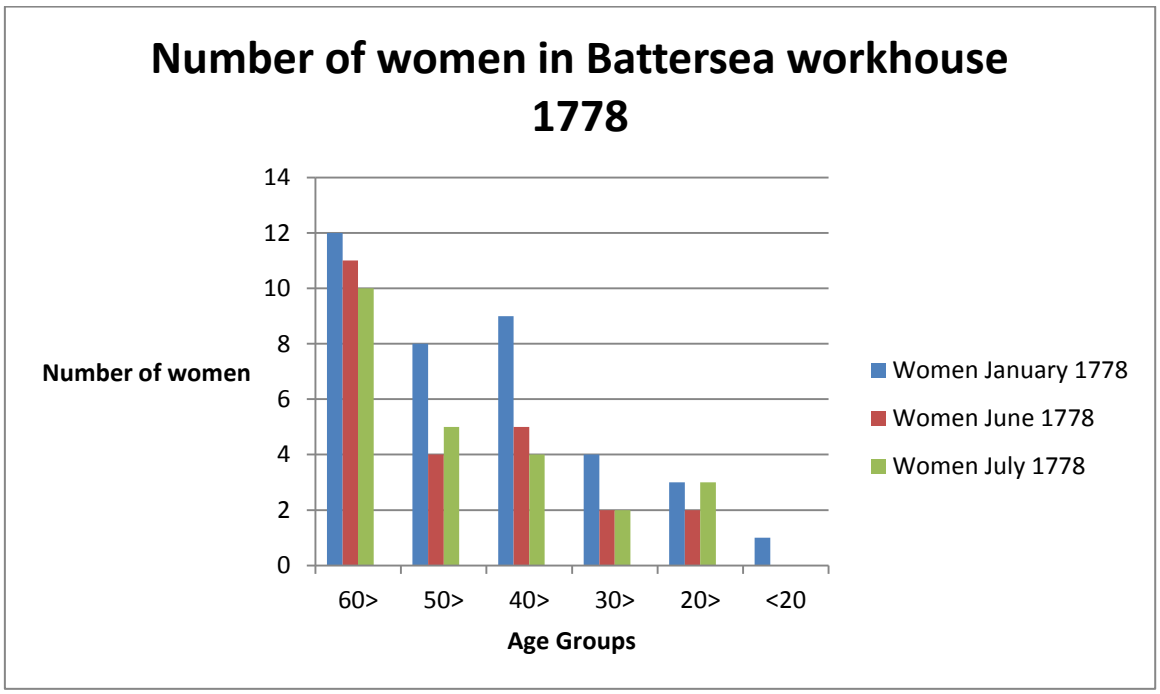


The mean number of women in the workhouse during this period fluctuated more dramatically than the comparable figure for men suggesting a different pattern of usage. The mean number of women in 1778 was twenty-four, rising to thirty-six in 1780 and falling back to twenty-seven in 1784, with the

[95] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (3 October 1778) and BP/3/1/5 (20 November 1779).

actual number of women peaking at forty in February 1784. Taking as our starting point once again the inmates register for 1778, we can see that the age spread for women was wider than for men. Women over sixty formed the largest group but other age cohorts were more uniformly represented. Figure 3 below also indicates a considerable movement out of the workhouse between January, and June and July 1778 which correlates with the more comprehensive figures that exist for the workhouse population as a whole during this period. The inmates register records the names of forty women residing in the workhouse during 1778: two of these died in the workhouse and sixteen left it between January and July, with three of them re-entering at some point in the intervening period. Those who went out, ranged in age from eighteen years old to fifty-eight years old, in marked contrast to the male inmates, who on the whole did not fall within this age range. No woman over the age of sixty is recorded as leaving the workhouse whereas four men over the age of sixty from a much smaller cohort are recorded as going out.

Figure 3. Number of women in Battersea workhouse 1778



There are thirty instances for which the reason for women's admittance to the workhouse is recorded in the minutes during the years 1778-85. On twelve occasions the woman, with or without her immediate family, entered the workhouse by order of a JP, and on eleven of these occasions the Justices were identified as being those of a parish other than Battersea. The geographical spread of these parishes will be examined in greater detail in due course. A further four of the women were admitted by order of the parish overseers; one of them, Mary Turner, having been described by the parish apothecary as 'exceeding ill', was subsequently sent to St. Thomas's Hospital for treatment.[96] Of the remaining thirteen women, five had been abandoned by their husbands, three were pregnant, two were widows, two were without work, one was unable to earn a living because of her age and one was unable to earn a living as she was lame in her hands. It should be noted that these thirty women represent a little under half of those women referred to in the vestry and workhouse committee minutes as having entered the Battersea workhouse during this period.

An analysis of the inmates register for the year 1778, of the mean number of women in the workhouse over the next seven years, and of the reasons for their admission suggests that there was a greater degree of 'churn' amongst the female population of the workhouse than amongst the male population. It seems to have been accepted that elderly women over the age of sixty who entered the workhouse were likely to stay there, but younger women seem to have entered and left the workhouse as their family and economic circumstances changed. Many of the women who entered the workhouse did so

[96] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (22 December 1781 and 12 January 1782).

as we would expect at a time of crisis in their lives: as single parents, as widows, in times of illness and when they were unable to earn a living. The graph showing the number of female inmates in 1778 (Fig. 3) suggests that there was an element of seasonality to female occupation of the workhouse, possibly reflecting employment opportunities in the local market gardens. A number of the women also accessed the poor relief system outside the workhouse, and admission to and discharge from the workhouse should be seen within this wider context. A striking aspect of the admissions recorded in the minutes is the number of women entering the workhouse in Battersea from other parishes.

Women formed the major group in receipt of poor relief outside the workhouse as well as within it. Without undertaking a sophisticated exercise in nominal linkage it is difficult to quantify precisely the number of recipients of relief who are mentioned in the vestry and workhouse committee minutes. It is, however, possible to say something about the gender breakdown of the applicants for relief. Those applicants mentioned in the vestry or workhouse committee minutes have been analysed by allocating each applicant a unique number, and where there is any doubt as to whether the same person is being referred to in different entries in the records they have been treated as two individuals. Such a method certainly overstates the number of applicants for relief. Even so it is clear that the profile of those engaging with the poor relief system was strongly gendered, with female applicants outnumbering men in a ratio of approximately 2:1. It is noticeable that on a considerable number of occasions women applied for relief on behalf of their husbands. For example the wife of George Adams applied twice on his behalf in 1783 as he was laid up

with rheumatism and unable to work.[97] It is possible that women were viewed by those who distributed relief as more deserving recipients and that they therefore chose to act as advocates for the men in their families. The number of children who benefited from relief outside the workhouse is also difficult to quantify: on occasion the number of children in a family is given but more often the minutes refer to the applicant 'and family' or 'children'. Common reasons for seeking relief were the illness or incapacity of the breadwinner, unemployment, abandonment of wives and families, widowhood, pregnancy both within and outside marriage and a need for support in the form of clothing when entering service. As we have already seen a number of recipients of relief had multiple contacts with the relief system both in and outside the workhouse. An examination of some of these pauper life histories will demonstrate multiple causes of poverty at work within the experience of one family.

Mary Archer, the wife of Thomas Archer, first appeared in the records in April 1780 when she requested an increase in her allowance as her husband had gone to sea. Having considered her case, the workhouse committee ordered that an inventory of her goods be taken and that she and her three children be brought into the workhouse.[98] Ten months later, she applied to leave the workhouse with the children and was given 2s 6d.[99] She struggled to make ends meet and in September 1781 she applied for relief again as she was behind with the rent and the children had been ill.[100] This time she was granted 5s and 4s per month. The following January she applied for a pair of sheets and was granted 2s 6d to purchase a pair.[101] The family continued to require

[97] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (26 April 1783, 24 April 1783).
[98] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (8 April 1780).
[99] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (24 February 1781).
[100] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (1 September 1781).
[101] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (19 January 1782).

support from the parish and in January 1783 Mary applied for an additional allowance and was granted 1s per week until further notice.[102] The absence of the husband and father seems to have been the catalyst for the Archer family's descent into poverty. The workhouse committee's initial response to their plight was to commit the family to the workhouse but the committee seems to have been equally disposed to provide outdoor relief. In this case admission to and discharge from the workhouse seems to have been a flexible process negotiated between the applicant and the representatives of the parish. The Craft family also experienced multiple contacts with the poor relief system in different forms. Over a seven year period, Thomas and Ann Craft make thirteen appearances in the minutes. Their reasons for seeking relief included illness, lameness, unemployment, admission to hospital and a request for clothing for a son when he entered a place in service. Ann spent time in the workhouse in 1780 and Thomas was admitted in October 1785 and again in December of that year.[103] Support to the family outside the workhouse took the form of grants of clothing and what appear to have been one-off sums of money. The experience of the Craft family mirrored that of Mary Archer and her children: their encounters with the poor relief system were intermittent and ongoing, prompted by varied life events and crises. Admission to the workhouse was one tool with which the parish authorities met their needs, but it was not the only one, nor did it offer a permanent solution.

Amongst the men who are identified in the vestry and workhouse committee minutes as applicants for relief, and whether they were applying on their own behalf or had someone to speak for them, illness or unemployment formed the basis of most of their claims. Several of the men applying for relief

[102] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (25 January 1783).
[103] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (6 May 1780, 29 October 1785 and 3 December 1785).

had been treated at St Thomas's Hospital, a not unusual experience for Battersea paupers: for example Thomas Smith was treated there after having had his foot run over by a waggon.[104] As in the case of their female contemporaries certain male applicants experienced multiple encounters with the poor relief system. In such cases the nature of the relief given could vary over time. Thomas Kennett and his wife are listed on a number of occasions, both as a recipient of a coat from the Henry Smith charity and as the recipients of a half peck loaf and two or three pounds of mutton.[105] John Bonnick, his wife and seven children, also received relief on a several occasions. In 1779 the family were recorded as living in distress and the overseers paid £1 3s 6d to redeem Bonnick's goods which had been seized in lieu of unpaid rent.[106] A year later his wife was a widow drawing a pension of 5s per week from the parish.[107] Here the illness and subsequent death of the breadwinner plunged the family into crisis. Where the applicant for relief was the head of a large family, the presence of children seems to be a supplementary rather than a primary cause of poverty. When the number of children in the family is referred to, it is usually mentioned in addition to some other reason for financial distress. An unusual case was that of Francis Piper, who, having lost his boat in bad weather and with a wife and four children to provide for, applied to the parish for assistance with the purchase of a new boat.[108] He was granted three guineas towards the purchase cost. In this case it was the total loss of Francis's means of livelihood that was emphasised, together with the fact that he had been apprenticed in the parish.

[104] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (21 July 1781).
[105] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (31 October 1778 and 13 March 1779).
[106] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (21 August 1779).
[107] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (15 January 1780).
[108] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (21 September 1782).

Just as the economic pressures of a large family were not an automatic route to the receipt of parish relief, neither was old age. We have seen that the majority of the male population of the workhouse in 1778 was elderly. However, the decisions recorded in the committee minutes suggest that old age alone was not a guarantee of parish relief.[109] Thomas Berry was admitted to the workhouse in November 1778 as he was aged seventy-three and not able to work.[110] Six months later he was discharged from the workhouse only to seek re-admittance in October 1779. This time he was refused relief without an order from the Justices 'not being thought a proper Object and able to get his living out of the House'.[111] Thomas Hall applied for a pair of shoes in 1783 as he was 'old and past labour': again the emphasis was placed equally on his age and inability to work.[112] Similarly Hannah Pugh was admitted to the workhouse at the age of sixty-eight as she was not able to get her living.[113] An instructive insight into the parish authorities' attitude towards their responsibilities towards the elderly is provided by the case of Sam Pollard the elder. In January 1781 Sam Pollard applied for assistance from the parish as he said he was aged and incapable of working. His son John was summoned before the full vestry and declared himself 'an utter stranger to his father's intentions at the same time he desired his Brother Mr Sam Pollard might be informed therewith'.[114] Only the most serious cases came before the full vestry, and John Pollard, as the main supplier of bread to the workhouse, would have been well known to the members of the vestry. In September the elder Sam Pollard again applied for relief and the committee 'Ordered that the Overseers be desired to acquaint his

[109] This is in accordance with the conclusion drawn by Susannah Ottoway. Ottoway, pp.72-73.
[110] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (14 November 1778).
[111] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (2 October 1779).
[112] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (15 February 1783).
[113] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (14 November 1778).
[114] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (24 January 1781).

son John therewith to know what his intentions were concerning him as he had been acquainted by the Officers if he became chargeable to the parish they should (according to law) expect to be reimbursed whatever they were at in keeping him'.[115] A fortnight later John and his brother advised the committee that they would contribute 1s 6d per week towards their father's upkeep.[116] It seems that Battersea parish was prepared to provide support in the workhouse to the elderly who were no longer able to earn their own living, but that they expected family members to contribute to their upkeep when they were able to do so. The parish authorities appear to have been well aware of their legal rights and prepared to invoke them or the threat of them when necessary.[117]

The authorities were mindful of the effect of their decisions on the level of the poor rate and this is nowhere more evident than in their deliberations regarding the implementation of the settlement laws. Some of those seeking relief from the Battersea vestry had their settlement in neighbouring parishes, as in the cases of Mary Griffiths, the subject of a disputed settlement with Lambeth, or William Barker, who was allowed 1s until the master of the workhouse could establish whether he had become a parishioner of Wandsworth.[118] Movement between these neighbouring communities appears to have been frequent and we find the officers of Battersea parish being dispatched to track down absent husbands, such as the husband of Mary Wallis, last seen working at the Spread Eagle in Epsom.[119] Some cases of settlement appear far from clear cut: in 1777 it was established that William Whithorn's settlement lay in Putney, yet a year later there were four Whithorn

[115] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (1 September 1781).
[116] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (15 September 1781).
[117] This is consistent with the argument advanced by Thane in 'Old People and their Families in the English past', in *Charity, self-interest and welfare,* ed. by Daunton.
[118] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (22 July 1780 and 31 July 1784).
[119] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (29 May 1784).

children in the Battersea workhouse and in 1780 Battersea reimbursed Putney £1 16s 10d for the cost of the funeral of William's wife.[120] Other applicants for relief came from further afield, including Ann Jones and Mary Oakes from Shropshire.[121] Daniel Lysons recounts how the market gardens of Battersea attracted labourers from Shropshire and Wales, and it seems likely that some of those seeking relief from the Battersea authorities had been attracted to the parish by the prospect of agricultural work in this well paid sector.[122] Battersea may have offered employment opportunities to those from less prosperous areas of the country, but it in turn experienced the pull of the metropolis. Between 1778 and 1785 there were eighteen admissions to Battersea workhouse by order of the Justices, including a mother and her four children. The majority of these orders were made by the Justices in London parishes returning those in need of parish relief to their place of settlement in Battersea. Two applicants were returned from the neighbouring parish of Lambeth, one from Streatham, one from St. Paul's Shadwell, one from St. George Hanover Square, one from St. Andrew Holborn, one from St. Sepulchre London, one from St. Paul's Covent Garden, one from St. Leonard's Shoreditch, one from St. James Westminster and one from St. Luke's Chelsea. The profile of those who sought and obtained relief from the Battersea parish authorities points to frequent movement across local parish boundaries, with the proximity of London exerting a powerful attraction for the residents of Battersea, and with Battersea in turn acting as magnet for those from further afield who were seeking employment.

[120] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (2 January 1777), BP3/7/2 (January 1778) and BP/1/1/3(14 October 1780).
[121] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (16 September 1780 and 20 November 1779).
[122] Lysons, I, p.27 'Most of the women travel on foot from Shropshire and North-Wales in the spring; and, as they live at a very cheap rate many of them return to their own country much richer than when they left it.'

How the vestry conceptualised poverty and defined the poor's right to relief was determined as much by the identity of those refused relief as by the identity of those who received it. We have seen that the entitlement to relief was partly decided by the application of the settlement laws, but how these were enforced was influenced by a variety of factors which the parish authorities took into account. The workhouse committee may have been prepared to provide relief to adults whose labour was needed in the market gardens even though their settlement lay in Shropshire, but they were quick to return the orphan children of Samuel and Ann Church to the parish of their father's settlement in Worcestershire.[123] Presumably a hard-headed decision was taken about the likely future cost the children represented to the parish. The committee were also quick to identify any attempt to manipulate the relief system by applicants: Rebecca Taylor's application to enter the workhouse was refused as it was felt that she simply wanted lodgings while seeking work.[124] Others were refused relief on moral grounds: Mary Spencer applied for a pair of shoes and was refused because of her past conduct.[125] The right to relief was a matter of negotiation and the outcome was by no means certain. Other examples of application for relief being refused can be cited, and once relief had been granted the names and circumstances of those in receipt of relief were closely monitored by the workhouse committee. Samantha Williams has shown that in Campton and Shefford pensioners did leave the relief lists and this is also true in Battersea.[126] A number of instances are recorded in the minutes where the allowance of a parish pensioner is discontinued, for example in the cases of Mary Bonnick, once she recovered from illness, and Sarah Selway, who had

[123] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (4 September 1779).
[124] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (7 August 1779).
[125] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (14 June 1783).
[126] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle,* pp. 118-119.

received an allowance after her husband left her and their three children.[127] Neither was old age a guarantee that the applicant would remain on the pension list indefinitely: Mr and Mrs Wyatt were granted an allowance of 2s per week in December 1779 as they were old and 'almost past labour', only to have the allowance discontinued a month later.[128] The workhouse committee, usually meeting weekly during this period, was alert to any changes in the circumstances of applicants for relief and quick to curtail relief when it was no longer justified.

The committee's careful monitoring of the list of those in receipt of weekly pensions provides an insight into the identity of the recipients and allows us to make a tentative comparison between those in receipt of relief in the workhouse and those in receipt of out-relief. At their meeting on Saturday, 31 October 1778 the workhouse committee considered the list of those receiving a weekly pension outside the workhouse and reached the following decisions.[129] Widow Cowper's pension of 1s 6d was to be continued, Richard Worm was allowed 1s 3d, Thomas Hancock's pension of 2s was continued, as were the pensions of John Childs, Widow Hill and Widow Parsons. Widow Johnson was taken into the workhouse and John Butcher and his family were allowed 1s 6d. It seems that at this time the list of those in receipt of a weekly pension outside the workhouse comprised only six names, three of whom are identified as widows. The case of Widow Johnson may afford some insight into how the weekly pension list was compiled. We have seen that at the end of October 1778 she was admitted into the workhouse. At the workhouse committee meeting of 5 December her daughter, Ann, delivered a message from Isaac

[127] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (19 January 1782 and 29 June 1782).
[128] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (11 December 1779 and 15 January 1780).
[129] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (31 October 1778).

Akerman, a local resident and JP, requesting the committee to consider her case.[130] The committee duly did so but responded that 'the Committee are still of opinion they cannot with justice or propriety relieve her out of the House'. The committee instead ordered that Widow Johnson was to have 3lb of mutton and a quarter loaf. It would appear that admission to the weekly pension list was a privilege granted to only a few of the poor. What exactly the criteria for admission to the list were is unclear. At a time when the list of those in receipt of a weekly pension ran to only half a dozen names, the population of the workhouse was significantly larger. In October 1778 the workhouse journal recorded seventy inmates and in November the number of inmates had risen to seventy-six.[131] It is clear that admission to the workhouse provided the members of the Battersea vestry with their preferred means of providing regularly for the poor of the parish.

If we accept that admission to the workhouse was the chosen method for caring for the poor of Battersea, then the rise in the number of admissions must indicate an increase in the underlying level of poverty in the parish. Identifying every individual in receipt of relief, whether within the workhouse or outside is, however, problematic, because of the difficulty of securely identifying individuals referred to in various guises in the records. Furthermore, those in receipt of casual relief from the overseers are unlikely to be captured in the surviving sources. In 1778, the year for which the most comprehensive spread of records survives, the names of 143 men, women and children have been identified receiving some form of relief.[132] These figures can be considered in the context of the number of occupied properties in the parish and the likely number of

[130] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (5 December 1778).
[131] WHS, BP/3/2/3 (1778).
[132] These names are drawn from the Battersea vestry and workhouse minutes, inmates register and clothing book.

inhabitants.[133] Writing in 1792 Lysons stated that 340 houses in the parish were occupied.[134] This figure is consistent with the rate book for 1776 in which 334 householders have been identified in the first and second quarters and 320 householders in the third and fourth quarters.

If we attempt to pull these threads together, it seems clear that the makeup of the workhouse population was influenced both by individual life-cycle crises and by more widespread economic pressures. The rise in the number of inmates, especially children, from 1783 onwards suggests that families were increasingly constrained, by one or more of these factors. The sources provide limited information about the occupations of those in receipt of relief, but there are hints that a number of them were employed in agriculture, fishing, domestic service and manufacturing. The economy of Battersea was becoming increasingly diversified but despite this it was still adversely affected by the weather and poor harvests. In August 1782 the vestry petitioned Lord Spencer, to 'grant permission for the Common Field to be kept shut such time as he shall think proper for the relief of the Landholders, the Harvest being so backward, as it will be impossible for the farmers to get in their crops in the usual time'.[135] The following year, 1783, sees a small rise in the number of inmates in the workhouse in the spring, followed by a sharp fall in June, before the numbers rose again. T. S. Ashton has drawn attention to the high price of bread in subsequent years and the knock-on effect of rising prices on aspects of the wider economy such as distilling.[136] Manufacturing in Battersea was in part dependent on the production of grain, with a mill in Battersea Fields and a large

[133] See p.30.
[134] Lysons, I, p40.
[135] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (17 August 1782).
[136] T.S Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England1700-1800* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp.24, 36-37.

scale distillery on the site of York House. It appears that when faced with increasing demand for regular poor relief, the Battersea authorities met that need by expanding provision in the workhouse. This increase in provision included more children entering the workhouse thus relieving pressure on overstretched families.

From an examination of the minutes of the vestry and of the workhouse committee we have analysed who sought relief from the parish and the circumstances which prompted them to do so. Those seeking relief were primarily women and children, the elderly and the infirm. The demand for irregular relief was met by a mix of remedies: by one-off payments of cash, by short term weekly payments, by gifts in kind and by charity. However, the vestry's preferred means of providing longer-term, regular relief was to admit claimants to the workhouse. This followed a long established pattern, and we should note the workhouse's physical presence in the centre of the village. As we shall see, by accommodating an increasing number of children within the workhouse, the vestry met their immediate economic needs at the same time as providing education and skills to enhance their future prospects. The use of the workhouse as the prime means of providing poor relief was a conscious decision made by and overseen by leading members of the vestry.

We are beginning to gain a sense of the Battersea vestry's response to the problem of poverty in the parish during our period. It is clear who sought relief and were deemed worthy of support by the vestry. It is also apparent that although the vestry offered both outdoor relief and admission to the workhouse, it was the workhouse which dominated provision for the poor of the parish. In particular it can be seen that when families faced economic pressure, often

occasioned by the loss or absence of a parent, the policy of the vestry was to admit one or more of the children into the workhouse. In subsequent chapters we will examine the reasons for their reliance on the workhouse in preference to alternative forms of relief, and whether the vestry were driven primarily by economic considerations or whether there were other motives or ideals which influenced their decisions.

6. Patterns of Spending

At a meeting of the vestry in April 1781, George Errington, the overseer, presented those assembled with a comparison of the cost of feeding and providing for the poor in 1770 and the equivalent cost in 1780.[137] As the minutes record, the cost had 'considerably increased to the great disadvantage of the parish'. At the same meeting a number of complaints were recorded against Robert and Christian Goodfellow, the master and mistress of the workhouse, while at a meeting of the workhouse committee the previous year it had been noted that the expenses of the workhouse were high considering the time of year and that they had greatly increased since the new master and mistress took up office.[138] The anxiety of the members of the vestry regarding the increase in expenditure was further evident in their discussions as to whether or not they should farm the poor. The debate rumbled on through the autumn and winter of 1779 until the decision was taken in March 1780 that any consideration of farming the poor should be postponed indefinitely.[139] Were the churchwardens and members of the vestry justified in their concern about rising expenditure and their suspicion that some of the blame lay with mismanagement of the workhouse? James Taylor has pointed out that the quality of leadership and governance in a workhouse could be crucial to its success, and the complaints against the Goodfellows were certainly many and

[137] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (13 April 1781).
[138] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (2 September 1780).
[139] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (23 March 1780).

varied. Clearly the underlying trends in expenditure do warrant closer examination.[140]

We are able to make some tentative comparisons between the expenditure in 1770 and 1780 by a careful analysis of the extant sources. The workhouse journal records expenditure for both years and a fairly direct comparison can be made between the two. In 1770 the workhouse spent a total of £279 6s 7d on consumables and by 1780 the comparable figure had risen to £400 15s 6d. The expenditure on non-consumables, which included salaries and administrative costs, amounted to £328 19s 3 ½d in 1770 and by 1780 this had risen to £387 13s 3d. The figure for 1780, however, included spending on 'casuals' for one month of £6 8s 8d and spending on 'weekly and casuals' of £48 18s 6d covering a nine month period, items which do not appear to have been included in earlier years. The vestry which met in April 1781 were certainly correct then in their perception that day to day spending on the poor in the workhouse had risen over the preceding ten years. What they appear to have failed to take into account when they attributed the rise in costs to mismanagement is that the number of poor accommodated within the workhouse had also risen. The figures recorded in 1770 are less comprehensive than those for 1780: the workhouse journal records the number of inmates for only five months in 1770. Even so, the rise in the number of inmates is striking: in 1770 the mean number of inmates in the workhouse each month was fifty-two and by 1780 it had risen to seventy-nine. It is less easy to compare outdoor relief in the two years: the poor rate book containing the overseers' disbursements survives for 1770 but not for 1780. We have seen that the workhouse journal for 1780 recorded spending on 'casuals' and 'weekly

[140] James S. Taylor, 'The Unreformed Workhouse', in *Comparative Development in Social Welfare,* ed. by E. W. Martin (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972), pp.57-84.

and casuals' totalling £55 7s 2d for that year, whereas ten years earlier a figure for 19s 6d spent on 'casuals' appears in the overseers' disbursements under the name of one of that year's overseers, William Pace. Clearly the disparity between the two figures is significant and although they may not be directly comparable, it does suggest that the vestry's concern about rising costs was not without foundation.

The desire of the vestry and workhouse committee to hold down and control costs is demonstrated in a number of ways. It is apparent from the minutes that suppliers to the workhouse were held to account by the committee: they were requested to produce itemised bills specifying the unit cost of the items supplied, bills were to be submitted by 5th of each month and they were to indicate on their bills any arrears owing to them.[141] No goods were to be ordered for the workhouse without the approval of the overseers and the monthly bills received were regularly compared with the vouchers.[142] The committee made a point of inspecting the provisions in the workhouse and watching the bread being weighed, and on several occasions the baker, John Pollard, was taken before the local Justices and fined for supplying short-weight.[143] The overseers in their turn were also subject to the scrutiny of the workhouse committee and were instructed to advise the committee how much they had paid out and to whom. As part of their supervision of the workhouse, the committee routinely inspected the list of inmates and their numbers were recorded in the minutes: with the cost of relief in mind, this oversight also extended to those in receipt of weekly pensions. On occasion those

[141] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (11 April 1778), BP/1/1/3 (11April 1780), BP/3/1/4 (2 May 1778).
[142] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (14 November 1778), BP/3/1/5 (18 March 1780).
[143] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (11 November 1780 and 29 December 1781).

parishioners who received weekly pensions were required to attend the committee in person so that their allowances could be reviewed.[144]

We have already seen the reluctance of the workhouse committee to expand the list of those in receipt of a weekly pension. A closer examination of the parish's expenditure on outdoor relief and of spending in the workhouse may reveal whether or not this policy was justified by economic considerations. The expenditure recorded in the workhouse journal falls broadly into two categories: consumables and services provided in the workhouse, and a second, broader category which will be examined in more detail later, which encompasses spending on the 'weekly and casuals' lists amongst other items. Expenditure on consumables is recorded routinely each month alongside the number of inmates. In 1778 the annual expenditure on consumables amounted to £425 14s 1d, in 1779 to £444 13s 3d, in 1780 to £400 15s 6d, in 1781 to £459 15s 5d, in 1782 to £381 9s 7d, in 1783 to £451 7s 4d, in 1784 to £515 4s 1d and in 1785 to £464 7s 5d. No figures for weekly or casual expenditure appear in the accounts for 1778 or 1779 but thereafter expenditure is recorded in whole or part for the next six years (Table 2).

[144] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (31 October 1778).

Table 2. Expenditure on weekly and casuals 1780-1785

Year and month	Weekly list	Casuals	Weekly and casuals list	Sundries
	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
Expenditure 1780		6.8.8 (1 month)	48.18.6 (9 months)	
Expenditure 1781		21.4.2 (5 months)	5.13.4 (1 month)	13.17.10
Expenditure 1782		44.13.7 (9 months)		
Expenditure 1783	5.14.0 (3 months)	9.5.6 (3 months)	74.11.10 (6 months)	
Expenditure 1784		71.15.3 (12 months)		
Expenditure 1785		59.6.8 (9 months)		

Table 2 summarises the detailed figures in Appendix I

Although the figures for spending on outdoor relief are incomplete in most years, it is evident that spending in this area was dwarfed by day to day spending within the workhouse. We could attempt to extrapolate a full year's figures from those we have, but this is a risky strategy as expenditure on outdoor relief varied considerably throughout the year. The expenditure is described in the workhouse journal as 'weekly', 'casual' or 'weekly and casual', but it appears likely that these terms were often being used interchangeably. It is, however, possible to discern a peak in the spending on outdoor relief in the autumn and winter of 1783 and the spring of 1784. In the last three months of 1783 spending rose to £59 10s 7d compared with £15 1s 3d in the previous

quarter. It remained relatively high in the spring of 1784 at £35 10s 3d (presumably a quarterly figure although not specifically recorded as such) before falling back in the summer. The pattern of spending in the workhouse lagged slightly behind that of outdoor relief, with workhouse expenditure peaking in March 1784 at £66 15s 7d compared with £34 17s 18d the previous month. It should perhaps be noted that the underlying weekly rate of expenditure per inmate was exceptionally high that March at 4s per head. In April monthly expenditure in the workhouse fell to £44 6s 6d, still a relatively high figure, and monthly expenditure continued to remain high throughout the remainder of 1784. As we have already seen the number of inmates in the workhouse rose during the winter of 1783 and remained high during the summer of 1784. It is possible, indeed probable, that the patterns of expenditure evident in the distribution of indoor relief and outdoor relief at this time reflect differing responses by the vestry to the same set of economic circumstances.

The level of expenditure on consumables and services within the workhouse was the product of two factors: the number of inmates and the level of expenditure per head per week which was recorded each month in the workhouse journal. During the course of a year expenditure per head per week could show wide variation; for example in 1779 it varied between 1s 10d per head per week in October and 3s 7d in March, and in 1784 between 1s 10d per head per week in February and 4s in March. The annual mean expenditure per head fluctuated within a narrower band. In 1778 mean expenditure per head per week stood at its highest during this period at 2s 9d per head per week, while in 1780 and 1782 it had dropped to 2s 3d per head per week. The mean expenditure per head in 1784 stood at 2s 6d per week, lower than in 1778, 1779 and 1781. This reinforces the argument that the sustained increase in daily

expenditure in the workhouse in 1784 was driven by an increase in the number of inmates and not by an unusually high level of spending per head . It is evident from analysis of the expenditure on indoor and outdoor relief that the authorities in Battersea regarded the workhouse as central to their provision for the poor of the parish. In contrast Samantha Williams has shown that in the Bedfordshire settlements she examined the workhouse had little or no role to play in providing for the poor, while John Broad has revealed more diverse patterns of provision at work elsewhere.[145] Meanwhile Jeremy Boulton and David Green have demonstrated that the workhouse played an important role in the welfare provision available in the metropolitan parishes: a similar pattern can be discerned south of the Thames in Surrey. [146] The workhouse in Battersea's neighbouring parish of Lambeth had opened with sixty spaces in 1726; by the early 1800s it had 270 spaces and was accommodating 400 inmates.[147] Other neighbouring parishes were also able to accommodate substantial numbers in their workhouses: the 1777 overseers' returns to parliament gave a capacity of thirty for Streatham, seventy for Putney and 120 for Wandsworth.[148] The Battersea vestry seems to have followed the London model in the emphasis that it placed on workhouse provision, whether as a supplement to or as a substitute for outdoor relief.

The numbers of inmates recorded monthly in the workhouse journal are consistent with those recorded in the workhouse committee minutes and discussed in an earlier chapter. In 1778 the mean monthly number of inmates was sixty-five, in 1779 it was seventy-one, in 1780 it was seventy-nine, in 1781

[145] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle,* p.35; John Broad, 'Parish Economies of Welfare'.
[146] Jeremy Boulton, 'Indoors or Outdoors?'.
[147] David R Green, 'Icons of the New System: Workhouse Construction and Relief Practices in London under the Old and New Poor Law, *London Journal,* 34 (3) (2009) 264-284.
[148] Peter Higginbotham, *The Workhouse Encyclopedia* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014), pp.325-6.

it was seventy-six, in 1782 it was seventy-four and in 1783 it was seventy-five, before it peaked at eight-five in 1784 and then fell slightly to eight-two in 1785. We have already noted the committee's reluctance to add to the weekly pension list, a small group which may have accounted for the weekly element of expenditure in Table 2. In October 1778 the list consisted of six names, less than a tenth of the number of inmates in the workhouse that month. The combined pensions of those named on the list (which ranged in value from 1s 3d per week to 2s per week), totalled 11s 3d per week, that is to say £2 5s 0d per month. Similarly if we look back to the overseer's disbursements for 1774 and 1775, the list of pensioners appears to be restricted to three names, typically in receipt of sums between 2s and 5s, although it is by no means clear what time period these amounts relate to. If spending on weekly pensions was tightly controlled and fairly consistent over the years, it follows that the pattern of spending on casual relief and the numbers relieved was subject to much greater variation. Expenditure on casual relief for the three months preceding June 1783 was £9 5s 6d, while casual relief for the same three month period in June 1785 totalled £21 8s 0d. Expenditure recorded as 'weekly and casuals' covering a nine month period in 1780 amounted to £48 18s 6d, whilst in 1783 six months' worth of expenditure similarly described came to £74 11s 10d. The workhouse journal does not identify or put a figure on the number of individual recipients of casual relief, and any attempt to quantify them must rely on information to be gleaned from the workhouse committee minutes.

Between 1778 and 1785 the workhouse committee minutes record 117 individual cash payments made to those seeking relief (Tables 3 and 4). The highest number, nineteen in all, was recorded in 1782, the lowest number, ten in 1784. It is not always clear from the minutes whether the payments granted

formed a weekly allowance or a one-off payment, and it has therefore been assumed, that unless the minutes specifically state that the payment is per week, that it constituted a one off payment. Nor is it possible to determine how long weekly allowances were granted for, but it is clear that they were subject to review, sometimes discontinued, sometimes increased and sometimes restarted. It is also apparent that some payments which were originally made as one-off grants were given repeatedly and came to take on the form of regular weekly allowances. In many instances the reason for an applicant seeking relief is not stated in the minutes but where a reason is given some recurrent themes emerge. By far the most common reason, given by applicants in twenty-seven cases, was illness, either of the applicants themselves or a member of their family. A further twelve pleaded unemployment, nine women had been abandoned by their husbands, and seven applicants claimed to be living in distress. Four applicants were widowed, four sought help with their rent and four sought assistance so that they could leave the workhouse. Other reasons for turning to the parish for assistance were given and of course an applicant might fall into more than one category.

Table 3. Weekly cash payments 1778-85

	5s pw	3s pw	2s 6d pw	2s pw	1s 6d pw	1s pw	6d pw
1778					3	1	
1779	1		1	1	1	1	1
1780	1		1	2	3	4	
1781			1			3	1
1782		2	1	2		4	
1783						1	
1784		2		1		2	
1785	1					1	
	3	**4**	**4**	**6**	**7**	**17**	**2**

Highlighted boxes include a weekly payment made in addition to an existing allowance

Table 4. One-off cash payments 1778-85

	5s +	4s	3s	2s 6d	2s	1s 6d	1s
1778				3	2	2	1
1779				4	4		2
1780		2	1		2		1
1781	5		1	1	1		1
1782	1		2	2	3	1	1
1783	4		1	4	4		
1784	3			1	1		1
1785	1		4	1	5		1
	14	**2**	**9**	**16**	**22**	**3**	**8**

The most common weekly payments granted in response were of low value: 1s per week (17), 1s 6d per week (7) and 2s per week (6). Larger weekly payments were comparatively rare: 5s per week (3), 3s per week (4), and in the case of weekly payments for 5s appear only to have been granted to widows or abandoned wives with a number of children to support. This is in accordance with Samantha Williams' findings that higher value weekly payments were made to the heads of single parent families.[149] These weekly payments probably fell into a different category from the half dozen weekly pensions previously referred to, three of which were granted to widows. The committee minutes give the impression that the weekly payments currently under discussion were a response to specific needs and life crises and were constantly reviewed and adjusted, and for Battersea this group may correspond to Steven King's *often* poor.[150] The present study focuses on a relatively short timespan and is therefore unable to place the number of recipients of relief in the context of longer term trends. It is apparent however as other historians have found, that the majority of payments were of low value and supplementary in their nature.[151] Alongside the weekly payments the workhouse committee also authorised a series of one-off cash payments. Slightly more one-off payments than weekly payments were recorded, but some of these represented repeat payments or additional payments to the same recipients. The beneficiaries of these irregular one-off payments can be seen as Steven King's *sometimes* poor.[152] The most frequently granted single payments were 2s (22), 2s 6d (16)

[149] Samantha Williams, 'Poor relief, labourers' households and living standards in rural England c. 1770-1834: a Bedfordshire case study', *Economic History Review,* 58 (3) (2005), 485-519 (p.516).
[150] King, *Poverty and Welfare in England,* p.59.
[151] King, *Poverty and Welfare in England,* pp.150-153; Henry French, 'An irrevocable shift: detailing the dynamics of rural poverty in southern England, 1762-1834: a case study', *Economic History Review*, 68 (3) (2015), 769-805 (p.777).
[152] King, *Poverty and Welfare in England,* p.59.

and 5s (13). The smaller value payments are spread evenly throughout the period, but the larger grants of 5s or 8s only begin to be made from 1781 onwards. It would nevertheless be unwise to place too much emphasis on the chronology of relief payments, because just at the point in the autumn of 1783 and the spring of 1784 when the financial records show expenditure rising significantly, the minutes become silent on the subject of individual payments. The circumstances in which the larger grants are made can be broadly categorised into two categories: those intended to help the recipient through a time of crisis, such as the birth of a child, illness or the absence of the family breadwinner; and those intended to reduce the dependence of the beneficiary on the parish. Into this latter category fell the allowance of 5s paid to Elizabeth Carter to enable her to leave the House and reside with a relation in Newbury.[153] These findings support those of historians in other areas of south east England.[154]

An examination of the purchasing power and relative generosity of these payments is instructive. Steven King has suggested that the weekly male wages of labourers in the arable south were less than 8s per week prior to 1801, but Battersea seems to have operated within a higher wage economy. [155] Writing in 1792 Lysons reported that the men working in the market gardens earned 10-12s per week and the women 5-7s per week.[156] As Samantha Williams and others have pointed out, most household budgets relied upon the combined incomes of the husband and wife and such children as were of working age.[157] The most frequently granted weekly payments in Battersea, which fell within the range of 1-2s per week, can thus only have provided a supplement to other

[153] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (15 September 1781 and 22 June 1782).
[154] French, 'An irrevocable shift' p.778.
[155] King, *Poverty and Welfare in England,* p.154.
[156] Lysons, I, p.27.
[157] Williams, *'Poor relief, labourers' households and living standards'.*

sources of income.[158] Even the larger weekly payments of 5s per week granted to lone female heads of households can hardly have replaced the earnings of an absent male bread winner. Similarly the many small value, one off payments recorded in the minutes merely provided a supplement to family budgets under strain, as demonstrated by the three payments of 2s, 2s 6d and 2s made to George Adams and his wife during his illness in 1783.[159] Likewise the six low level weekly pensions which have been referred to earlier were probably only intended to support individuals. Approximately half of payments made at the level of 1s per week were made to individuals, but many other modest payments were made to couples or those with dependent children. In Battersea nearly 50% of payments in excess of 1s per week but less than 3s per week, were made to couples or individuals with dependent children. It is evident that many of the recipients of both weekly and one-off grants of cash relief in Battersea resided in some form of family unit, and that the relatively small grants were helping more beneficiaries than the nominal recipient. In contrast expenditure on those admitted to the workhouse is directly attributable to those individuals alone.

It might be supposed that the Battersea vestry's enthusiasm for institutional relief was driven by economic considerations but it is clear that admission to the workhouse was always a comparatively expensive means of providing for the poor of the parish. Even the lowest weekly expenditure at 1s 6d per head in May 1783 was fifty per cent more than the most common weekly payment of 1s per week to those receiving outdoor relief. The mean weekly

[158] Some context for these payments is provided by the payments made to nurses in Battersea employed by London parishes. St. James, Westminster paid its nurses 2s pw. and St. Martin-in-the-Fields paid 3s pw. exclusive of clothing. Jonas Hanway, *Letters on the importance of the rising generation of the labouring part of our fellow subjects;*(London: A. Millar and T. Cadell, 1767). Google ebook.
[159] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (26 April, 24 May, 31 May 1783).

expenditure per inmate ranged between 2s 3d in 1782 and 2s 9d in 1778, representing a higher level of expenditure than the majority of the weekly outdoor relief payments authorised by the workhouse committee. Once we take into account that these outdoor relief payments were often intended to provide relief to a couple or family, the expenditure within the workhouse looks increasingly expensive. An examination of two families who made use of both outdoor relief and admission to the workhouse at Battersea illustrates that workhouse provision here was indeed relatively expensive, but that the Battersea vestry decided upon a different course of action to some other vestries. In February 1781 Mary Archer applied to leave the workhouse with her three children, intending to keep a greenstall, and was given 2s 6d. By September she was in arrears with her rent and the workhouse committee allowed her 5s, and 4s per month. The sums involved are typical of the low level, supplementary weekly payments which the parish was distributing at this time, and of the larger one-off sums intended to set a family on its feet. By comparison, when the Archer family departed from the workhouse in February 1781, the weekly rate for the maintenance of the inmates was 2s 2d and it had therefore cost the parish 8s 8d per week to maintain Mary and her three children in the workhouse for a week. We have seen that admission to the weekly pension list was a closely maintained privilege and this remained so even when at first sight economic rationale did not support the policy. The three widows who received pensions in October 1778 received pensions of 1s 6d, 2s and 2s respectively. Widow Johnson's appeal to be relieved outside the workhouse was refused and she was temporarily admitted even though at that time the weekly rate for maintenance in the workhouse was 2s 10d per week. Within a few weeks, however, Widow Johnson had left the workhouse and was

in receipt of grants of bread and meat, reminding us how flexibly the workhouse was used by the parish authorities.

The weekly costs of maintaining the inmates in the workhouse equate to the cost of what might be termed consumables and services. That is to say they encompass payments for bread, meat, milk, beer and other foodstuffs, and costs involved in providing care. The workhouse journal also records a series of other payments which relate directly to the workhouse such as the salaries of the master and mistress and the surgeon and clerk, together with rent for the workhouse itself, and repairs to fabric of the workhouse; all overheads which need to be borne in mind when we consider the cost of accommodating the poor. A further set of payments is more ambiguous: the journal includes extensive expenditure on items such as shoes and fabric and it is not clear whether this is solely to provide for the inmates or whether it may include items provided as benefits in kind to the recipients of outdoor relief. As already discussed, from 1780 onwards the workhouse journal begins to record the payment of casual and weekly relief. Where both the workhouse journal and the overseers' disbursements survive from the mid-1770s it is apparent that the same suppliers are named in both records, and that certain payments, such as salaries, rent and administrative costs are duplicated.

The workhouse committee made regular grants of clothing to the poor of the parish and shoes were the most frequently distributed items. During this eight year period the workhouse made use of three local shoemakers and the journal records considerable sums being paid to them (Table 5).

Table 5. Expenditure on shoemakers

	£ s d
1778	34.19.8
1779	21.3.1
1780	22.8.3
1781	25.19.2
1782	24.16.10
1783	29.9.6
1784	27.12.4
1785	21.12.0

Historians have shown that the cost of clothing formed a significant proportion of the household budgets of the poor, and that parish authorities often provided items of clothing for struggling families.[160] Samantha Williams suggests that amongst occasional recipients of relief in the form of clothing, older children may have been prioritised because they were being fitted out for apprenticeship or service. In Battersea there are a number of examples of both adults and children being provided with clothing by the parish when they hired themselves out or entered an apprenticeship. In December 1778 Ann Oakly was admitted to the workhouse aged thirteen. Six months later she was apprenticed to Mr. Barker, a member of the vestry, for three years and provided with a gown, an upper petticoat, a pair of shoes, a pair of stockings, two shifts and two aprons. The parish also undertook to provide £2 for clothing her.[161] The immediate cost

[160] Peter Jones, '"I cannot keep my place without being deascent"; Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle,* pp.42-44.
[161] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (12 and 19 June 1779).

to the parish was compensated for by the potential savings to be made in the future. Similar motives must have been at play in the case of Elizabeth Stockly. We know little of her age or background, other than that she spent a period of time in the workhouse before going out into service. Once again the parish provided her with a full set of clothing, and on this occasion the clerk recorded the agreement reached between the overseers and her employer. 'I do herby agree with Messrs Ralph Beckford and James Hill Overseers of the Parish of St Marys Battersea in the County of Surry to hire as a yearly servant Elizabeth Stockly for one year certain at five shillings per annum in Consideration of their Clothing her in a decent and satisfactory manner.'[162] Grants of clothing were also made to parishioners entering hospital. For example, Ann Craft, a frequent recipient of clothing, requested two shifts when she was going into hospital and in 1779 the mistress of the workhouse was instructed to make a shirt for John Butcher while he was in hospital.[163] Alongside the clothing funded by the poor rate, the workhouse committee annually distributed coats and gowns to six men and women under the terms of the Henry Smith charitable bequest. Parochial support and charitable relief together combined to meet the clothing needs of the poor of the parish. It appears that by providing clothes the authorities were not only satisfying an immediate need, but were hoping to establish some of their poor in employment and thus avoid future demands for parish support.

With future employment prospects in mind the parish also provided tools, such as a sickle, a basket to sell fruit from, and a grant of three guineas towards the purchase of a new boat.[164] Entries in the overseers' accounts from an earlier year suggest that the parish may have been accustomed to extend loans

[162] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (24 July 1779).
[163] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (14 June 1783 and 11 December 1779).
[164] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (21 September 1782).

for the purchase of boats, a large but vital item of expenditure in a riverside community. From time to time the parish stepped in to redeem goods which had been pawned or to assist with the payment of rent. The workhouse committee also made grants of food in the form of bread, mutton and tripe: these were given to a few applicants who at other times received occasional grants of cash, or who received food for several weeks in succession. In 1778, for example, Thomas Kennett and his wife received a half peck loaf and 2lb or 3lb of mutton for five consecutive weeks.[165] Benefits in kind in the form of non-clothing items do not appear to have been as widespread or as frequent as grants of clothing as can be seen from Table 6 below.[166] We have seen that the provision of clothing for children entering into apprenticeships formed a key element of parish spending and Battersea's use of apprenticeships will be examined in greater detail later. The parish authorities also provided various forms of medical care for poor parishioners, both within and outside the workhouse, and made use of the London hospitals when appropriate. This too will be considered further in a later chapter.

[165] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (October 1778).
[166] These grants mainly take the form of out-relief but also include some clothing for those entering service from the workhouse.

Table 6. Benefits in kind to recipients of out relief

1778-85

Type of relief granted	Number of times granted
Pair of shoes	24
Pair of sheets	2
Shift	6
Shirt	3
Stockings	6
Gown	5
Petticoat	5
Apron	3
Slips	4
Night cap	1
Handkerchief	1
Breeches	1
Stays	1
Cash for clothing	2
Half peck loaf	7
Quarter loaf	2
3lb mutton	3
2lb mutton	3
Tripe etc.	1
Basket to sell fruit in	1
Coals	2
Sickle	1
Cash for boat	1
Rent	4
Redeem pawned goods	2
Funeral costs	2

We have seen that the parish authorities in Battersea, acting through the workhouse committee, were prepared to decline applications for relief if necessary, but when relief was granted it encompassed a wide range of circumstances. Support for parishioners experiencing illness or unemployment

was readily forthcoming, albeit at a modest level which could have done no more than supplement other forms of income. Widows and abandoned wives were able to access larger grants, usually in the form of one off payments but occasionally as weekly payments. It is not possible to trace the duration of weekly payments, but it is clear that they were the subject of monitoring and review by the workhouse committee, and that they were intended as a time-limited intervention in the lives of the recipients. Long-term weekly pensions seem to have been a privilege accorded to a very small and restricted group.

Alongside expenditure on weekly payments and one-off cash payments the parish made regular grants of benefits in kind. These seem to have been wide ranging and responsive to the needs of the poor. The prime focus of the workhouse committee, however, seems always to have been on providing benefits which would enable the poor to be become more self-sufficient and which would decrease their dependence on the parish. These grants were designed both to meet immediate needs such as the provision of individual items of clothing, assistance with rent or the cost of a funeral, and to underpin the parish's longer term objectives. By redeeming goods from the pawnbroker, by financing the purchase of tools and by clothing those entering service the parish hoped to alleviate future demands on the rate bill.

The Battersea vestry represented by its workhouse committee was deeply conscious of the cost of poor relief. It controlled access to relief, monitored the recipients of relief and demonstrated alertness to rising costs. In its accounting practices and its comparison of the cost of relief across the decades it exhibited a degree of sophistication. Even so there appears to have been little attempt to compare the relative costs of indoor and outdoor relief. The vestry considered and rejected potential cost saving measures such as

farming its poor, and remained committed to the workhouse in its existing form. In late 1783 and early 1784 rising expenditure on outdoor relief was followed a few months later by rising numbers inside the workhouse. The decision of the parish authorities to significantly increase the population of the workhouse cannot have been determined solely by financial calculations, for when all the costs involved were taken into consideration, this must have been a more expensive option.

Susannah Ottaway has argued that a decision to utilise the workhouse was not necessarily the product of economic logic, but might also reflect administrative convenience. In a comparison of workhouse usage in Terling in Essex and Ovenden in Halifax she shows how Terling increasingly relied on the workhouse to accommodate its elderly poor in the late eighteenth century, with the number of elderly inmates outpacing the number of elderly poor in the parish. In contrast the workhouse in Ovenden was used more flexibly with less emphasis on long term care for the elderly.[167] Elsewhere, in the two Bedfordshire communities examined by Samantha Williams, the local poor houses were small and under-utilised and made only a minor contribution to the poor relief regime, with outdoor relief forming the key element of relief policy.[168] In Battersea, the parish authorities used the workhouse flexibly in conjunction with low level, supplementary, outdoor relief. [169] Access to regular pensions was restricted, and when they were granted, they were usually of low value. For those experiencing the deepest poverty, the outdoor relief on offer can rarely have been sufficient to provide for their needs, and the workhouse formed the core of the parish's provision. As in Terling, it provided care for many of the

[167] Ottaway, pp.247-265.
[168] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-cycle*, pp.49-50.
[169] King, *Poverty and Welfare in England*, pp.162-164.

elderly poor, but our period also saw an increasing number of children accommodated in the workhouse alongside a fluid population of mostly female, working age adults. Admission to the workhouse was likely to have formed part of the life experience of many of the poor of Battersea at one time or another particularly in childhood or old age.

It is apparent that by opting to use the workhouse as the main means of providing for the poor, the parish chose a relatively expensive solution to the problem of poverty. In making this choice they were not guided by economic logic, although in other respects they showed themselves to be financially aware and sophisticated. Who and what influenced this decision, how it was funded, and how closely the operation of the workhouse was monitored all require further investigation.

7. Operation of the Vestry and Workhouse Committee

The response of the parish authorities to the claims of the poor was ultimately determined by the decisions of the parishioners at the weekly vestry. It was to this body that those responsible for administering poor relief in the parish were accountable. *The Survey of London*, dates the vestry's growing sense of identity to the period when the manor of Battersea was held by the first and second Viscount Bolingbroke in the 1740s and 1750s, and it is certainly during this period that the vestry began to meet weekly and to show an increased interest in the administrative arrangements for poor relief.[170] The overseers were instructed how to keep their accounts, arrangements were made for paying the christening and burial fees of the workhouse inmates, and the vestry clerk was given the responsibility for keeping the workhouse accounts.[171] The increasingly self-confident vestry also took the lead in the rebuilding of the parish church with the foundation stone being laid in 1775. The vestry of the late 1770s has been characterised as comprising three groups: the market gardeners, the owners of the factories along the river bank and the villa dwellers who resided around the Commons. To these might be added a fourth group, the local traders and craftsmen, many of whom supplied the workhouse.

During our period the vestry usually met regularly, with attendance varying from single figures to over forty. During the eight-year period (1778-85), 136 meetings are recorded with 181 parishioners and five clergymen in attendance. The occupations of over half of those who attended the vestry can

[170] *Survey of London, 49* p.7; WHS, BP/1/1/3 (10 January 1742).
[171] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (7 January 1755, 22 June 1756, 27 December 1756).

be discovered by comparing their names with the lists of those qualified for jury service in Surrey in the same years.[172] By far the largest occupational group was formed of twenty-four market gardeners and six farmers. A second group was represented by seven victuallers, while those engaged in the building trade formed a third. Those described as gentlemen and esquires numbered around two dozen, with the designation being fairly fluid and changing from year to year. When comparing the lists of those qualifying for jury service in Wimbledon for the years 1762 and 1788 with attendance at the vestry, Cowe notes that only one of those named in the lists never attended a vestry meeting.[173] This pattern is not replicated in Battersea, although like Wimbledon it had an open vestry. In 1782, a year which saw an extensive list of Battersea parishioners qualify for jury service, twenty-one of those who qualified never attended any vestry meetings. On the other hand, Benjamin Dogett, who played a key role in the vestry, does not figure at all amongst those eligible for jury service. The majority of vestry members who did attend meetings were leaseholders, but this may simply reflect the pattern of land tenure in the parish rather than telling us much about those vestry members who took a particularly active role in parish government in Battersea.[174]

Many vestry members put in an appearance only occasionally, but a smaller group attended more frequently and were energetic in managing the affairs of the parish. A list of those who regularly attended meetings of both the full vestry and the workhouse committee is set out in Appendix II, and a later chapter will examine in greater detail the influences which motivated them.

---

[172] Surrey, England, Jury-Qualified Freeholders and Copyholders, 1696-1824. www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 29 June 2020].
[173] *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes*, p. xiii.
[174] H.R. French, 'Social Status, Localism and the 'Middle Sort of People' in England 1620-1750', Past & Present, 166 (1) (2000), 66-99.

These men are representative of the pattern of landholding in the parish, including amongst their number both freeholders and copyholders but with leaseholders predominating. The group encompassed both newcomers to the parish such as Joseph Dixon and George Errington, and long-serving men like Dogett, who had first attended the vestry in the 1750s. Between the two extremes of those who rarely appeared at vestry meetings and those who were regular and committed members, lay a cohort who attended less frequently but who nonetheless served their turn as parish officers and contributed to parish business. By the 1770s Battersea, along with Wandsworth and Wimbledon, formed part of Earl Spencer's estate in south-west London. But unlike Wimbledon, there is no evidence of direct Spencer involvement in the vestry at Battersea, nor does the Earl's steward appear to have been an active presence.[175] The vacuum left by the absence of the major landowner created an opportunity for others to take the lead in the affairs of the vestry.

When it came to poor relief the vestry primarily concerned itself with the formulation of policy and the consideration of issues deemed too serious for the parish officers or the workhouse committee to handle. The vestry also determined the poor rate for the parish and oversaw its collection and disbursement. Samantha Williams has pointed out that, 'Historians still know very little about ratepaying, the proportion of the parish paying the rate, the wealth distribution of ratepayers and their familial characteristics'.[176] It seems clear that in Battersea in the late eighteenth century the basis for the poor rate was the land tax assessment, and several references occur in the vestry minutes to making a comparison between the poor rate assessment and the

[175] *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes*, pp. 55 and 65.
[176] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle*, p.71.

Land Tax Book.[177] As we have seen, a category of 'NC', appears in the Battersea rate books, and this same group also features in the land tax assessments. As Tate observed, it was the vestry which determined who should be excused payment of the poor rate, and we can see this decision making in operation in Battersea.[178] We should also remember that some of those who were most active in the vestry paid the highest rates, and had a vested interest in how they were spent (Appendix II). Occasionally the outcome of the Battersea vestry's deliberations is recorded, for example, the assessment for the premises belonging to William Jones was reduced from £215 to £100, as the premises were unoccupied and no manufacturing was being carried out there.[179] Further close oversight of the process of raising the poor rate was exercised through an annual review of those who failed to pay the rate: those whom it was felt were able to pay, but who had failed to do so, being summoned before the Justices.[180] Rates in Battersea were raised twice a year in arrears: that is to say the rate was determined after the expenditure for the relevant quarters had been incurred or sometimes while it was still being incurred. The relationship between income, expenditure and the needs of the poor was complex and unclear. Expenditure was incurred without reference to the likely income to be raised from that year's rate, which in turn was often set in ignorance of the full extent of the liabilities which had been incurred. Typically the rate was 2s 6d in the pound, rising to 3s for the financial years 1782-83 and 1784-85 (Table 7).

[177] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (29 June 1780).
[178] W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest*, 3rd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946; repr. Stroud: Phillimore, 2012), p.29.
[179] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (29 January 1785).
[180] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (15 July 1779).

Table 7. Poor Rate 1778-1785

	1st/2nd quarter	Rate approved	3rd/4th quarter	Rate approved
1778	1s	13/10/1778	1s 6d	30/3/1779
1779	1s 6d	3/10/1779	1s	25/03/1780
1780	1s 6d	29/06/1780	1s	4/01/1781
1781	1s 6d	2/08/1781	1s	23/02/1782
1782	1s 6d	27/07/1782	1s 6d	15/03/1783
1783	1s 6d	1/09/1783	No figure given	
1784	1s 6d	2/09/1784	1s 6d	29/01/1785
1785	1s 6d	25/06/1785	6d	17/12/1785

Some considerable time might elapse before the overseers presented their accounts to the vestry, but the system functioned effectively and any shortfall incurred by the outgoing overseers was reimbursed by the following year's overseers. The accounts of the overseers for the year 1778 were not approved until January 1780, but even so the balance of £1 11s 10d owing to them was ordered to be paid to them by that year's overseers.[181] As well as approving the overseers' annual accounts the vestry also audited their monthly accounts. The churchwardens occasionally drew the importance of this task to the attention of the parishioners: when publicising the meeting to approve the accounts, they

[181] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (27 January 1780).

would remind parishioners that attendance at the vestry meeting provided, 'the most likely means of Regulating the Expense of the Parish'.[182]

Although the vestry exercised oversight of the poor rate and made the policy decisions involved in distributing the funds raised, they delegated day to day decision making to the parish officers and the workhouse committee. As early as June 1742 some form of committee existed to oversee the workhouse, as the vestry minutes record that the master was to bring his accounts to the next month's vestry and that a monthly committee was to be held on the first Tuesday of the month after the vestry. In 1752 Benjamin Dogett put forward a motion to the vestry, seconded by Mark Bell, formally to establish a workhouse committee. Dogett was a regular attendee at the vestry and was to become a key figure on the workhouse committee. Mark Bell likewise regularly attended vestry meetings, and was to serve as churchwarden, even though he was a prominent member of the local Baptist Chapel. Dogett and Bell's motion proposed that membership of the committee should comprise the vicar, churchwardens and overseers, and those parishioners drawn from a list of eligible names, who within three months signed up to attend the committee. It was stipulated that attendance at the committee was required at least once every three months. The committee was to meet on the first Tuesday in the month and a quorum of five was laid down, with any one from the vicar, churchwardens and overseers obliged to form one of the quorum. The committee was empowered to make rules and regulations for the benefit of the workhouse and the parish in general by a majority decision. Any such decisions were to be reported to the vestry and if approved were to become standing

[182] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (19 September 1780).

orders.[183] In 1779 a new motion restating the position was put forward at the vestry meeting, and a new committee to oversee the running of the workhouse was appointed. Again a list of eligible parishioners was appended and it was stated that anyone paying an annual rent of more than £10 was eligible to attend.[184] With the criteria for membership set at this level, membership of the committee was open to a wide cross-section of parishioners. The committee now met at 11am. on a Saturday at the workhouse. Battersea was certainly not alone in looking to a committee smaller than the full vestry to govern the affairs of the workhouse: a few miles away at Wimbledon and similarly in the 1750s, the vestry were taking comparable measures to establish a committee to oversee their workhouse.[185]

As we have seen a large number of parishioners were eligible to attend the workhouse committee. The vestry minutes of February 1779 name fifty-seven such individuals, but the number who did attend was far fewer. In July 1778 the vestry clerk had been instructed to draw up a list of parishioners to attend the committee weekly in rotation: possibly just a piece of record keeping or perhaps reflecting concern about low levels of attendance.[186] Unsurprisingly the workhouse committee was dominated by a small group of men who were also active in vestry meetings. Between 1778 and 1785 Benjamin Dogett was present at 55 per cent of the committee meetings, Thomas Barker was present at 51 per cent of the meetings and Mungo Clark was present at 40 per cent of the meetings which took place. George Errington and Allyn Smith were also regular attendees, registering one hundred, and ninety-seven appearances respectively out of a possible 331 meetings. Although attendance was generally

[183] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (24 October 1752).
[184] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (16 February 1779).
[185] *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes*, p. 25 and 27.
[186] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (4 July 1778).

low and meetings were often postponed because they were inquorate, the nadir was reached in the autumn of 1783 and in 1784, when meetings were normally attended only by the overseers. This was a period of heavy expenditure on the poor and one might have expected more parishioners to become involved in the work of the committee. However, Errington had left Battersea by this point and Benjamin Dogett was to die in early 1786 and was perhaps already unwell. It seems that there was no one sharing their interest in poor relief to come forward to replace them.

In conjunction with the churchwardens and overseers, those who were regular attenders at the workhouse committee exercised enormous influence over the distribution of poor relief. Between them they represented the agricultural and manufacturing elements within the parish, and the interests of those whose residence was in Battersea, but whose professional and business interests lay in London. This small group of men controlled admission to and discharge from the workhouse and the distribution of outdoor relief in cash and in kind. Only the most unusual cases were referred back to the full vestry for their consideration. Although nominally a ‘Workhouse Committee’, the remit of the committee was far wider. Such was made clear in the early years of its operation when its responsibilities were still being defined. At a meeting in 1753 the committee laid down the procedure for the annual re-election of the beadle and set out his duties. In Battersea the beadle also acted as master of the workhouse and these duties included seeing the inmates to bed at night and enforcing the other workhouse rules. He was also to patrol the parish looking out for beggars, and inquiring into lodgers and inmates who had no settlement

certificate and might therefore become a burden on the parish.[187] Deciding on the nature and extent of the relief to be awarded to claimants, and monitoring its implementation formed a large part of the committee's business. The workhouse committee at Battersea operated a regime which encompassed both indoor and outdoor relief, and which also encompassed the strategic use of benefits in kind. The flexible use of both the workhouse and outdoor relief was central to the operation of the committee.

The members of the committee actively monitored the impact of their decisions, and a key aspect of this was their supervision of the master and mistress of the workhouse. Oversight of these officials took up much of the time of the committee and their appointment was a major event in the life of the vestry. We have seen that attendance at vestry meetings was often low: a notable exception to this was when a meeting was called to appoint a new master and mistress of the workhouse. In 1778 the mistress of the workhouse died and her widower retired as master. The names of four candidates were put forward for the vacant posts of master and mistress, and a form of hustings was held which was attended by seventy members of the vestry.[188] Three years later after a series of complaints about their behaviour, the posts were re-advertised and on this occasion forty-seven members of the vestry were present to vote.[189] The members of the vestry were no doubt well aware of the central role that the workhouse played in the delivery of poor relief in Battersea, and the important role of the master and mistress in how that relief was provided. Some of those voting may also have been conscious that at some point in the future they or

[187] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (17 April 1753).
[188] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (16 July 1778).
[189] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (5 June 1781).

members of their family might have to avail themselves of the workhouse, and thus the appointment of the master and mistress had a personal relevance.

What qualities were the vestry looking for when they appointed the master and mistress? Writing of the salaried workhouse masters of the first half of the eighteenth century, Tim Hitchcock says that they were often of low social standing and that when they were appointed the vestry looked for a good local reputation, the ability to keep accounts and the provision of someone of good standing to give a bond.[190] This certainly resonates with the situation in Battersea. Charles Stevens, the retired master described himself as 'gentleman' in his will, but he found it expedient to remain a resident of the workhouse after the appointment of his successor, although for how long is not known.[191] When his successor, Robert Goodfellow and his wife were appointed, they were one of four couples nominated by members of the vestry. Goodfellow was proposed by George Errington, and two of the other candidates were also nominated by one of the small group of men who dominated both the vestry and the workhouse committee. Each candidate was required to produce a certificate, signed by some of the parishioners, setting forth their suitability for the post, and the vacancy was then put to a vote in the vestry. When the vestry sought to replace the Goodfellows three years later, as a result of the many complaints made against them, the recruitment process was altogether more sophisticated. An advert was placed in the *Daily Advertiser* and the applications were considered at a meeting of the workhouse committee before a short list was submitted to the full vestry for consideration.[192] Thirteen applications were received for the post and this time the applicants were mainly the type of men

[190] Hitchcock, 'The English Workhouse', p.147.
[191] TNA PROB11/1069/149; Battersea Inmates Register July 1778.
[192] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (5 May 178) and BP/1/1/3 (26 May 1781).

whom Alannah Tomkins has identified managing contracted-out workhouses, that is to say people with skills in weaving or some other area of production.[193] It is also noteworthy that a number of them had experience of employment in or running London institutions. The shortlist drawn up by the workhouse committee tells us something about the qualities and skills they were looking for in a new master. Samuel Vaus had been the master of the workhouse of St. George the Martyr in the Borough for five years, another applicant came with references from the churchwardens of St. Sepulchre and a gentleman of St. Paul's Cathedral, Richard Landers had been master of the house of industry, Battersea Bridge, John Parsons understood the weaving of silk and John Easterbrook came with several respectable references and his wife was a maker of mantuas. The committee were able to identify a number of candidates with both experience and strong references and it might have been expected that one of them would be appointed. The Goodfellows, however, apologised for their errors and were reinstated in their posts. The explanation may lie in Robert Goodfellow's position as both owner and master of the workhouse.[194]

Goodfellow and his wife were appointed on the same salary as his predecessor had received, that is to say £18 per annum paid quarterly.[195] The accounts indicate that the master and mistress also received an annual gratuity of two guineas.[196] These salaries are broadly in line with those paid elsewhere: at Wimbledon in 1776 the matron of the workhouse was paid £13 a year.[197] The master of the Battersea workhouse also served as the parish beadle, and as

[193] Alannah Tomkins, *The experience of urban poverty, 1723-82: Parish, charity and credit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.37.
[194] In 1791 Goodfellow negotiated with the parish to extend their tenancy of the workhouse and bequeathed a property known as 'the old workhouse' in his will. TNA PROB11/1287/73; BP1/1/4 (1 December 1791).
[195] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (16 July 1778).
[196] BP/3/2/3 (March 1779).
[197] *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes*, p.63.

such he was able to claim for his expenses, for example for escorting paupers under removal orders or accompanying paupers to an examination by the magistrates. The vestry kept a watchful eye on such expenditure, specifying that journeys to the Justices should be on foot unless the pauper was ill, in which case travel by water was permitted, and requiring that appropriate receipts be produced.[198] The receipt of a salary, gratuity, expenses and benefits in kind in the form of accommodation and a uniform do not seem to have satisfied the Goodfellows, and most of the complaints made against them seem to have involved low level peculation.

The original set of complaints, which nearly led to their dismissal in 1781, was made at a time when the vestry were seeking an explanation for the rising cost of poor relief, and involved instances where the actions of the Goodfellows had caused possible financial loss to the parish. These included the charge that Mrs Goodfellow had distributed the clothes of a deceased pauper without the permission of the overseers, that she had sent girls into service without the knowledge of the officers, and that Battersea had incurred costs of over £4 because Robert Goodfellow had admitted to the officers at Lambeth that the paupers he was removing to Lambeth were not actually their parishioners.[199] The vestry and workhouse committee's oversight of the workhouse also involved practical measures such as auditing the accounts and inspecting the provisions in the workhouse, alongside making enquiries amongst the inmates as to how they were treated by the master and mistress. The favourable response returned by the inmates should perhaps be treated with some caution. Nonetheless the workhouse committee certainly endeavoured to fulfil its

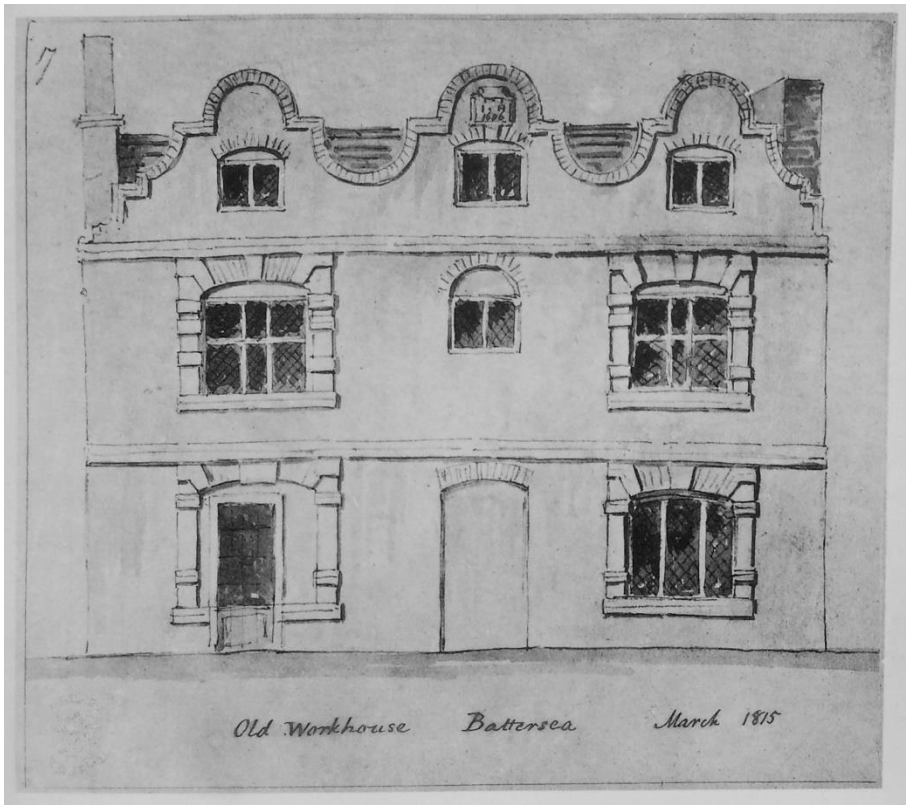
[198] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (15 July 1780).
[199] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (13 April 1781).

supervisory responsibilities.[200] In 1783 the committee considered a new tranche of allegations against Mrs Goodfellow, this time brought by her sister and by the wife of John Pollard, the baker.[201] These consisted of accusations that she had substituted one type of meat for another, that her family had benefitted from supplies intended for the workhouse and that she had taken in various forms of dressmaking for her own profit. Mrs Goodfellow denied most of the allegations, and the committee concluded that most of the charges brought against her were malicious, with the exception of substituting beef for pork, and taking in dressmaking. Nevertheless we are left with the impression of a couple quick to use their position for their own financial advantage.

The workhouse over which Goodfellow and his wife presided was a substantial concern. An inventory of 1733 records that there were three garrets containing nine beds; below were two chambers containing one and two beds, with a storeroom in between. There was also an infirmary containing two beds, an unfurnished 'Long Room', a hall with tables and benches, a parlour containing a bed, a master's room containing one bed and a wash-house.[202] In 1754 the vestry took a decision to obtain separate premises to accommodate those suffering from infectious diseases and to act as a mortuary, and leased a yard, house, stables and barn next to the workhouse.[203] According to a parliamentary report the workhouse was able to accommodate seventy inmates in 1776 but by 1785 it was housing up to ninety-nine on occasion.[204] The location of the 'old workhouse' has long been a matter of debate, but recent

[200] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (15 April 1780).
[201] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (15 February 1783).
[202] WHS, BP/3/3/1 (1733).
[203] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (11 June 1754).
[204] Abstracts of the returns made by the overseers of the poor, PP1775-76, xxvii.

reseach has shown that it occupied a substantial site near to Battersea Square and formed a visible presence in the heart of the village. [205]



2.Watercolour by an unidentified artist dated 1815 showing Battersea's original workhouse, from J.G. Taylor's *Our Lady of Battersey* (1925), pl.24. The original is in the British Library

Provisioning an institution of this size gave rise to opportunities for both corruption and patronage, and it is no surprise that many of the complaints raised against the master and mistress of the workhouse stemmed from their exercise of this responsibility. One of Mrs Goodfellow's detractors was the baker's wife and it is possible that the ill-feeling between them sprang from the award and oversight of the contract to supply the workhouse with bread. Typically the contract rotated in alternate months between two bakers resident in the parish. The purchase of bread and flour was a major item of expenditure

[205] Jane Saul, 'The location of Battersea 'old workhouse' ', *The Wandsworth Historian*, 113 (2022),4-9.

and in some months purchases from the main contractor were supplemented by smaller purchases from the other baker. The workhouse committee were mindful of the costs involved and they regularly inspected the bread supplied. John Pollard was found supplying short-weight bread on more than one occasion and was taken before the Justices and fined.[206] Further evidence that the workhouse committee pursued a policy of purchasing goods in rotation from different suppliers is to be found in another complaint made against Robert Goodfellow. Mary Blany, a supplier of haberdashery goods, complained to the workhouse committee that prior to Goodfellow's appointment as master she had supplied goods in her monthly turn, but that because of a 'pique' he bore against her, he had ordered goods from other suppliers when her turn came round. The committee ordered that Goodfellow should place the next month's order with Mary Blany.[207] The committee clearly had a well-established policy of rotating its custom amongst a number of local tradespeople, and this can also be seen in operation in relation to the suppliers of of goods such as groceries and shoes. More specialised items such as coal seem to have been in the hands of a single contractor. Such a policy reduced opportunities for corruption and ensured that parish expenditure was distributed widely amongst the ratepayers. The tradespeople who supplied the workhouse, and who have so far been identified, seem to have all resided within the parish. Examining the supply arrangements for post-1834 London workhouses, Douglas Brown has pointed out the benefit to workhouses of using local suppliers whose reputation

[206] WHS, BP/1/1/2 (19 October 1766) and BP/3/1/5 (11 November 1780).
[207] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (5 December 1778).

was established, and who employed local labour, thus potentially relieving demand on the relief system.[208]

In terms of dietary items the highest expenditure was on bread. As Alannah Tomkins has noted it is difficult to judge exactly how much bread, the staple foodstuff, was available to inmates.[209] Workhouse expenditure ledgers exist from before 1778, and for the earlier years these provides considerable detail about the type of purchases made. Alongside these the workhouse journal records summaries of expenditure against the names of suppliers. In March 1780 the workhouse spent £9 12s 5d on bread, that is to say the equivalent of a penny loaf per day per inmate. In March 1779 the comparable figure had been 1 ¼d per day and in March 1770 it was a little less than 1 ½d per day. The detailed expenditure ledger for 1770 shows that the workhouse purchased bread by the bushel, as well as purchasing flour and paying for baking. The expenditure on bread is lower than that identified by Tomkins in the Shrewsbury town bridewell and may be explained by the vestry's decision some years previously to purchase 'household' bread for the workhouse rather than wheaten bread, presumably in an effort to control costs.[210]

The monthly butcher's bill was the other major outlay in the accounts. In June 1779 the workhouse committee considered the provisions and allowances for the inmates of the workhouse and declared that henceforward each inmate was to receive two pounds of meat a week.[211] We know that this order was implemented as the amount of meat ordered each week is recorded in the minutes. This gave each inmate a daily allowance of 4.6 ounces per day, a

[208] Douglas Brown, 'Supplying London's Workhouses in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *London Journal* 41 (1) (2016), 36-59.
[209] Tomkins, p.58.
[210] WHS, BP/1/1/2 (19 October 1766).
[211] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (2 June 1779).

figure similar to the 4.8 ounces found by Alannah Tomkins in Shrewsbury in 1742 and York in 1751.[212] The more detailed expenditure available for the early 1770s shows that most of the meat consumed was beef, supplemented by small amounts of mutton and pork. In addition later accounts show annual purchases from the owners of the local distillery who kept a significant number of pigs on the premises, and may therefore have supplied bacon to the workhouse.

Tomkins also points to differences in the consumption of dairy products in the two workhouses which she examines. In Battersea milk and dairy products seem to have been a regular part of the inmates' diet. We should remember that at this time Battersea was a largely rural community and milk was supplied each month to the workhouse by two local suppliers; Joseph Stacey, who is usually described as a gardener and Joseph Keates, a cow keeper. The grocer's bill for March 1770 also records the purchase of one hundred pounds of cheese and twenty-seven pounds of butter. Vegetables do not feature prominently, other than the purchase of peas from the general grocer, but it seems hard to believe that in an area famed for its market gardens, the workhouse did not have access to some source of produce.

Beer was ordered from the local brewers, Halletts, and formed another significant item of expenditure. In March 1780 John Hallett was paid £4, a sum at the lower end of monthly expenditure on beer that year. In March 1770 Thomas Hallett was paid £4 7s for eighteen kilderkins of beer. In 1782 Henry Hallett asked the workhouse committee to pay him 12s per barrel, as duty had been raised and the price of hops was increasing. It seems that at some point tea was also served, although who the recipients were is not clear, as the

[212] Tomkins p.56.

master was summoned to the workhouse committee and instructed that no more tea was to be allowed.[213] The monotony of the workhouse diet was relieved by the inclusion of cinnamon, all spice and sugar. In March 1770 the grocery bill included thirty-two pounds of sugar.[214] In this context it should be remembered that Battersea was the site of a large sugar manufactory owned by a prominent member of the workhouse committee. Tobacco was also included amongst the purchases, and in 1778 the officers were instructed to enquire which inmates used tobacco and what quantity was necessary.[215] The detailed evidence available from the Battersea workhouse during this period lends support to Alannah Tomkins belief that some workhouse diets contained regular comforts for the inmates.[216]

Material comfort for the inmates was to be found not only in their diet but also in the form of light, heat and the furnishings that surrounded them. Tomkins found little evidence of fire and light equipment in the workhouses that she examined. In Battersea, however, the situation seems to have been different.[217] Irregular payments are to be found in the accounts to William Chapman, the local coal merchant, who also supplied sand and brooms to the workhouse. These payments ranged from £5 2s 0d for three chaldrons of coal in March 1770 to a payment of £23 3s 6d in March 1778. The March 1770 accounts also show spending on candles, a poker and tongs. Although candles were purchased, their use was restricted, probably as Tomkins suggests as a deliberate aspect of parish policy. The minutes of the workhouse committee note that candles are only to be burnt in cases of sickness, and that the poor

[213] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (10 April 1779).
[214] WHS, BP/3/3/4 (March 1770).
[215] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (May 1778).
[216] Tomkins pp.64-65.
[217] Tomkins p.67.

should be in bed by 9pm in summer and 8pm in winter.[218] Tomkins also notes an absence of knives amongst the household goods of the workhouses that she examines, whereas in Battersea it looks as though knives were available to most of the inmates. An entry in the workhouse committee minutes in 1778 lists a number of items which were to be ordered for the workhouse: six dozen knives and forks, twelve dozen wooden trenchers, twelve dozen wooden bowls, two dozen pint tin pots and marking tools for letters and figures.[219] The committee also examined cloth which had been purchased to make fifteen pairs of sheets, and ordered samples of material for table linen and towels. A month later the master reported to the committee that the cutlery had been delivered together with two pairs of carving knives and forks, two large bowls and a cheese taster. Although it was overcrowded at times, the Battersea workhouse seems to have offered a reasonable degree of material comfort to its inmates and in this respect to diverge from some of the regimes to be found elsewhere. Several factors may account for this: easy transport for bulky goods such as coal, the existence of local industries such as sugar refining able to supply local tradesmen, and possibly higher expectations of comfort than those found in provincial urban centres.

A further insight into the conditions experienced by the poor in the workhouse is afforded by an examination of the Clothing Book. This covers the period July 1778 to February 1793, and consists of some 2828 entries listing clothing items provided to named inmates of the workhouse, together with details of fabric and haberdashery goods purchased, clothing issued to unnamed inmates and domestic linen provided for the workhouse.[220] As we

[218] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (8 July 1780).
[219] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (24 October 1778).
[220] WHS, BP/3/6/1.

have already seen, the provision of clothing formed an important element of the benefits provided to the poor in receipt of out-relief, and the inmates of the workhouse were similarly well provided for. This point is perhaps best illustrated by two case studies. We have already seen that Mary Archer and her three children received both indoor and outdoor relief between 1780 and 1783. The Clothing Book shows that their sojourn in the workhouse was much more extensive than the various minutes reveal, and that members of the family were resident in the workhouse until 1792. During this time, the three children, in common with other child inmates, were provided every twelve to eighteen months with two shifts or shirts and with worsted stockings. They would also have benefitted from the caps, aprons, petticoats and gowns made for unnamed children. Likewise, the amount and type of clothing that an adult woman might have expected to receive is well illustrated by the case of Martha Sculthorpe. In 1778 she is recorded in the Inmates Register aged 52, and that year the Clothing Book shows that she received two shifts, a handkerchief and a pair of stockings. In 1779 she was still an inmate of the workhouse and was recorded as having no employment. That year she was issued with two shifts, an apron and a camblet gown. The following year she received two ready-made shifts and a handkerchief, and in 1781 she received two shifts, before disappearing from the record. Martha might also have gained from the bed-gowns, stays, caps, tippets and callemanco bonnets provided to women in the workhouse.

The number of clothing items issued by the workhouse authorities was considerable and in most cases it was clear that the fabric was bought in and made up in the workhouse. This represented a significant commitment of time and labour. We know from the complaints lodged against her that the mistress of the workhouse took in dressmaking, but to produce clothing on this scale

must also have involved the labour of other women within the workhouse, which in turn equipped these women with a skill which they could utilise on leaving the house. The material used for bedding, sheets, towels and table cloths within the workhouse was also bought in from local suppliers, and made up in the house, creating an additional need for plain sewing skills. The quantity of cloth purchased to clothe the inmates and supply the domestic needs of the workhouse was considerable, and the Clothing Book indicates that the overseers were closely involved in the purchasing process, rather than leaving such purchases solely in the hands of the master and mistress.

We can deduce from the complaints made against them, that the master and mistress of the workhouse were responsible for day to day purchasing, but it is also clear that the workhouse committee exercised close supervision of their actions. We have seen that the committee inspected goods supplied to the workhouse, and we have already noted the oversight that they exercised over the placing of orders and the invoices received for them.[221] Bills were routinely checked against vouchers and where necessary overcharged goods were refused.[222] Each month the accounts were inspected and approved by a small group of about half a dozen vestry members which typically included at least one churchwarden and overseer, and occasionally the vicar. The accounts were signed, 'This account being duly Examined is allowed and approved of by us the underwritten Vestry'. This group seem to have formed a separate audit committee, as its composition never exactly matches the recorded attendance at a vestry or workhouse committee meeting, although there was an overlap of personnel.[223] The names of local tradesmen who supplied the workhouse often

[221] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (14 November 1778) and BP/1/1/3 (11 April 1780).
[222] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (31 October 1778).
[223] A note of caution must be struck here, as it is clear that not all the minutes survive.

feature in this group. The trust placed in these men is in sharp contrast to practice in the nearby parish of Putney where tradesmen who supplied the workhouse were barred from sitting on a committee to appoint a new master of the workhouse.[224] Jeremy Boulton and John Black make the point that the experience of inmates in London's workhouses must have been very different from that of inmates in provincial workhouses. Not only were London houses much bigger, but they were run on bureaucratic lines and were operated by professionals.[225] The records which survive for Battersea workhouse, and the degree of scrutiny exercised by the workhouse committee over its operation, together suggest that the Battersea workhouse at this time tended towards the professionalism of the London model.

As well as monitoring purchases the workhouse committee also checked the inventory of the workhouse. On their appointment in 1778 the new master and mistress were requested to produce such a document and check that it agreed with what they found.[226] The presence of marking tools amongst the items purchased for the workhouse suggests that parish goods were routinely marked as being parish property. There is also evidence that the parish took an inventory of paupers' goods when they entered the workhouse and that such items became part of the common stock if the pauper died there. In the case of Sarah Innes, the vestry ordered that the clothes given away by the mistress after Sarah's death were to be returned to 'the box' and only to be distributed at

[224] *A Charge on the Parish The Treatment of Poverty in Putney 1620-1834, Wandsworth Papers 1* (London: Wandsworth Historical Society, 1974).
[225] Jeremy Boulton and John Black 'Paupers and their Experience of a London Workhouse: St Martin-in-the Fields, 1725-1824', in *Residential Institutions in Britain, 1725-1970 Inmates and Environments*, Perspectives in Economic and Social History number 27,ed. by Jane Hamlett, Lesley Hoskins, Rebecca Preston (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013) .
[226] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (18 July 1778).

the discretion of the overseers.[227] The inventory shows Sarah to have been in possession of a good stock of clothing, but her household goods were limited to a table cloth, a sheet, a curtain, two old boxes and a cookery book. This raises questions about whether such household goods as she had possessed had already been disposed of before she entered the workhouse or whether they had been absorbed into the common stock in the house. When the vestry clerk wrote to the overseers of Acton Beauchamp, Worcestershire, to inform them that the orphan children of Sam and Ann Church were to be returned to their father's place of settlement, his letter stated that the costs incurred by Battersea would be deducted from the sale proceeds of Ann's possessions and the balance sent to Acton Beauchamp with the children.[228] It appears that the policy of taking an inventory of paupers' goods and recouping the costs incurred by the parish applied even when the deceased pauper left dependent children.

The impression left by the records of the Battersea vestry and its workhouse committee is of an administratively and financially sophisticated organisation dominated by a small group of parishioners. The workhouse sat at the centre of the system of relief provided to the poor of the parish, and this is reflected in the importance attached to the appointment of the master and mistress. The workhouse committee maintained oversight of the operation of the workhouse and monitored expenditure closely. At the same time, however, inmates appear to have received a reasonable diet which included dietary items over and above bare necessities. Similarly their physical surroundings offered some degree of comfort and bear favourable comparison with institutions in other parts of the country.

[227] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (29 July 1780).
[228] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (4 September 1779).

The men who formed the workhouse committee and oversaw the running of the workhouse were aware of rising costs and the financial implications of their decisions, but cost does not appear to have been the sole factor determining the type of care provided. The nearby parish of Putney struggled to run its workhouse effectively and at times during the eighteenth century resorted to farming its poor at the cheapest possible rate, which gave rise to an unstable system.[229] The Battersea vestry in contrast seems to have overseen a successful workhouse in which the well-being of the inmates was a matter of genuine concern. The vestry and workhouse committee were certainly aware of the need to contain expenditure and of the burden which they and fellow rate payers faced. However, as well as financial considerations, other influences and ideals underpinned their decision making and shaped life for the inmates of the workhouse.

[229] *A Charge on the Parish, Wandsworth Papers 1*

8. Work and Care in the Workhouse

The standard of living in the Battersea workhouse compared favourably with conditions elsewhere, but it came with attendant obligations for the inmates. Until 1773 the pages of the workhouse journal were headed 'To the maintenance of their Poor for one month and cash earned by them….' [230] The nature of these earnings and whether they made a significant contribution to the upkeep of the poor both constitute important questions. As we have already seen, the vestry had shown itself to be financially alert. What we need to consider next is their expectations of the poor they catered for and the extent of the financial contribution made by the poor themselves.

Evidence of any earnings by the poor is signally absent from the journal but the ideal underpinned the decisions of the workhouse committee. Although there is no extant source material for a manufactory such as exists for Wimbledon, nonetheless in 1803 Battersea reported earnings of £20 16s 6d from the labour of the poor to the1803 parliamentary commission.[231] The profit to be made from the labour of the workhouse residents may have been minimal or non-existent, but the expectation was clear: all those residents who were physically able should undertake some form of work. In March 1779 the mistress complained to the workhouse committee that Mary Ballard would not work when requested and claimed that she was unable to do so. Similarly Ann Draper claimed she could not work because of her rheumatism.[232] The apothecary was ordered to examine the pair and reported to the next meeting

[230] WHS, BP/3/2/3 (April 1773).
[231] Abstract of Answers and Returns under Act for procuring Returns relative to Expense and Maintenance of Poor in England, PP 1803-4, xiii. C. 175.
[232] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (6 March 1779).

that both women had subsequently behaved well, presumably performing the tasks which they were requested to undertake. The children were likewise expected to work and the committee busied itself with identifying suitable employment, including the winding and tramming of silk.[233] Where we are able to identify individual sums earned by the poor, they are to be found not in the journal but in the workhouse clothing book.[234] Here it is recorded that two inmates, William George and Daniel Smith earned 6s 6d and 2s respectively, and that a pair of shoes was purchased for William George and a pair of stockings for Smith. Likewise, James Reculest, the eldest of the children in the workhouse, earned 6s which was used to purchase a waistcoat for him. Whether these purchases supplemented the paupers' basic requirements, or were simply an accounting convenience is a moot point. At the same time as the waistcoat was purchased for James Reculest, the overseers bought him a hat, a leather apron and a neckcloth. There is no means of knowing whether he would have received the waistcoat if he had not 'earned' it.

The work undertaken by the workhouse inmates fell broadly into three categories: what might be termed public works; manufacturing, which in Battersea meant the manufacture of silk; and domestic and caring duties. As in other parishes the vestry used pauper labour to maintain parish infrastructure. In November 1778 the surveyor of the highways was ordered by the workhouse committee to employ William Smith, Thomas Berry and William Hawkins and to account for their labour. The surveyor's accounts for that year record a payment of 12s 6d for labour to Robert Goodfellow, the master of the workhouse. All three of the men employed to repair the roads were men in their late sixties and early seventies, who had been resident in the workhouse in January and who

[233] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (11 April 1778 and 24 October 1778).
[234] WHS, BP/3/6/1 (1778-93).

had subsequently left the house. It is not known when they returned to the workhouse, but it is clear that the support that they received from the parish was contingent upon the labour that they undertook in return.[235] Hawkins repeatedly found himself dependent upon parish relief and an entry in respect of the cost of his labour also appears in the churchwarden's accounts for 1784. Battersea was a predominantly rural parish, and we are reminded of this by the vestry's concern regarding a web infesting the hedges and trees. A number of the poor were instructed to go out from the workhouse to cut the web and burn the cuttings under supervision.[236] Two younger men resident in the workhouse were also employed to fetch and carry water. Daniel Smith fetched the water needed by the workhouse, while William George was employed to carry water for members of the public. Anyone wishing to make use of George's services had to apply to the overseer and pay the appropriate charge: three halfpence per hour or one shilling per day.[237] Employment of the poor on parish projects offered a number of benefits: it represented work from which the inhabitants of the parish benefited, it ensured that money raised in the parish flowed into the workhouse, and it spared the ratepayers the necessity of undertaking these tasks themselves.

Such schemes, however, could not provide regular work for all of those residing in the workhouse. The minutes make occasional reference to oakum picking and to spinning, but it was the manufacture of silk that came to be the main focus of employment. In 1779 a proposal from one Mr Rose to employ the poor in silk manufacturing was declined by the workhouse committee because it

[235] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (21 November 1778) and BP/3/7/2 (January 1778).
[236] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (30 March 1782).
[237] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (17 June 1780).

would only employ a small number of people.[238] The emphasis was on ensuring work for as many of the workhouse inhabitants as possible. Less than a year later, at a meeting of the vestry, the churchwardens and overseers proposed several different types of manufacturing to employ the poor. As a result it was agreed that silk winding should be part of their future employment and the overseers were instructed to put this into effect as soon as possible.[239] What is not clear is whether the silk manufacturing was to take place somewhere within the workhouse, or whether the inmates were leaving the premises to work. What is clear, however, is that the poor were expected to contribute towards their keep through this form of employment. Sarah Holmes was told that she would have to leave the workhouse if she did not work at silk manufacture, and the support given to Mrs Wallace and her children was granted on condition that she applied to the silk weaver for work.[240] As for the question of where this activity took place- it seems that on occasion inmates did leave the workhouse for employment, while continuing to use it as a form of lodgings, a practice noted by Tim Hitchcock in London workhouses.[241] This is implicit in the workhouse committee's instructions to the overseer to inform Thomas Miller that he was not to leave the workhouse to labour unless he paid 4s per week to the overseers for the upkeep of his family.[242]

If, on occasion, the workhouse provided cheap lodgings, then the inmates also provided the labour necessary to run the institution. The parish paid for a salaried master and mistress, a surgeon-apothecary and a clerk, but unlike some of the larger London workhouses and the rural incorporations there

[238] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (19 June 1779).
[239] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (22 April 1780).
[240] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (10 June 1780 and 13 July 1782).
[241] Hitchcock, *Down and out in eighteenth-century London*, p.134.
[242] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (21 November 1778).

was no provision for a cook or a salaried school master or mistress. Caring tasks were undertaken by the inmates themselves: in May 1780 the workhouse committee enquired which inmates were most suitable to wash, clean and care for the children in the house, and were furnished with a list of nine names.[243] Schooling of the children was undertaken by Mrs Wingate, one of the long-term inmates, who was paid 1s per week and an additional 1d per head if the number of children in the school exceeded twelve.

The committee seem to have attached considerable importance to the education of the children. In April 1779 it gave instructions that they should be examined in respect of their learning, and a week later Mr. Dogett reported back to the committee that he had heard some of the girls read well.[244] At the beginning of May it was resolved to set up a school under the direction of Mrs Wingate. The hours of schooling were to be from 10am to midday and from 2pm-4pm. and the children were not to be called away from the classroom to other employment.[245] The clerk was ordered to provide one dozen Marshall's spelling books for the children. Eighteen children were listed attending the workhouse school at the start of May, while the minutes record twenty three children resident in the workhouse on 22 May, suggesting that the majority of the children in the institution received some form of schooling. The children attending the school were equally divided between boys and girls and the ages of those attending ranged from two to twelve.[246] The wide age suggests that for the youngest children the workhouse 'school' can have provided little more than child minding facilities.[247] Nonetheless, the committee's commitment to

[243] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (6 May 1780).
[244] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (17 and 24 April 1779).
[245] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (1 May 1779).
[246] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (1 and 22 May 1779).
[247] Tomkins, p.173.

providing several hours of uninterrupted schooling for the children and the monitoring of the children's attainment is significant. Alysa Levene has discussed how the nurture and education of poor children increasingly came to be seen as a means of forming human capital and training them to be productive adults.[248] As the number of children housed in the Battersea workhouse increased during this period, possibly as result of a deliberate policy by the vestry, their commitment to the education of the children would have become increasingly important. While Levene's research has focused on the experience of childhood in London, she has suggested that the example of London was disseminated more widely, in part through the links between metropolitan workhouses and the areas outside London which they used to nurse young children. Battersea's geographical location and the use of nurses in the parish by the workhouses of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and other London parishes may have exposed members of the vestry to ideas circulating in the metropolis.[249]

When the time came for the children to leave the workhouse, the workhouse committee endeavoured to place them in service or in suitable apprenticeships. When considering such a short timespan any judgement formed is bound to be impressionistic, but one or two tentative conclusions can be drawn. The inmates register of 1778 records two boys and two girls being sent out on liking or apprenticed. Henry Shore was sent out on liking at the age of fourteen, while William Walker, also aged fourteen, was likewise sent to a fisherman at Erith.[250] Two years later John Walker, aged eleven, was sent on

[248] Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor.*
[249] Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor*, p.63.
[250] WHS, BP/3/7/2 (1778).

trial as a servant to George Errington, a member of the vestry.[251] The vestry minutes record that Francis Bull was to be apprenticed to John Davis, a fisherman, and we have already noted that the vestry funded the cost of a new boat for a former parish apprentice.[252] These examples suggest that fishing was a favoured occupation for parish apprentices: a logical choice for a riverside community. This conclusion is reinforced by the surviving apprenticeship indentures: of the four boys who were apprenticed between 1781 and 1785: two were apprenticed to fishermen and the others were apprenticed to a breeches maker and a farrier.[253] There is little indication of the level of premiums paid by the parish, other than for the apprenticeship of Mary Mayner to a beaver cutter in Southwark, which consisted of an initial payment of 40s followed by a further 40s half way through her apprenticeship. We also know that in 1785 the churchwardens paid two premiums of five pounds for apprenticeships to a Mr Ellis of Carnaby Market: this is likely to have been funded by a bequest of property in the parish of St Mary Colechurch which provided £10 per annum for the apprenticing of two boys from Battersea.[254] The term of all the apprenticeships was until the apprentice reached the age of twenty-one or until they married in the case of some of the girls.

There was no significant difference in the age at which boys and girls left the workhouse to be apprenticed or to enter service, the mean age for both sexes being around twelve years old. The inmates register records that Ann Simpkin was aged eleven when she was bound apprentice and Elizabeth Clifton was aged ten when she went out on liking, while the four surviving

[251] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (24 June 1780).
[252] WHS, BP/1/1/3 (11 May 1782).
[253] WHS, BP/2/6/3.
[254] WHS, BP/4/1/5 (1785).

apprenticeship indentures are for girls aged fourteen and fifteen.[255] Three of these apprenticeships provided for the girls to be instructed in 'housewifery' and to learn traditional domestic skills. Appearing before the workhouse committee in 1780 Mrs Goodfellow reported that she had found places in service for two girls.[256] Mary Maynard had been placed with the publican at the Prince's Head in the parish of Battersea, while Sarah Wingate had been placed with a Mrs Locke near the Smallpox Hospital in Clerkenwell. The workhouse committee were less than appreciative of Mrs Goodfellow's efforts, with the officers complaining that this had been done without their knowledge. While the matron of the Wimbledon workhouse was rewarded with half a guinea for every child put out to service or apprenticed, the committee at Battersea was anxious for this power to remain in the hands of the parish officers.[257] The reason for these divergent attitudes is possibly to be found in the Battersea workhouse committee's reservations about the financial probity of the Goodfellows. In 1783 the committee resolved that the master and mistress should give an 'exact and particular' account to the overseers of money received for work done in the house and who had earned it. A book was to be provided for that purpose. It was also resolved that when a child went out into service with the approval of the overseers their wages should be accounted for in the same book, unless they were apprenticed or no longer chargeable to the parish for some other reason.[258]

In these records a distinction is made between those children who had been placed in service and who earned a wage which was paid to the workhouse, and those who had been formally apprenticed and were no longer a

[255] WHS, BP/3/7/2 (1778), BP/2/6/3.
[256] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (27 August 1780).
[257] *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes,* p.57.
[258] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (8 March 1783).

burden on the parish. It is not clear whether this financial distinction implies that the parish absolved itself entirely from all future responsibility for the welfare of those it apprenticed. It might have been expected that the parish would retain some interest in the children during the term of their apprenticeship. Katrina Honeyman has demonstrated that the London parishes continued to monitor the well-being of those children whom they apprenticed with northern manufacturers, checking on their physical well-being whilst apprenticed and ensuring that the terms of the apprenticeship agreement were implemented.[259] Battersea's attitude can only be inferred from the substantial grant which it made to a former parish apprentice, which does suggest some continued interest in their welfare.[260] Where the location of the children's placements is given, a number lie beyond the parish boundary: a few in neighbouring Surrey parishes and a few in metropolitan parishes, possibly in an attempt to establish a new settlement for the children. The children's early training within the workhouse in silk manufacture does not appear to be reflected in their future employment prospects. The choice of placements for the children seems on the whole to have remained traditionally domestic and rural, notwithstanding the changing nature of the local economy. There is however a hint that that this was beginning to change. Of the thirteen surviving apprenticeship indentures covering the period 1786-1790, eleven involved apprenticeships outside the parish of Battersea, and four saw girls placed as tambour workers with the same family enterprise in Bermondsey.[261] Such a shift in policy makes sense in the context of the rising number of children accommodated in the workhouse in the early 1780s. Battersea's use of apprenticeships can be seen as part of a

[259] Katrina Honeyman, *Child workers in England, 1780-1820: parish apprentices and the making of the early industrial labour force*, (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).
[260] See above p.58.
[261] WHS, BP/2/6/3.

wider pattern. Samantha Williams found little evidence of the use of apprenticeships in Campton and Shefford, whereas Battersea fits more closely the model of reliance on apprenticeships by London parishes discussed by Katrina Honeyman and Alysa Levene.[262] The policy may also reflect the need to tie children to their employer, once they had learnt the basics of their trade, in an employment market which offered a range of alternative opportunities.

We have seen that while they remained in the workhouse the children were cared for by some of the female inmates. The workhouse also provided a refuge for the elderly and the long-term sick or incapable, and on occasion it provided nursing care to the infirm in the community. The workhouse committee authorised monetary relief, such as the payment made to Mrs Corker to meet her expenses in respect of her lodger who had smallpox, but it also arranged for female workhouse inmates to provide nursing care to parishioners.[263] As was commonly the case, there were instances of unmarried mothers and abandoned wives coming in to the workhouse to give birth, but intriguingly the workhouse committee minutes refer to one inmate, Hannah Palson, going into the lying-in hospital.[264] Samantha Williams has described how entry to the Westminster Lying-in Hospital was a complex and lengthy process involving a letter of recommendation from a subscriber, an interview before the committee, and requiring the new mother to take a change of linen when she entered.[265] It is possible that Hannah Palson's admission was facilitated by Richard Dixon, the brother of vestry member Joseph Dixon, who served as surveyor and treasurer

[262] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle*, p.106.
[263] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (19 May 1781) and BP/3/1/4 (31 July 1779).
[264] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (11 September 1779).
[265] Samantha Williams, *Unmarried Motherhood in the Metropolis, 1700-1850: Pregnancy, the Poor Law and Provision* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp.92-94.

to the hospital.[266] As we have already noted, Hannah left her older child at the workhouse at the time of her confinement.[267] In Hannah's case the parish seems both to have facilitated access to high quality medical care and to have provided childcare to allow her to resume an independent life.

Attending women at their lying-in was specifically excluded from the contract of the workhouse surgeon-apothecary, except in case of necessity. John Lumisden, who served as the workhouse surgeon from the 1750s until his death in 1781, wrote to the vestry in 1757 seeking an increase in his salary in the light of the number of poor he was expected to treat in the establishment. He requested that the vestry enquire from the neighbouring parishes of Wandsworth, Lambeth and Chelsea how many poor were admitted to their workhouses, and how many and suffering from what type of disease were sent to hospital by them.[268] The compromise reached with the Battersea vestry was that the officers and Lumisden would decide together who should be admitted to the workhouse, who should be sent to hospital and who should be treated outside the workhouse. Lumisden's salary was increased to twenty guineas per annum on condition that the parish received no additional bills for any sick or 'casualty' or any lying-in of women unless in case of necessity.[269] Lumisden also undertook to provide orders for admission to hospital for anyone for whom it was deemed necessary. As Irvine Loudon has argued, such all-encompassing contractual arrangements enabled the parish to anticipate and control its expenditure.[270] And just as Samantha Williams discovered a competitive market

[266] *Court Miscellany: Or, Gentleman and Lady's New Magazine,*v (London: Richardson and Urquart, 1776), pp.179-180. Google ebook.
[267] WHS, BP/3/1/4 (11 September 1779 and 27 November 1779).
[268] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (21 June 1757 and 26 December 1758).
[269] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (17 April 1759).
[270] Irvine Loudon, *Medical Care and the General Practitioner 1750-1850,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p.234.

in medical care in East Bedfordshire, likewise Battersea framed its contractual arrangements by reference to neighbouring parishes.[271] Where Battersea was perhaps distinctive was in how early it put in place such contractual arrangements. John Lumisden was in post by 1755, but had been preceded as surgeon-apothecary by William Larnor and Henry Rattray, each earning a salary of fifteen guineas per annum.[272]

On his death in 1781 John Lumisden was succeeded by his godson and partner, John Alderman. Lumisden, the son of Charles Lumisden, another surgeon, came from an Edinburgh family and was apprenticed in 1744 to one George Lander.[273] In Battersea Lumisden entered into partnership with William Corrance and members of the Alderman family. Corrance was an assiduous attendee at vestry and workhouse committee meetings, and John Lumisden also attended regularly. In his will Lumisden left his estate to John Alderman and his family, making it clear that his personal wealth had been acquired by his own endeavours.[274] Amongst his bequests was one to John Alderman's son of his prized possession, a gold watch made by one of the leading watch makers of the day, Tompion and Graham. Loudon argues that by the middle of the eighteenth century surgeon-apothecaries were generally well remunerated in England, and that many surgeons who qualified in Scotland moved south to take advantage of the higher income which could be earned. The post of workhouse surgeon had a part to play here, both in the salary which it carried

[271] Samantha Williams, 'Practitioners' Income and Provision for the Poor: Parish Doctors in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Social History of Medicine,* 18 (2) (2005), 159-186.
[272] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (9 June 1749 and 10 July 1750).
[273] James Dennistoun, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange: Knt., and of his Brother-in-law, Andrew Lumisden*, (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), I, p.74; PJ and RV Wallis, *Eighteenth-Century Medics* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1988), p.379.
[274] TNA, PROB11/1078.

and the opportunity which it offered to make connections.[275] Lumisden exemplifies this and seems to have established a remunerative practice for himself during his years in Battersea. His godson appears to have been less successful in developing and maintaining a practice, even though the Alderman family more widely seem to have been engaged in the medical profession. In addition to John Alderman, Lumisden's will also referred to a Mrs Mary Alderman, who appears to have operated as a midwife.[276] There seems to have been no difficulty raised about the transfer of the contract for the post of workhouse surgeon to John Alderman, at the same salary as Lumisden had received, thus fitting into the pattern whereby such contracts were passed from father to son. However, the partnership between Lumisden, Corrance and Alderman had been dissolved just prior to Lumisden's death and six years later John Alderman was declared bankrupt.[277] Alderman's career provides a sharp contrast to Lumiden's thirty year tenure as surgeon-apothecary to the workhouse and his lucrative medical practice. It is possible that the increasing number of poor in the workhouse made the workhouse contract less profitable, and that less impressive professional qualifications and social contacts made it more difficult for John Alderman to secure private patients.

John Lumisden's contract with the parish required him to procure orders for admission of the sick poor to hospital when necessary. In the case of Battersea this usually meant admission to St Thomas's Hospital in Southwark. Over a twelve year period from 1778 to 1790 a small sample of ten admissions to St Thomas's has been identified. These are drawn from entries in the

[275] Loudon, pp.113-114, 232-234.
[276] *Survey of London: Battersea*, 50, ed. Colin Thom (2013), p.35.
[277] *A List of Bankrupts with their Dividends, Certificates etc. from Jan.1, 1786, to June 24, 1806, inclusive* (London: William Smith and Co., 1806).
< www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/12240/page/4/data.pdf> [accessed 31 January 2022].

workhouse committee minutes and the admissions registers of St Thomas's.[278] In the admissions registers the Battersea patients are identified as parish paupers and Robert Goodfellow is given as the financial guarantor. Amongst the ten paupers from the parish admitted to St Thomas's, two were admitted for treatment for venereal disease, a percentage similar to the 21.12% identified for greater London as a whole in the 1770s.[279] Patients treated on the foul wards were charged a fee of 10s 6d as opposed to the usual fee of 3s 6d. Battersea also made substantial one-off payments to St Thomas's; £8 14s 11d in 1782 and £2 16s 6d in 1786.[280] When necessary, Battersea also made use of the Bethlem Hospital or asylum for the insane. In January 1776 Sarah Wingate, whose age was given as forty-three, left the workhouse for Bethlem, returning to the workhouse in April the same year.[281] It seems likely that this was the same Mrs Wingate who a few years later was being paid to school the children in the workhouse.[282] The workhouse gave the poor access to specialised medical treatment, and the role of the surgeon as the gatekeeper to these services was crucial. He advised the workhouse committee who was fit to work, who should be treated within the workhouse and who should be admitted to hospital. Even when the decision was taken to admit a pauper to hospital, it was by no means certain that this marked the end of the parish's responsibilities. We have seen that Sarah Wingate returned to the workhouse after a spell in hospital, and

[278] St Thomas's Hospital: Hospital Admission and Discharge Registers, 1781-1790, LMTHRH55404-LMTHRH55409 (www.londonlives.org**,** version 2, March 2018), London Metropolitan Archives [accessed 23 March 2022].
[279] Simon Szreter and Kevin Sienna, 'The Pox in Boswell's London an estimate of the extent of syphilis in the metropolis in the 1770s', *Economic History Review,* 74 (2) (2021), 372-399.
[280] WHS, BP/3/2/3 (February 1782 and March 1786).
[281] WHS, BP/3/7/2 (1776).
[282] It seems likely that a complete cure was not affected as she still appeared to require institutional care.

likewise when John Butcher was turned out of St Thomas's as incurable, he and his family sought parish relief.[283]

The workhouse provided some dedicated accommodation for the sick, although like most of the accommodation it does not seem commensurate with the recorded number of inmates. An early inventory listed an infirmary with two beds, whilst in 1754 Benjamin Dogett proposed that a room be erected to house the poor who were suffering from infection or who were lousy, and to act as a mortuary.[284] Just as they had cared for the poor of the parish in life, so the parish authorities cared for them in death. The burial registers for St. Mary Battersea are extant for October 1778 until the end of 1782, and they record those who were poor or who came from the workhouse to be buried. In any year this might account for between eighteen and thirty per cent of the burials. By linking the workhouse expenditure and the workhouse journal we can identify the names of several men who seem to have received regular payments throughout the period in respect the expenses involved in caring for the dying. An example of the costs incurred is illustrated by the payment to Nathan Houghton in June 1774; washing beer 2s 11d, sitting up beer 1s 5 ½d, and cleaning beer 7d.[285] Similar amounts appear at regular intervals throughout the accounts, and it also seems that the parish had a set scale of fees which it paid. In 1780 Mrs Blany claimed her expenses for burying Sarah Innes, a pauper, and the workhouse committee ordered that she be reimbursed what the parish usually allowed, that is to say 7s 6d, and that she be allowed two of the

[283] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (22 January 1780).
[284] WHS, BP/3/3/1 (1733-44), BP/1/1/1 (9 April 1754).
[285] WHS, BP/3/3/4 (June 1774).

deceased's gowns as she had returned to the parish all the deceased's clothes which were in her possession.[286]

The parish thus offered a wide ranging package of care to the poor, and the workhouse acted as a hub through which such care could be accessed. It was within its walls that provision was made for the lying-in of unmarried and abandoned mothers, and it was the surgeon-apothecary who decided who should be cared for in the workhouse and who merited treatment in hospital. The parish stepped in again at the end of life, and the associated costs are reflected in the workhouse accounts. The early implementation of a contractual arrangement with the surgeon suggests that parish was keen to contain medical costs, but even so the medical provision for the poor seems to have been fairly comprehensive and generous.

The degree of care and commitment shown by the members of the workhouse committee, and the largely benevolent regime operating within the workhouse, suggest influences at play beyond the simple desire to hold down the rates. Battersea measured its medical provision against that provided by neighbouring parishes, and took advantage of its proximity to the major London hospitals. We have already seen that compared with the package of care offered to the poor in Putney, the regime which operated in the Battersea workhouse was relatively compassionate and well managed. Certainly the members of the workhouse committee were financially literate and expected to obtain value for their money, but wider concerns also motivated them. What was the background of these men and from where did they draw their ideas?

[286] WHS, BP/3/1/5 (29 July 1780).

9. The Vestry

The Battersea vestry at this time was nominally an open vestry. Nonetheless as the authors of the Survey of London have noted it was dominated by a much smaller group of regular attendees.[287] To suggest, however, that these men's attendance was simply a result of the leisure afforded by their financial and occupational standing, as some commentators have done, is perhaps to underestimate their commitment to parish governance. Some of these men invested considerable time and energy in the administration of poor relief and in oversight of the parish workhouse, alongside other aspects of local government, and this chapter will attempt to identify the common threads which bound them together and the influences which underpinned their decisions.

The chapter examines a sample of vestry members who attended the vestry or workhouse committee on over thirty occasions or who signed the monthly workhouse accounts on more than twenty, over a period of eight years between 1778 and 1785. In addition, the two local JPs and the long-serving workhouse surgeon have been included, giving altogether a total of twenty-four vestry members (see Appendix II). Speaking of the building of the new church in 1775-7, the Survey of London refers to 'gathering bourgeois confidence [in Battersea], as local influence became shared between the rising number of Thames-side manufacturers and mercantile villa-dwellers, and an older agricultural constituency'.[288] This shift is reflected in the composition of our sample of vestry members, in which Mungo Clark was the sole representative of the market gardeners, while lawyers, merchants and factory owners out-

[287] *Survey of London*, 49, p.21.
[288] *Survey of London*, 49, p.95.

numbered those engaged in agricultural occupations. The relative lack of influence of the agricultural constituency in the vestry appears to be at variance with their numerical predominance in the parish. Market gardeners represented 24% of those qualified for jury service in 1778, a figure which presented a striking contrast to their lack of active representation on the vestry.[289] Also strongly represented in the sample were the small tradesmen and craftsmen who serviced the workhouse. Men such as James Codd, George Culverwell, James Griffin and James Hill, amongst their number, were particularly prominent among the signatories of the monthly workhouse accounts. We have seen that orders for supplying the workhouse rotated amongst local suppliers. However, it is also clear that the vestry made use of competitive tendering for more expensive work, and that those exercising oversight of the workhouse accounts were in a position of some responsibility.[290] Although other vestry members also signed the accounts regularly, it seems to have been in this capacity that men with a modest commercial background were able to exert their influence. We can therefore see the emergence of two key groups within the vestry: those men who were shaped by business interests and careers which lay beyond Battersea and those men who serviced the workhouse in one form or another and whose livelihood was in some measure determined by the decisions taken by the vestry.

Several sources provide an insight into the wealth and standing of members of the vestry: these include the registers of insurance policies issued by the Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Group, the Land Tax returns, the parish rate books and a return of 1786 for Battersea which details liability for the

[289] The percentage of market gardeners qualified for jury service are 1778-24%, 1779-20%, 1780-16%, 1781-12%, 1782-11%, 1783-21%, 1784-12%, 1785-6%. The lists of those qualified for jury service appear to be more comprehensive in some years than others.
[290] WHS, BP/1/1/2 (12 June 1771).

window tax and other assessed taxes. The insurance policies reinforce the impression gained from the rate books regarding the relative wealth of the vestry members (Appendix II). Mark Bell and his partners insured the distillery and other property to the value of £8,000.[291] Mungo Clark, a gardener, and John Routh, maltster, insured more modest properties, to the value of £600 in the case of Clark, and £300 and £600 in the case of Routh.[292] James Corrie, a timber merchant, although likewise assessed on a moderate property value in the rate book, insured other reasonably high-value property over several years; £1500 in 1777, £500 in 1780 and £2800 in 1781. This reflected the value of his timber stock or ships in his breakers' yard.[293]

An examination of the Land Tax return alongside the rate book further illuminates the ownership of property in Battersea. The same owners of high-value individual properties are in evidence, but alongside them we can detect a landlord class. Earl Spencer, the lord of the manor, is naturally pre-eminent, but we also find the names of vestry members such as Thomas Barker, John Lumisden and Mark Bell. We know very little about Barker other than that he was a carpenter/builder, active on both the vestry and workhouse committee. It is clear, however, from the Land Tax assessment that he was the proprietor of a large number of properties in Battersea. Individually the assessed value of these was relatively low but in total they made Barker a significant landlord, and in1780 he numbered amongst his tenants fellow members of the vestry and one of the poor recorded in the 1776 rate book.[294] Appendix III shows landlord and

[291] LMA CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/293/443493.
[292] LMA CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/264/398864, LMA CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/295/448161 and CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/290/439675.
[293] CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/254/379198, CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/288/438789 and CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/286/435470.
[294] Surrey, England, Land Tax Records, 1780-1832, www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 25 January 2021].

tenant relationships ascertained from several sources. It is clear that not only were many vestry members bound together by such ties, but that a number of the tenants whose landlords fall within our sample of vestry members were on the margins of poverty.[295] Twenty-two out of the forty-six tenants of our sample of vestry members attended meetings of the vestry. Eleven per cent of the tenants identified were in receipt of poor relief, fifteen per cent received a dole of bread from Isaac Akerman, thirteen per cent received one of the Reverend Fraigneau's bibles and another eleven per cent were listed as poor or excused in the 1776 rate book. A stake in the local housing market in their role as landlords perhaps affords one reason for the involvement of men such as Barker and Lumisden in the vestry and in the allocation of relief to the poor. Complex relationships founded on an identity of interests and a financial stake in the welfare of their tenants may well have been at play here. Such men would certainly have been aware of the financial vulnerability of some of their tenants and neighbours.

Property wealth was to be found mainly in the hands of the merchants, factory owners, lawyers and small scale landlords. For a community such as Battersea, however, we need to look beyond the pages of the rate book and the Land Tax assessment to gauge the wealth of its citizens. Influence and substance cannot neatly be mapped onto property wealth held within the borders of the parish of Battersea. George Errington and Benjamin Dogett both appear as modest leaseholders. Yet we know that under the terms of his father's will Errington's inheritance was still held in trust for him and that in due course he was to inherit substantial estates in Essex and Derbyshire.[296] Dogett

[295] See Appendix III.
[296] TNA PROB11/949/47.

had inherited property in South Carolina under the will of his sister, Elizabeth Dogett, and likewise Christopher Baldwin, one of the two Justices, possessed substantial overseas wealth, referring in his will to his plantations and slaves in Antigua and Dominica.[297] Battersea's location and the ease of communication with the City and the West End made it an attractive location for many of their more prominent citizens. A number of its inhabitants were members of City livery companies: Isaac Akerman a Merchant Taylor, Mark Bell a Distiller, Joseph Dixon a Mason, Benjamin Dogett a Mercer, Thomas Rhodes a Fishmonger, Allyn Simmons Smith a Draper and John Tuach a Salter. Several of their wills make clear that they owned property in the City, and were witnessed by residents of the City. In addition to these merchants, residents of Battersea included lawyers such as Errington and Robert Deleroy, the architect Joseph Dixon, who worked alongside Henry Holland and Robert Mylne, and the shipbreaker and timber merchant, James Corrie, whose trade brought him into contact with the Navy Board. All these men had professional interests and contacts which extended well beyond Battersea, and yet with the exception of Christopher Baldwin, they attended the vestry regularly and many of them evinced considerable interest in the relief of the poor. We should remember, however, that there were other matters besides poor relief which drew the attention of vestry members: at the beginning of the period under consideration the parish church had been rebuilt largely on the initiative of the vestry, the period also saw a dispute between vestry and vicar over the appointment of the churchwardens, and a boundary dispute with the neighbouring parish of Wandsworth.

[297] TNA PROB11/1005/2 and PROB11/1436/212.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the wills of vestry members emphasise further the close personal relationships between some of the group. Benjamin Dogett's will lapsed into incoherence and it was James Codd, a fellow vestry member, who was called upon to testify that the will was in Dogett's handwriting.[298] Joshua Smith Simmons Smith, the son of Allyn Simmons Smith, was named as one of George Errington's executors. By the time Errington came to draw up his will he had long since left Battersea, but the bonds forged there seem to have been long-lasting. It is clear from family correspondence that Joshua Simmons Smith remained a close friend of Errington throughout his lifetime.[299] There are also other hints that relations between the two families were close. Towards the end of his life Allyn Simmons Smith moved his family to Derbyshire, where he died at 'the Spa, near Derby' (presumably Matlock).[300] As executor of Errington's will Joshua Simmons Smith engaged in much correspondence with Errington's land agent at Matlock, which takes on additional interest in the light of the elder Simmons Smith's move to Derbyshire.[301] In a codicil to his will, Mark Bell released the Simmons Smiths, father and son, from their obligations under a bond which they had given to him. Everyone else similarly released from their financial obligations was a close relation of Bell's, suggesting that the relationship between him and the Simmons Smiths was familial or particularly close in some other respect.[302] Isaac Akerman, the second local JP, named Robert Dent, another wealthy vestry member as one of his executors.[303] Akerman was a glass and china merchant, whilst Dent and his son John were

[298] TNA PROB11/1139/271.
[299] Uncatalogued correspondence between George Errington and his son, dated September 1793 to November 1794. In private hands but shortly to be deposited at Essex Record Office.
[300] *The European Magazine and London Review*, Vol. 21, January-June 1792), p.80. Google ebook.
[301] ERO, A14632 Box 6.
[302] TNA PROB11/1188/52.
[303] TNA PROB11/1218/129.

bankers, and the ties between them seem to have been both those between neighbours and between business associates. Akerman's company purchased porcelain from the East India Company in which Robert Dent and his brother William had an interest.[304] The two families were to be linked on a wider public stage in the next generation, with John Dent, and John Dawes, Akerman's son-in-law, both serving as Members of Parliament. Dawes played little active part in the proceedings of the House of Commons, but John Dent spoke regularly, including on several occasions proposing a tax on dogs to fund the relief of the poor.[305] The connections forged amongst the vestry members went beyond the merely professional, and extended between generations. Furthermore, a review of the pew register for St. Mary's, Battersea shows that most of the key members of the vestry leased pews in the church, whatever may have been their underlying denominational loyalties, and their social interaction there would have lent added strength to the ties which bound them together.[306]

The wills which survive for this sample of vestry members suggest that for a number of them religion was more than a matter of mere conformist observance. Mark Bell, for example, left £1000 for the benefit of the minister of the nonconformist meeting house in Battersea and £200 for the benefit of the dissenting meeting house in Beverley, Yorkshire. The family descent of Allyn Simmons Smith, is complicated, with Allyn Simmons adopting the additional surname Smith in 1774.[307] It seems possible, however, that he was the son of

[304] http://www.northernceramicsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/DEALERS-LIST-updated-Nov.-2021.pdf [accessed 1 February 2022].
[305] *The History of Parliament, The House of Commons 1790-1820* , ed. R G Thorne, 5 vols. (London: Secker and Warburg for The History of Parliament Trust, 1986), III pp.586-590.
[306] WHS, BP/8/3.
[307] *The Manchester Mercury and Harrop's General Advertiser*, 22 November 1774. https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/ [accessed 31 January 2022].

the Reverend Thomas Simmonds of the Battersea Baptist Chapel and the beneficiary of the wills of his uncles, Joshua and Allyn Smith. In each case their wills included bequests to the poor of Battersea and to the poor of the dissenting congregation there, with Mark Bell acting as one of Joshua's executors.[308] George Errington specified in his will that 'as may regard the funeral nothing more expended than what decency may require', following the example of his father who had given detailed instructions for a simple funeral to be held in the morning. It seems that lawyers favoured such a lack of ostentation and although we cannot determine Errington's religious beliefs from his request, there may be a suggestion here that he gave serious consideration to religious matters.[309] Errington's fellow vestryman, Joseph Dixon, the architect of the new church at Battersea, exhibited a similar concern for his final resting place, asking to be buried in the most frugal manner in the south side of Battersea churchyard close to the wall under the centre window.[310] Dixon's will is relatively short, but as well as making provision for his funeral, he left his copy of the Bible, printed by Baskerville, to his nephew Joseph. Taken together, the two requests suggest a genuine religious commitment on his part.

It appears then that there was a section of the vestry for whom religious observance was important, and that this may in part have underpinned their commitment to poor relief. This seems especially to have been so amongst the nonconformist members of the vestry. There were also other ways in which individual vestry members were linked with both the church and concern for the poor, but in a less overt manner. Isaac Akerman's will was concerned almost entirely with the disposition of his considerable fortune and made no charitable

[308] TNA PROB11/688/6 and TNA PROB11/958/282.
[309] I am grateful to Dr Julian Litten for his advice on funeral practices.
[310] TNA PROB11/1152/231.

bequests, yet in his lifetime he provided financial support to both the church and the poor, acting as a benefactor of the newly rebuilt church, and paying for bread to be distributed to the poor of the parish at Christmas 1777.[311] At this distance in time it is difficult to say what motivated his actions but a desire to underpin his social position and to cultivate deference may have played a part.[312] Akerman's charitable impulses are further demonstrated by the extent of his association with various London based charities and hospitals, as he is found serving as a governor of at least eight of these organisations, most notably as the treasurer of the Smallpox Hospital for seventeen years. Writing of the Smallpox Hospital, the author of an early nineteenth-century survey of London charities recorded that "Mr. Akerman had been a zealous promoter of the charity, had served in the first list of stewards, had filled the office of chairman of the committee, and had assisted in all the efforts which were necessary towards its establishment; he was a man of polished manners and liberal mind, he was respected as much in commerce as in his private life, and possessed a fixedness of determination which was not easily diverted from his settled purpose".[313] The Smallpox Hospital was a pioneering endeavour and an account of its work under the stewardship of Akerman was included in a digest of European pamphlets compiled by one of the French learned academies.[314] It seems not unreasonable to conclude that if the influence of the charity in which Akerman played such a prominent role extended to the continent, then its work and the principles which underpinned it must have been familiar to members of the Battersea vestry. Akerman was not an assiduous attender at meetings of

[311] WHS BP3/7/2.
[312] Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?*, p.170.
[313] Anthony Highmore, *Pietas londinensis: the history, design, and present state of the various public charities in and near London* (London: Richard Phillips, 1810), p.282 and p.290. Hathi Trust.
[314] *Journal étranger*….Paris June 1756 pp.204-215. Hathi Trust.

the vestry but he attended often enough for his voice to be heard, and his wealth and standing as one of the local JPs must have given him influence amongst his fellow vestry members.

This association with the London hospitals is one which Akerman shared with other members of the Battersea vestry. A number of the wealthier members of the vestry subscribed to the great London subscription charities of the age. Like Akerman, Mark Bell served as a governor of St Thomas's, and sponsored the treatment of a patient, possibly a worker from his distillery. John Tuach, himself a member of the vestry and the nephew and heir of Robert Deleroy, another of our sample, later subscribed to the Bridewell Hospital, and Allyn Simmons Smith joined Akerman and George Errington as governors for life of the London Hospital, and also subscribed to the General Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor.[315] Like Isaac Akerman, Errington subscribed to a wide range of charities including the Magdalen Hospital, the Lying-in charity and the Asylum for Orphan Girls in Lambeth. In so doing he followed the example of his father, whose benefactions included subscriptions to the Smallpox Hospital and the Foundling Hospital. A further link to the administration of the London charities was found in the person of Richard Dixon, Joseph Dixon's brother and the building contractor for Battersea church, who served as the surveyor and treasurer of the Westminster New Lying-in Hospital. Joanna Innes has highlighted the way in which these subscription charities set out their aims, and published reports of their activities whilst giving subscribers a voice in their management.[316] In a sermon preached before the benefactors of the Smallpox Hospital the Bishop of Norwich took as his text "Blessed is he that considereth

[315] *An Account of the Rise, Progress, and State of the London Hospital…..to ….1785.* Google ebook.
[316] Joanna Innes 'The "mixed economy of welfare", pp.153-4.

the Poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble". Whilst acknowledging the inequalities between rich and poor, which he saw as an inevitable result of the operation of society, he stressed the benefits which would accrue in this world and the next to those who assisted the poor.[317] Similarly the General Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor with its emphasis on the mutual obligations of rich and poor, on the need of the industrious poor for aid in times of sickness and unemployment, and of the particular vulnerability of children, was typical of these metropolitan charities.[318] Likewise, the Westminster Lying-in Hospital in its promotional literature focused on the industrious poor and on the potential resource that children represented for the future of the country.[319] Such sympathies chimed with those which underpinned the relief made available to the poor in Battersea, which was offered relief primarily to the elderly, the sick and unemployed, and through the admission of increasing numbers of children to the workhouse. When they subscribed to the proliferating metropolitan charities, members of the Battersea vestry were brought into contact with the latest ideas regarding relief of the poor. If they attended the meetings at which these institutions presented their annual reports, they might well have found themselves mixing with social reformers such as Jonas Hanway, himself a governor and steward of the London Hospital and a governor of the Foundling Hospital.

As Joanna Innes has shown, contemporary observers debated whether relief for the poor was best delivered through voluntary aid or by statutory relief. Men such as Hanway operated in both spheres and the well-to-do of the

[317] *A Sermon Preached before his Grace George, Duke of Marlborough, President…..of the Smallpox Hospital* (London: H. Woodfall, 1764), Google ebook.
[318] *An Account of the General Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor* (London: James Phillips, 1776).
[319] *Court Miscellany: Or, Gentleman and Lady's New Magazine,*(London: Richardson and Urquart, 1776), v, pp.179-180. Google ebook; Berry, p.25.

Battersea vestry did likewise.[320] The metropolitan charities to which they donated clearly set out for subscribers their rules and regulations, and the accounting and management structures which supported them. Taking as an example the General Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor, we can see similarities with the way in which the Battersea workhouse was organised. Subscribers to the dispensary nominated a committee of fifteen governors to meet monthly, together with a committee to audit the treasurer's accounts annually. In addition, a monthly committee drawn from the governors was established to examine tradesmen's accounts and to authorise payment of them, and two members of the committee were deputed to attend the dispensary each week to check on the behaviour of employees and patients.[321] In the case of both the London subscription charities and the Battersea workhouse, the firm administrative framework which was put in place owed something to the ideas of men with a commercial background and experience of administration in other areas. In Battersea we perhaps need to look no further than those who first advocated setting up the workhouse committee in the 1750s, Mark Bell, the distiller, and Benjamin Dogett, who may have served as a member of the City's Court of Common Council.[322] Referring to the Shrewsbury branch of the Foundling Hospital and its influence on the men who made up the local branch committee, Alannah Tomkins says, 'The charity consequentially exposed these men to metropolitan methodology, scale of working and rules'.[323] Familiarity with the great London charities must similarly have influenced those members of the Battersea vestry who subscribed to them, and perhaps led these members of the vestry to emulate their working practices.

[320] Innes, 'The "mixed economy of welfare"'.
[321] *An Account of the General Dispensary.*
[322] A bill from 1765 lists his expenses for suppressing a riot in the City and sees him sworn in as Constable of the Exchange. LMA COL/CC/GRJ/02/001.
[323] Tomkins, pp.194-5.

The contacts which Benjamin Dogett made in the City of London seem both to have influenced his family life and to have shaped his attitude to poor relief. His landlord in Battersea was William Chapman, later Sir William Chapman, third baronet, of Loudham Hall, Suffolk, a partner in the sugar bakers, Chapman and Emerson.[324] In 1729 Sir William, the first baronet, a member of the Mercers' Company had been granted the freedom of the City and twelve months later, Dogett, likewise a Mercer, was also granted the freedom of the City.[325] William Chapman's illegitimate daughter was the first wife of John Revett of Brandeston Hall, Suffolk, whose second wife was Benjamin Dogett's daughter, Catherine.[326] These business and family connections take on additional significance when we note the involvement of William Chapman (later the third baronet) and John Revett in the Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation in Suffolk. Both men were amongst the Guardians present at the initial meeting of the incorporation and were elected Directors, with John Revett also being elected Treasurer.[327] Parallels can be seen between the Loes and Wilford and the Battersea systems of relief, particularly the use of an approach which straddled two systems, outdoor relief and the use of the workhouse, although the Suffolk incorporation unlike Battersea made little use of relief in kind.[328] Other common approaches included the emphasis on the provision of work for the inmates, the admission of children into the workhouse to relieve pressure on families and the establishment of a weekly committee at which key decisions were taken. Concerns were raised in July 1780 by the Loes and Wilford committee

[324] TNA PROB11/748/272.
[325] https://www.londonroll.org/ [accessed 31 January 2022].
[326] *Survey of London, 50,* P.61.
[327] *The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation 1765-1826 "A Prison with a Milder Name"*, ed. by John Shaw, Suffolk Record Society 62 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019) p.3.
[328] Shaw, *Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation*, p. xxvi.

regarding the level of expenditure in the House of Industry. Members of the committee were requested to enquire at other Houses of Industry to establish what level of expenditure they were incurring.[329] Suggestively, it was at precisely this moment that the Battersea workhouse committee itself began to express concern about the level of expenditure incurred in Battersea, and asked the overseers to produce comparative figures from ten years previously. Given the links between Dogett, and Chapman and Revett, it is not inconceivable that ideas concerning policy were exchanged between Battersea and Suffolk.

As well as being typical of those members of the vestry with connections in the City, Dogett was also representative of a small group of men who served on the vestry for several decades from the 1750s onwards. These included Mark Bell and John Lumisden, the workhouse surgeon. The voice of active and influential men such as these, together with that of other long serving vestrymen, perhaps predisposed the vestry to continuity of policy. Certainly, although expenditure on the workhouse and the effectiveness of its management might be scrutinised, the workhouse's central role in the provision of poor relief in Battersea was not questioned during this period. The timing of the establishment of the workhouse in Battersea in the early 1730s would suggest that it was influenced by the wave of workhouses established around London at this time under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK).[330] The workhouse in the neighbouring parish of Lambeth was one of those held up as an example in an *Account of Several Work-houses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor*, and on occasion, as we have seen, the parish of Lambeth provided a point of reference for the Battersea vestry.

[329] Shaw, *Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation*, pp.55-6.
[330] Hitchcock, 'The English Workhouse', p.233.

The indirect influence of the SPCK and other religious tract societies can also be detected in other areas. The charity school founded in Battersea by Sir Walter St John in 1700 featured in the annual report into charity schools produced by the SPCK, and in 1751 Thomas Church, the vicar of Battersea, preached the sermon at their annual meeting.[331] Copies of his sermon were distributed by the SPCK's overseas arm, the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an organisation to which George Errington's father subscribed.[332] The elder Errington sat as a magistrate alongside Henry Fielding and must have been familiar with his proposals for institutional care for the poor.[333] Whether the younger Errington was himself familiar with and influenced by such material is of course a matter for conjecture. The pamphlets produced by the SPCK's dissenting and ecumenical rival, The Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, were also in circulation, with Allyn Simmons Smith having served as a steward of that organisation.[334] The ideals which the SPCK espoused, those of the workhouse as a deterrent, the inculcation of habits of industry, and the provision of free education for children seem likely to have had some currency amongst members of the Battersea vestry, particularly the longer serving members.[335] Mark Bell's first appearance at meetings of the vestry occurred as early as the mid-1740s, and at this time his fellow vestry members included Joshua Smith, the uncle of Allyn Simmons Smith, Thomas Emerson and the Reverend

[331] *A sermon preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London, 1752)* https://www.gale.com/intl/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online [accessed 31 January 2022].
[332] *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London, 1756), Google ebook.
[333] M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1966), p.20.
[334] *An Account of the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge amongst the Poor* (London, 1779), Google ebook.
[335] Hitchcock, 'The English Workhouse', pp.250-1.

Thomas Church.[336] Emerson's role as the business partner of William Chapman has already been noted, but what is perhaps more significant for the transmission of ideas and policy is his role as a patron of the Foundling Hospital.[337] The Reverend Church, was closely associated with the SPCK and in his will left £30 for religious tracts for the poor of Battersea.[338] It was he rather than his successors as vicar of Battersea who provided an intellectual framework for the vestry's deliberations.

The ideas of the SPCK, a branch of Anglicanism, may have been influential but, local nonconformists also formed an important constituency amongst the members of the vestry. This activity stood within a tradition of nonconformist involvement in local government, particularly in London.[339] Recent research has highlighted the prominent role that John Dogett, the grandfather of Benjamin Dogett, played in a group of nonconformist City merchants who made Clapham their home in the second half of the seventeenth century.[340] We have seen that Allyn Simmons Smith was familiar with evangelical tracts and the female members of his household also subscribed to religious literature such as *Memoirs of eminently pious women…..*[341] Mark Bell and other members of his family who, as we have noted, were leading members of Battersea Baptist chapel, subscribed to a range of sermons and commentaries which may in some measure have helped

[336] WHS, BP/1/1/1 (17 February 1744 and 1 April 1746).
[337] Berry, *Orphans of Empire,* pp.81-82.
[338] J. M. Scott, revised by Emma Major, 'Church, Thomas (1707-1756), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, (*8 January 2008),< https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5390> [accessed 31 January 2022].
[339] Seaward, 'Gilbert Seldon, the London Vestries, and the Defence of the Church', in *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* ed. Harris, Seaward and Goldie, pp.49-73.
340 Timothy Walker, The First Clapham Saints: A London Village 1600-1720 (Privately published 2016).
[341] Thomas Gibbons, *Memoirs of eminently pious women….* (London: J Buckland, 1777).

to shape their attitude to contemporary social problems.[342] Certainly it is mainly amongst members of the nonconformist community that we are able to detect an intellectual hinterland.

We have seen that Dogett and Bell were instrumental in setting up the workhouse committee in the 1750s and that they continued to wield considerable influence on it. Significantly it was these same men and others drawn from our pool who were also active in other aspects of local government. Among the commissioners appointed to hear cases of small debts in the Western Division of the Hundred of Brixton in 1757 were Bell, Akerman, Lumisden and Dogett.[343] These men played a key role in the parish's response to the problem of poverty in Battersea, whilst also representing their parish in a wider arena. In so doing they came into contact with vestry members from other neighbouring parishes and were provided with a forum in which to network and exchange ideas. An examination of the Land Tax returns for the period of this study shows that Bell, Akerman and Christopher Baldwin acted as commissioners, whilst James Corrie, Thomas Davis, Mungo Clark and Thomas Barker acted as assessors. Craig, Tuggy, Barker, Corrie and Tuach all acted as collectors of the tax. A similar picture emerges in respect of the 1786 House Assessment where Tuggy, Clark and James Hill act as assessors and Corrie and Tuach as collectors. It is evident that those who were most assiduous in their attendance at the vestry were also those most active in other aspects of local government and taxation. Furthermore the hierarchy which we can discern

[342] Charles Bulkley, *The oeconomy of the Gospel….* (London: Henry Baldwin, 1764);Stephen Addington, *The life of Paul the apostle….* (London: R. Hett, 1784);Francis Webb, *Sermons in Two Volumes* (London: Dryden Leach, 1766 Edn.2), Vol.1.; *https://www.gale.com/intl/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online* [accessed 31 January 2022].
[343] An Act for the more early and speedy Recovery of Small Debts within the Western Division of the Hundred of Brixton, in the County of Surry 1757.

within the vestry is reflected in their roles within the tax collection system and the small debt court.[344]

The sample of vestry members which has been examined shows that these men represented a cross-section of different stakeholders within the parish, all of whom had their own motives for involving themselves in the administration of poor relief and wider concerns of parish government. For the small tradesmen in the parish the contract to supply the workhouse represented an important source of income; and this must, in part, explain their involvement in the business of the vestry and in particular in monitoring the expenditure of the workhouse. Furthermore, as David Green has shown for London, involvement in the work of the vestry gave those of relatively humble background an opportunity to influence local government.[345] Likewise for the builder, Thomas Barker, and the surgeon, John Lumisden, contracts awarded by the vestry were both a source of income and of introductions to future business. The farmers and market gardeners who were considerable employers in the parish and who operated within a seasonal and mobile labour market, were no doubt anxious to influence the relief policies which applied to their workforce. Yet we have seen that they lacked effective representation on the vestry and we are left with the strong impression that much of the direction of policy was dictated by a small group of wealthier parishioners. It is also apparent that ties between landlords and tenants produced a network of relationships that brought some of the marginally poor into the orbit of those directing poor relief.

[344] Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman 1689-1798* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1991), pp.243-248, 424-426.
[345] Green*, Pauper Capital*, pp.85-93.

These were men whose religious convictions, familiarity with the London charities and connections with the City of London shaped their approach to the relief of poverty in Battersea. Their decisions were formed not just by their direct experience of coping with poverty in Battersea, but also by familiarity with ideas and practices current in London and a wider area. They were able to draw on a broad range of contemporary theory and practice, and through their involvement with the metropolitan charities they acquired experience in administration. In some cases they were also able to bring to their work on the vestry the skills acquired in their own business dealings, and experience gained in the administration of other aspects of local government and taxation. It is the rich network of ties of association formed in London and more locally, through business dealings, through religious affiliation and through minor public office which can be seen to have influenced the delivery of poor relief in Battersea.

10. Conclusion

To the City merchants and bankers who built villas overlooking Clapham Common in the later eighteenth century, and to the factory owners whose properties fringed the banks of the Thames, Battersea represented ‘rus in urbe’. To the majority of its inhabitants, however, it was first and foremost a rural and waterside settlement offering agricultural and river borne employment. It was the dichotomy between the largely rural nature of the parish and the metropolitan links of its leading parishioners which defined the parish’s response to poor relief during this period. This tension was further underlined by the structure of local government – a problem which has long bedevilled Surrey parishes on the southern outskirts of London. Battersea parishioners sat as Justices at the Surrey Quarter sessions, and took their turn administering other aspects of local government for the County of Surrey. Yet many of their social and business contacts lay within the metropolis.

The period under consideration (1778-1785) saw a rise in the cost of poor relief nationally, a trend from which Battersea was not exempt. Agricultural wages were generally high in Battersea, but the parish was linked to the wider economy, drawing in migrant agricultural labourers, supplying the London market from its market gardens and factories, and experiencing the pull of the London labour market. The vestry was acutely aware of the rising cost of poor relief, and sought to provide an appropriate response: considering and rejecting the possibility of farming the poor, and investigating corruption as a possible cause of the rising costs. However, although the vestry of this period showed

themselves to be financially sophisticated, at no time did they compare the relative costs of indoor and outdoor relief, or question the central place that the workhouse held in providing for the poor in Battersea. In this respect their approach contrasted with that of many other parishes, both in the immediate vicinity and further afield. Their commitment to using the workhouse as the prime means of providing poor relief in Battersea remained unshaken. The vestry continued to offer both indoor and outdoor relief, but the dominant role played by the workhouse is clear, and an analysis of the workhouse accounts demonstrates that much of the increasing cost of poor relief was driven by the rising number of inmates in the workhouse.

The importance of the relief offered in the workhouse was recognised by Battersea's parishioners: it was after all, the appointment of a new master, which drew a notably large turnout of the vestry. Admission to the list of out-pensioners was restricted and closely monitored, and some vestry members must surely have been aware that their turn for admission to the workhouse would arrive.[346] The inhabitants of the workhouse were primarily the young, the elderly and the infirm, and an often-changing group of women inmates facing various life-cycle crises. Here the circumstances of elderly Battersea inmates echoed the increased dependence of the elderly and their experience of parish relief identified by Susannah Ottaway. There is little to suggest that the parish at this time saw the rise in claims from able-bodied, working age men or from couple-headed families, which has been identified in some other areas in the later years of the century.[347] Nor is there any evidence that the type of poverty which the vestry encountered led them to consider the use of allowances as an

[346] Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle,* p.78.
[347] French, 'An Irrevocable Shift'; Smith, 'Ageing and well-being in early modern England'.

appropriate response.[348] It is important to note, however, that the period under consideration represents a snapshot in time, and makes no attempt to identify longer term trends or changes amongst the groups claiming relief. Notwithstanding this, two aspects of the Battersea workhouse population during this period are particularly noteworthy: the fluid female intake and the increasing number of children housed there. It has been suggested that elsewhere, apprenticeships or boarding out of children were used by parishes to relieve families under pressure.[349] In Battersea, however, the workhouse performed a similar function in assisting overstretched families, and provided a core element of the relief on offer from the parish, a policy approach similar to that identified by Alysa Levene in London parishes.[350] By using the workhouse in this way the vestry also tapped into contemporary concerns about the provision of an adequate workforce and the development of human capital, which motivated many of the London charitable institutions.

The regime which operated within the workhouse placed an emphasis on the discipline of work and on the provision of some limited education for the children. An examination of the surviving sources, suggests that the work undertaken by the inmates made little financial contribution to the running costs of the workhouse, yet its symbolic importance and the vestry's continued commitment to the ideal should not be underestimated. A brief survey of the domestic life of the workhouse indicates that it offered a modest degree of comfort when compared with what is known about life in some other workhouses. The indications are that the material surroundings compared

[348] Building on the earlier work of Baugh and Blaug, Thomas Sokoll has examined the use of allowances in Ardleigh, Essex. Sokoll, 'Families, Wheat Prices and the Allowance Cycle'.
[349] Steven King, *Medical Welfare and the English Poor, 1750-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), p.209.
[350] Levene, 'Children, Childhood and the Workhouse'.

favourably with those in the workhouses in Oxford, Shrewsbury and York, examined by Alannah Tomkins, although this conclusion requires much more detailed examination.[351] As elsewhere, the workhouse also offered a gateway to the professional skills of the parish's surgeon-apothecary, John Lumisden, and through his recommendations to treatment in the London hospitals. The surviving financial records indicate that the workhouse was the dominant element of relief policy in Battersea, but throughout the period it continued to operate alongside a parallel system of monetary out-relief and benefits in kind. The out-relief on offer was mainly short-term and low-value, often supplemented by benefits in kind, particularly of clothing and tools. It seems clear that the parish used such benefits strategically to improve the poor's prospects of independence in the future. The policy of the vestry, articulated by the workhouse committee and by the parochial officers who administered relief, was to make use of the workhouse and other forms of relief flexibly and pragmatically, as did the poor themselves.

The vestry, through the agency of the workhouse committee, monitored the operation of the workhouse closely, and it is here that the influence of some of the most active of its membership can be detected. The committee oversaw the distribution of relief, the day to day operation of the workhouse, the welfare of the inmates and the education of the children housed in the workhouse. They also monitored a sophisticated purchasing and accounting system. The main vestry, meanwhile, concerned itself with strategic issues, such as the setting of the poor rate, checking who had paid or failed to pay the rate, and the consideration of any matters deemed too important for the workhouse committee to handle.

[351] Tomkins, pp.36-78.

The vestry during this period was dominated by a small group of regular attendees, which included both a number of the wealthier ratepayers and representatives of the small tradesmen who supplied the workhouse. The agricultural interest, as we have seen, was numerically under-represented in this group. To characterise the vestry simply in terms of a polarity between these two groups is, however, to over-simplify matters: there were also modest ratepayers who exerted considerable influence on policy and who were actively involved in the administration of poor relief. What is clear, nonetheless, is that the more active members of the body were bound together by a complex network of common interests and concerns.

Many of these men had clear and demonstrable ties to the metropolis: as businessmen, as lawyers, as members of livery companies and above all as patrons of the many London hospitals and charitable institutions which flourished during this period. These influences can be seen in their approach to the administration of poor relief in Battersea, where they brought the administrative, accounting and legal skills gained in their business lives to bear on the oversight of the workhouse and the distribution of relief. The administrative structures, which they encountered in the London charitable institutions which they supported, must also have shaped their own attitude to institutional relief. Similarities can be identified between the structures and procedures which operated in the Battersea workhouse and those which were commonly in place in the great London charitable institutions. Yet although many of their interests lay outside the parish, the active members of the vestry were not totally remote from the poor of the parish. The vestry encompassed several small scale landlords, some of whose tenants were vulnerable to economic pressure and likely to turn to the parish for support. And as the

proprietors of substantial industrial concerns they encountered recipients of relief amongst the families of their workforce. Close links were also formed between the workhouse and the small-scale tradesmen who supplied it with provisions. These men tended to make their influence on the vestry felt by regular attendance at the workhouse committee, which implemented a policy of rotating purchases amongst local suppliers, and by monitoring and approving the workhouse accounts. In so doing they represented a counterbalance to the oligarchic tendencies of the more substantial ratepayers.

Members of the vestry were also linked by the bonds of religion. Several of the more prominent vestry members subscribed to religious tracts, and a clear nonconformist commitment or a nonconformist family background can be detected for some of them. These men of dissenting sympathy, served their turn as churchwardens, occupied a pew in the parish church, and showed considerable commitment to parish governance. During this period it was Robert Coram, the tenant of the Baptist, Mark Bell who served as workhouse clerk, and ensured the efficient administration of the workhouse committee. Although the vestry and the workhouse committee comprised both long-standing members of the community and relative newcomers to the parish, it is perhaps significant that the longer serving members included men who had first attended in the 1740s and 1750s, which coincided with the Reverend Thomas Church's tenure in Battersea. Church's connections with the charity school movement and the SPCK fit with tentative indications that Battersea may have been one of the workhouses founded around London under the auspices of the SPCK. Certainly the workhouse in the neighbouring parish of Lambeth was one of the SPCK's foundations, and it is evident that the Battersea vestry looked not

just to the metropolis but to other parishes, both near and far, for its practice and policy.

In some respects this was the practical response of a community which, in spite of the rural nature of its economy, lay in close proximity to neighbouring centres of population. The physical boundaries of the parish were closely monitored, as was the poor's right to relief from the parish. This activity necessitated regular contact with the officers of the neighbouring parishes, and it is not surprising that practical decisions such as the setting of the surgeon-apothecary's salary were taken by reference to the policy in neighbouring parishes. At the same time the migrant nature of the Battersea labour force and the push/pull effect of the metropolis on the labouring class brought the vestry into contact with a wide range of parish officers. The contemporary perception of Battersea as a healthy, rural location, also provided a channel by which ideas circulating amongst metropolitan reformers reached the parish. Inner London parishes sent young children to be nursed in rural locations, including Battersea, and this provided another means by which ideas about child welfare, current in the metropolis, could reach the village. Alongside their commitment to the Battersea vestry, some of its more prominent members also served in other capacities in local government, for example as members of the local commission dealing with small debts. It can be demonstrated that in this capacity they encountered members of nearby Surrey vestries, such as that of Wimbledon, and were again afforded an opportunity to share policy and practice. Furthermore, as we have seen, many of the more substantial members of the vestry had personal and business connections which extended far beyond the parish boundaries. A clear example of this process is afforded by Benjamin Dogett's connections: in Battersea Dogett was no more than a

modest leaseholder, albeit an extremely active member of the vestry, but his connections extended into the City hierarchy and into Suffolk society. Such connections as these brought members of the vestry into contact with men who were grappling with the problem of the rising cost of poor relief in other parts of the country, and offered an opportunity for the exchange of policy. In the case of Isaac Akerman, the local Justices of the Peace, his influence on policy perhaps lay as much in his wide range of charitable interests and responsibilities, as in the formal connections associated with office identified by David Eastwood and Joanna Innes, and thus his example allows us to consider parallel routes for the dissemination of policy.

It is apparent that Battersea's position as part of the London hinterland did not protect it from the pressure of rising demand for poor relief which was being felt elsewhere. The response of the vestry to this pressure was to maintain its long-standing commitment to the workhouse as its primary means of supporting the poor of the parish. Admission to the workhouse was used flexibly in conjunction with a small number of carefully monitored weekly pensions, modest casual relief and benefits in kind. But there can be little doubt about the vestry's dedication to the parish workhouse. The regime there offered a modest degree of comfort and access to healthcare, but at its heart lay a commitment to the ideals of the discipline of work and education. If cost had been the deciding factor for the Battersea vestry when it decided how to care for its poor, then its loyalty to the workhouse would have been hard to justify. But, although their motives were not explicitly stated, at the core of their decision making there lay an unstated policy, which recognised the vulnerability of fellow vestrymen, tenants and employees, whilst remaining mindful of the cost of relief. The vestry was able to draw on a wide range of policy and practice

encountered through the myriad connections of its members, who demonstrated an awareness of the issue of poverty in the wider world around them.[352] Battersea's geographical location and the wide horizons of its parishioners gave rise to a spatially specific response to poverty.

[352] Policy transfer is examined by Samantha Shave in *Pauper Policies Poor Law Practice in England, 1780-1850.*

Appendix I. Expenditure on weekly and casuals 1780-1785

Year and month	Weekly list	Casuals	Weekly and casuals list	Sundries
		£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
January 1780				
February 1780				
March 1780				
April 1780			6.12.0	
May 1780		6.8.8		
June 1780			5.17.0	
July 1780			7.12.10	
August 1780			4.16.8	
September 1780			6.2.10	
October 1780			6.3.2	
November 1780			5.3.8	
December 1780			6.10.4	
Total expenditure		**6.8.8 (1 month)**	**48.18.6 (9 months)**	
January 1781		4.18.8		
February 1781		5.16.2		
March 1781			5.13.4	13.17.10
April 1781				
May 1781				
June 1781				
July 1781				
August 1781				
September 1781				
October 1781				
November 1781				
December 1781		10.9.4 (3 months)		
Total expenditure		**21.4.2 (5 months)**	**5.13.4 (1 month)**	**13.17.10**
January 1782				
February 1782				
March 1782		16.16.4 (3 months)		
April 1782				
May 1782				
June 1782				
July 1782				
August 1782				
September 1782		27.17.3 (6 months)		
October 1782				
November 1782				
December 1782				
Total expenditure		**44.13.7 (9 months)**		

January 1783				
February 1783				
March 1783				
April 1783				
May 1783				
June 1783	5.14.0 (3 months)	9.5.6 (3 months)		
July 1783				
August 1783				
September 1783			12.4.6 and 2.16.9 (3 months)	
October 1783				
November 1783				
December 1783			59.10.7 (3 months)	
Total expenditure	**5.14.0 (3 months)**	**9.5.6 (3 months)**	**74.11.10 (6 months)**	
January 1784				
February 1784				
March 1784		35.10.3		
April 1784				
May 1784				
June 1784		7.17.0		
July 1784				
August 1784				
September 1784		10.5.6		
October 1784				
November 1784				
December 1784		18.2.6		
Total expenditure		**71.15.3(12 months)**		
January 1785				
February 1785				
March 1785		15.0.6		
April 1785				
May 1785				
June 1785		21.8.0		
July 1785				
August 1785				
September 1785		22.18.2		
October 1785				
November 1785				
December 1785				
Total expenditure		**59.6.8 (9 months)**		

Source:WHS,BP/3/3/4, Battersea Workhouse Journal

Appendix II. Sample of Vestry Members

	Occupation	***Esquire (E) Gentleman (G)****	***JP***	***Number of attendances at Vestry 1778-85***	***Number of attendances at Workhouse Committee 1778-85***	***Number of times signed monthly workhouse accounts 1778-85***	***Date of will/death***	***Freeholder (F) Copyholder (C) Leaseholder (L)****	***Value of property assessed in 1776 Rate Book (£)***
Akerman, Isaac Esq	Merchant	E	JP	18	4	0	May 1792	F	120
Baldwin, Christopher Esq	West Indies merchant	E	JP	10	1	0	January 1806	F	94
Barker, Thomas	Carpenter			77	168	39	December 1799	C	20
Beilby, William	Glass painter/drawing master			31	6	3	October 1819	L	-
Bell, Mark Esq	Distiller	E, G		39	23	11	February 1790	F	166
Clark, Mungo	Gardener			82	131	33	November 1796	C	54
Codd, James	Supplier of coffins, carpenter			57	35	30		L	10
Corrance, William	Apothecary			35	70	2			26**
Corrie, James	Timber merchant/ship breaker			41	32	14	October 1801	L	40
Craig, Charles	Pump borer			28	58	11	June 1798	L	33
Culverwell, George	Victualler			15	1	24	December 1787	L	12
Davis, Thomas	Supplier of general merchandise, carpenter			34	51	13		L	24
Deleroy, Robert	Lawyer			32	23	22	November 1780		25
Dixon, Joseph	Architect/builder/surveyor			52	37	24	April 1787	L	42
Dogett, Benjamin	Mercer			69	181	25	March 1786		10
Errington, George Esq.	Barrister	E		57	100	36	May 1795	L	12
Griffin, James	Grocer, corn chandler			18	3	21		L	
Hill, James	Grocer			62	52	53		L	10
Lumisden, John	Surgeon/apothecary			10	14	2	May 1781		26**
Rhodes, Thomas Esq	Stockbroker	E, G		53	21	11	April 1791	F	64
Routh, John	Maltster			54	27	20	May 1796	L	76
Smith, A S Esq	Owner of sugar factory	E, G		77	97	48	January 1792	F	71
Tuach, John		E, G		31	48	21	February 1805	F, C	
Tuggy, James	Miller			27	34	12	October 1808	L	30

*Source, Surrey, England, Jury-Qualified Freeholders and Copyholders, 1696-1824, <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> [accessed 29 June 2020]
WHS, BP/2/2/2, Battersea Overseers of the Poor Rate Books 1760-1776, ** Messrs Lumisden, Corrance and Alderman assessed on £26

Appendix III. Battersea Tenancies 1778-1792

Proprietor	***Tenant***	***Tenant's occupation***	***Source***	***Vestry member***	***Recipient of Akerman's bread***	***Recipient of Fraigneau's Bible***	***Poor Relief***	***1776 Rate Book***
Mungo Clark	Chandler	Labourer	Sun Insurance Policy for Mungo Clark		Y		Y	Poor
Mungo Clark	Child	Labourer	Sun Insurance Policy for Mungo Clark		Y		Y	Poor
James Bell	Joseph Stacey	Gardener, supplier of milk to workhouse	James Bell Lunacy Commission	Y		Y		
James Bell	John Wingate		James Bell Lunacy Commission	Y	Y	Y	Sarah (spouse?), Catherine and Sarah (children?) inmates of workhouse	
James Bell	Nathaniel Greneley		James Bell Lunacy Commission					
James Bell	Simon Webb		James Bell Lunacy Commission					
James Bell	Richard Bryant		James Bell Lunacy Commission		Y (?)			
James Bell	Robert Coram	Workhouse clerk	James Bell Lunacy Commission					Excused
James Bell	Churcher		James Bell Lunacy Commission					
James Bell	Green (garden ground)		James Bell Lunacy Commission	Y (?)				
Robert Deleroy	Joseph Wingate		Land Tax 1780		Y	Y		
Robert Deleroy	Thomas Stone		Land Tax 1780		Y	Y		Poor
Thomas Barker	John Barnes	Molecatcher	Land Tax 1780	Y	Y			
Thomas Barker	William Higgs	Gardner	Land Tax 1780	Y				
Thomas Barker	Henry Aungle	Corn chandler	Land Tax 1780	Y				
Thomas Barker	William Corrance	Apothecary	Land Tax 1780	Y				
Thomas Barker	Henry Monger		Land Tax 1780		Y			Poor
Thomas Barker	Edward Chipp		Land Tax 1780					

Thomas Barker	J Macpheson (poor)		Land Tax 1780					
Thomas Barker	William Brew		Land Tax 1780					
Thomas Barker	Jacob Collins		Land Tax 1780	Y				
Thomas Barker	late Arnold		Land Tax 1780					
John Lumisden	Miss Alderman		Land Tax 1780	Brother				
John Lumisden	Edward Hussey		Land Tax 1780					
John Lumisden	? Dyson	Plumber	Land Tax 1780	Y				
John Lumisden	William Salisbury		Land Tax 1780	Y				
John Lumisden	Thomas Davis	Carpenter	Land Tax 1780	Y				
John Lumisden	Abraham Burt		Land Tax 1780	Y				
A S Smith	John Emmett	Farmer	Land Tax 1780	Y			Spouse	
A S Smith	John Spencer		Land Tax 1780	Y		Y		
A S Smith	Richard Spencer		Land Tax 1780	Y				
A S Smith	Robert Mousley	Gardener, supplier of milk to workhouse	Land Tax 1780	Y				
A S Smith	Weathershot		Land Tax 1780					
Mark Bell	Nicholas Chandler	Carpenter	Land Tax 1780	Y				
Mark Bell	Mrs Macbeth		Land Tax 1780	Husband		Y (husband)	Y	
Mark Bell	John Wingate		Land Tax 1780	Y	Y	Y	Spouse	
Mark Bell	Widdow Pidder (poor)		Land Tax 1780					
Mark Bell	Robert Coram	Workhouse clerk	Land Tax 1780					Excused
Mark Bell	R Howard		Land Tax 1780	Y				
Mark Bell	W Goodwin		Land Tax 1780	Y				
Mark Bell	John Elmes		Land Tax 1780					
Isaac Akerman	John Walter		Land Tax 1780	Y				
Isaac Akerman	William Francis		Land Tax 1780					
Thomas Rhodes	John Mousley		Land Tax 1780					

Source:TNA C211/3/B174 Inquisition into the lunacy of James Bell; TNA C101/3561 Accounts of the committee for James Bell, lunatic; Surrey, England, Land Tax Records, 1780-1832, https://www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 25 January 2021]; LMA,CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/264/398864

Appendix IV. Vestry Interests

	Occupation	***Religion***	***Member of City Livery Company***	***London Hospital***	***SPCK***	***General Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor***	***Smallpox Hospital***	***Westminster Lying-In Hospital***	***Magdalen Hospital***	***Lying-In Charity***	***Asylum for Orphan Girls Lambeth***
Akerman, Isaac	Glass and china merchant		Merchant Taylors	Governor			Treasurer		Governor and Committee member		
Baldwin , Christopher	West India merchant										
Barker, Thomas	Carpenter										
Beilby, William	Schoolmaster/ artist/ glass enameller										
Bell, Mark	Distiller	Non-conformist	Distillers								
Clark, Mungo	Gardner										
Codd, James	Carpenter										
Corrance, William	Apothecary										
Corrie, James	Timber merchant/ shipbreaker										
Craig, Charles	Pump borer										
Culverwell, George	Brewer										

Davis, Thomas	Carpenter										
Deleroy, Robert	Lawyer										
Dixon, Joseph	Mason/ architect		Masons			Brother, Richard Dixon, was subscriber		Brother, Richard suveyor and treasurer			
Dogett, Benjamin		Non-conformist	Mercers								
Errington, George	Barrister	CofE (possibly decended from RC family)		Governor					Governor	Governor	Guardian
Griffin, James	Corn chandler/ grocer										
Hill, James	Grocer										
Lumisden, John	Surgeon/ apothecary										
Rhodes, Thomas	Stockbroker		Fish-mongers								
Routh, John	Maltster										
Simmons Smith, Allyn	Sugar Refiner	Non-conformist	Drapers	Governor for Life	Steward	Subscriber					
Tuach, John			Salters								
Tuggey, James	Miller										

	St. Thomas's Hospital		***Royal Bridewell Hospital***	***Guy's Hospital***	***Marine Society***	***St. Luke's Hospital***	***Humane Society***	***Other charitable interests***	***Commission for hearing cases re. small debts 1757***	***Overseas Connections***
Akerman, Isaac	Governor		Governor	Governor	Governor	Governor		Benefactor of Indian Charity School, Connecticut and Sir Walter St Johns School, Battersea	✓	✓
Baldwin , Christopher										✓
Barker, Thomas										
Beilby, William										
Bell, Mark	Governor							Bequests in will for benefit of nonconconformist ministers in Battersea and Beverley, Yorks. Subscribes to series of sermons and religious tracts.		
Clark, Mungo										
Codd, James										
Corrance, William							Director/ Steward			
Corrie, James										
Craig, Charles										

Culverwell, George										
Davis, Thomas										
Deleroy, Robert										
Dixon, Joseph								Freemason		
Dogett, Benjamin									✓	✓
Errington, George								Benefactor of society for maintaining and educating poor orphans of clergymen. Robert and William Dent also subscribers.		
Griffin, James										
Hill, James										
Lumisden, John							Director		✓	
Rhodes, Thomas										
Routh, John								Patron of the anniversary of Charity schools		
Simmons Smith, Allyn				✓			Director	Family subscribed to improving tracts		✓
Tuach, John			Governor							
Tuggey, James										

Bibliography

I Manuscript Sources

Battersea, Wandsworth Heritage Service

BP Battersea Parish

BP/1/1/3 Battersea Vestry Minutes 1778-1785

BP/1/1/4 Battersea Vestry Minutes 1785-1793

BP/2/2/2 Battersea Overseers of the Poor Rate Books 1760-1776

BP/2/6/4 Battersea Apprenticeship Indentures 1791-1818

BP/3/1/5 Battersea Workhouse Committee Minutes 1779-1792

BP/3/2/3 Battersea Workhouse Journal 1771-1786

BP/3/3/4 Battersea Workhouse 1770-1778

BP/3/4/2 Battersea Workhouse Ledger 1764-1780

BP/3/7/2 Battersea Inmates Register 1753-1778

BP/4/1/5 Battersea Churchwardens Accounts 1737-1797

D10/4 Auctioneer's sale particulars by Blake & Croydon

Chelmsford, Essex Record Office

A14632 Records of the Errington family of Lexden Park and Chadwell Hall and Ashbourne, Derbyshire

Kew, The National Archives

PROB11 Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills

C101 Chancery Masters' Account Books

C211 Chancery: Commissions and Inquisitions of Lunacy

London, London Metropolitan Archives

CLC/B/192/F/001 Royal and Sun Alliance Group Policy Registers 1710-1863

COL/CC/GRJ Corporation of London – Court of Common Council: Joint Gresham Committee

CLA/007 City of London, Bridge House Estates

Woking, Surrey History Centre

QS2/6/ Surrey Quarter Session Bundles (1630-1888)

II Published Primary Sources

The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation 1765-182 ed. by John Shaw, Suffolk Record Society LXII (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019)

The Manchester Mercury and Harrop's General Advertiser, 22November 1774

Wimbledon Vestry Minutes 1736, 1743-1788, ed. F M Cowe (Guildford: Surrey Record Society, 1964) XXV

III Official documents and publications

An Act for the more early and speedy Recovery of Small Debts within the Western Division of the Hundred of Brixton, in the County of Surry 1757, *Statutes at Large* ed. Owen Ruffhead (London: Mark and Robert Baskett, 1764) in Eighteenth Century Collections Online

Abstracts of the returns made by the overseers of the poor, in pursuance of an act passed in the sixteenth year of His Present Majesty's reign, Intituled, "An act for obliging the overseers of the poor, within the several parishes and places within that part of Great Britain called England, to make returns, upon oath, to certain questions specified in the act, relative to the state of their poor; and to authorize and require the justices of the peace, within their respective divisions and jurisdictions, in the several counties and cities in England and Wales, to take such returns upon oath, and to cause them to be transmitted to the clerk of the Parliaments*,* PP1775-76, xxvii.

Abstract of Answers and Returns under Act for procuring Returns relative to Expense and Maintenance of Poor in England, PP1803-4, xiii. C.175.

IV Internet Sources

Addington, S., *The life of Paul the apostle….* (London: R. Hett, 1784) in Eighteenth Century Collections Online [accessed 7 November 2020]

Bulkley, C., *The oeconomy of the Gospel….* (London: Henry Baldwin, 1764) in Eighteenth Century Collections Online [accessed 7 November 2020]

Gibbons, T., *Memoirs of eminently pious women….* (London: J Buckland, 1777*)* in Eighteenth Century Collections Online [accessed 7 November 2020]

Highmore, A. *Pietas londinensis: the history, design, and present state of the various public charities in and near London* (London: Richard Phillips, 1810), p.282 and p.290 <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044055016414&view=1up&seq=5> [accessed 6 May 2021]

Stevenson, W., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Surrey* (London: The Board of Agriculture, 1809), Google ebook

Townsend, J., *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws* (London: C. Dilly, 1786), Google ebook

Webb, F., *Sermons in Two Volumes* (London: Dryden Leach, 1766 Edn.2), Vol.1) in Eighteenth Century Collections Online [accessed 7 November 2020]

Surrey, England, Jury-Qualified Freeholders and Copyholders, 1696-1824 https://www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 29 June 2020]

Surrey, England, Land Tax Records, 1780-1832, https://www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 25 January 2021]

A List of Bankrupts with their Dividends, Certificates etc. from Jan.1, 1786, to June 24, 1806, inclusive (London: William Smith and Co., 1806) < https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/12240/page/4/data.pdf > [accessed 21 August 2020]

St Thomas's Hospital: Hospital Admission and Discharge Registers, 1781-1790, LMTHRH55404-LMTHRH55409 **(**www.londonlives.org version 2, March 2018), London Metropolitan Archives [accessed 23 March 2022].

Northern Ceramic Society-List of dealers < https://www.northernceramicsociety.org/dealers-list/> [accessed 7 May 2021]

The Records of London's Livery Companies Online (ROLLCO) <https://www.londonroll.org/> [accessed 5 November 2020]

Journal étranger……..Des Academies d'Angers, de Montauban & de Nancy (Paris: June, 1756), pp.204-215 <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015063711348&view=1up&seq=210> [accessed 7 May 2021]

A sermon preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London, 1752) in Eighteenth Century Collections Online [accessed 7 November 2020]

A sermon preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London, 1752) in Eighteenth Century Collections Online [accessed 7 November 2020]

A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London, 1756), Google ebook

A Sermon Preached before his Grace George, Duke of Marlborough, President…..of the Smallpox Hospital (London: H. Woodfall, 1764), Google ebook

Court Miscellany: Or, Gentleman and Lady's New Magazine, Volume 5 (London: Richardson and Urquart, 1776), Google ebook

An Account of the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge amongst the Poor (London, 1779), Google ebook

An Account of the Rise, Progress, and State of the London Hospital…..to ….1785, Google ebook

An Account of the General Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor (London: James Phillips, 1776), Google ebook

V Secondary Sources

Andrew, D. T., *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989)

Arkell, T., 'The incidence of poverty in England in the later seventeenth century', *Social History*, 12 (1987), 23-47

Ashton, T.S., *Economic Fluctuations in England1700-1800* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959)

Baugh, D. A., 'The Cost of Poor Relief in South-East England, 1790-1834', *Economic History Review* 28 (1975), 50-68

Berry, Helen, *Orphans of Empire The fate of London's Foundlings*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Blaug, M., 'The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New', *Journal of Economic History* 23 (1963), 151-84

Blaug, M., 'The Poor Law Report Reexamined', *Journal of Economic History, 24* (1964), 229-245

Boulton, J., '"It Is Extreme Necessity That Makes Me Do This": Some "Survival Strategies" of Pauper Households in London's West End During the Early Eighteenth Century', *International Review of Social History*, 45(S8) (2000), 47–69

Boulton, J., 'Welfare Systems and the Parish Nurse in Early Modern London, 1650–1725, *Family & Community History*, 10 (2007), 127-151

Boulton, J. and Schwarz, L. ‘‘The Comforts of a Private Fireside’? The Workhouse , the Elderly and the Poor Law in Georgian Westminster: St Martin-in-the-Fields, 1725-1824’, in *Accommodating Poverty The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c1600-1850* ed. J. McEwan and P. Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.221-245

Boulton, J. and Black, J. ‘Paupers and their Experience of a London Workhouse: St Martin-in-the Fields, 1725-1824’, in *Residential Institutions in Britain, 1725-1970 Inmates and Environments*, Perspectives in Economic and Social History number 27,ed. by J. Hamlett, L. Hoskins, R. Preston (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), pp.79-92

Boulton, J., ‘Indoors or Outdoors?: Welfare Priorities and Pauper Choices in the Metropolis under the Old Poor Law, 1718–1824’, in *Population, Welfare and Economic Change in Britain, 1290-1834*, ed. by C. Briggs, P. M. Kitson and S. J. Thompson (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), pp.153-88

Broad, J., ‘Parish economies of welfare, 1650–1834’, *Historical Journal, 42* (1999), 985-1006

Broad, J., ‘Housing the Rural Poor in Southern England, 1650–1850’, *Agricultural History Review*, 48 (2000), 151–170

Broad J., ‘The Parish Poor House in the Long Eighteenth Century’, in *Accommodating Poverty The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c1600-1850* ed. J. McEwan and P. Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.246-262

Brown, D., ‘Supplying London’s Workhouses in the Mid-Nineteenth Century’, *London Journal,* 41 (2016) 36-59

Chadwick, O., *The Victorian Church,* 2 vols. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1971-72) II (1972)

A Charge on the Parish The Treatment of Poverty in Putney 1620-1834, Wandsworth Papers 1 (London: Wandsworth Historical Society, 1974).

Dennistoun, J., *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange: Knt., and of his Brother-in-law, Andrew Lumisden*, (London:Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855)

Eastwood, D., *Governing Rural England, Tradition and Transformation in Local Government 1780-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

Eastwood, D., *Government and Community in the English Provinces 1700-1870 (*London: Macmillan Press, 1997)

Eden, F. M. and Rogers A. G. L., *The state of the poor;:A history of the labouring classes in England, with parochial reports* (London: Routledge, 1928)

French, H., ‘Social Status, Localism and the 'Middle Sort of People' in England 1620-1750’, *Past & Present*, 166 (2000) 66-99

French, H. R., *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England, 1600-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

French, H., ‘Living in Poverty in Eighteenth-Century Terling’, in *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England*, ed. by S. Hindle, A. Shepard, J. Walter (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013) pp.281-316

French, H., ‘‘How dependent were the ‘dependent poor’? Poor relief and the life-course in Terling, Essex, 1762–1834’, *Continuity and Change, 30* (2015), 193-222

French, H., ‘An Irrevocable Shift: Detailing the Dynamics of Rural Poverty in Southern England, 1762-1834: a case study’, *Economic History Review 68 (2015), 769-805*

George, M. D., *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1966)

Green, D. R., *Pauper Capital : London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009)

Gale, F. H., *Battersea Chapel 1797-1897 A Centenary Record* (London: Unwin Brothers, The Gresham Press, 1897)

Green, D. R., ‘Icons of the New System: Workhouse Construction and Relief Practices in London under the Old and New Poor Law’, *London Journal,* 34 (2009), 264-284

Harley, J., ‘Material lives of the poor and their strategic use of the workhouse during the final decades of the English old poor law’, *Continuity and Change, 30* (2015), 71-103

Harley, J., 'Pauper inventories, social relations, and the nature of poor relief under the old poor law, England, c.1601–1834.', *Historical Journal* 62 (2019) 375-398

Higginbotham, P., *The Workhouse Encyclopedia* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014)

Himmelfarb, G., *The Idea of Poverty England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf; Toronto: Random House; London: Faber and Faber, 1984)

Hindle, S., *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c.1550-1750,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Hindle, S., ‘Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c.1550-1750’, *Cultural and Social History,* 1 (2004), 6-35

Hitchcock, T., ‘Paupers and Preachers: the SPCK and the Parochial Workhouse Movement’ in L. Davison, T. Hitchcock, T. Keirn and R. Shoemaker, *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England 1689-1750* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1992), pp.145-166

Hitchcock, T., King, P., and Sharpe, P., *Chronicling poverty: The voices and strategies of the English poor, 1640-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997)

Hitchcock, T., *Down and out in eighteenth-century London*, (London: Hambledon,, 2004)

Honeyman, K., *Child workers in England, 1780-1820:* p*arish apprentices and the making of the early industrial labour force*, (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007)

Innes, J., 'The "mixed economy of welfare" in early modern England: assessments of the options from Hale to Malthus (c.1683-1803)' in M. Daunton, *Charity, self-interest and welfare in the English past* (London: UCL Press, 1996)

Innes, J., 'The State and the Poor Eighteenth-Century England in European Perspective' in *Rethinking Leviathan The Eighteenth Century State in Britain and Germany* ed. J. Brewer and E. Hellmuth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Innes, J., *Inferior Politics : Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Jones, P. D., '"I cannot keep my place without being deascent": pauper letters, parish clothing and pragmatism in the south of England, 1750-1830', Rural History, 20 (2009) 31-49

Jones, P. and King., 'Obligation, Entitlement and Dispute: Navigating the English Poor Laws1600-1900' in *Obligation, Entitlement and Dispute under the English Poor Laws* ed. Peter Jones and Steven King (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp.1-19

King, P., 'Pauper Inventories and the Material Lives of the Poor in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' in *Chronicling poverty: The voices and strategies of the English poor, 1640-1840* ed. Tim Hitchcock, Peter King, and Pamela Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997), pp.155-191

King, S., *Poverty and Welfare in England 1700-1850 A regional Perspective* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000)

King, S., *Sickness, medical welfare and the English poor, 1750-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018)

Langford, P., *A Polite and Commercial People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Langford, P., *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman 1689-1798* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Lees, L. H., *The Solidarities of Strangers*, *The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Levene, A., 'Children, Childhood and the Workhouse: St Marylebone, 1769-1781', *London Journal,* 33 (2008) 41-59

Levene, A., 'Poor families, removals and 'nurture' in late Old Poor Law London', *Continuity and Change, 25*,2 (2010) 233-262

Levene, A., *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

Loudon, I., *Medical Care and the General Practitioner 1750-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

Lysons, D., *The Environs of London*, 4 vols. (London: T Cadell, 1792-96), I (1792)

Mathias, P., *The Transformation of England Essays in the economic and social history of England in the eighteenth century* (Methuen: London, 1979)

Malthus, T. R., *An Essay on the Principle of Population and Other Writings,* ed. Robert J. Mayhew (London: Penguin, 2015)

Ottaway, S. R., *The Decline of Life, Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Porter, R., *English Society in the 18th Century* (London: Penguin, Revised edition 1991)

Richmond, V., *Clothing the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp.186-190

Seaward, P., 'Gilbert Seldon, the London Vestries, and the Defence of the Church' in *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* ed. Harris, T., Seaward, P. and Goldie, M. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) pp.49-73

Sharpe, P., ''The bowels of compation': A Labouring Family and the Law, c.1790-1834' in *Chronicling poverty: The voices and strategies of the English poor, 1640-1840* ed. Tim Hitchcock, Peter King, and Pamela Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997), pp.87-108

Shave, S., *Pauper Policies: Poor Law practice in England 1780-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017)

Slack, P., *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (Harlow: Longman, 1988)

Slack, P., *The English Poor Law 1531-1782* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1990)

Simmonds, H.S., *All about Battersea* (London: Ashfield, 1882)

Smith, R.M., 'Ageing and well-being in early modern England, Pension trends and gender preferences under the English Old Poor Law c.1650-1800' in *Old Age from Antiquity to Post-Modernity* ed. Johnson, P. and Thane, P. (London: Routledge, 1998) pp.64-95

Snell, K. D. M., *Annals of the Labouring Poor Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

Thomas Sokoll, 'Old Age in Poverty: The Record of Essex Pauper Letters, 1780-1834' in *Chronicling poverty: The voices and strategies of the English poor, 1640-1840* ed. Tim Hitchcock, Peter King, and Pamela Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997), pp.127-154

Sokoll, T., 'Families, Wheat Prices and the Allowance Cycle: Poverty and Poor Relief in the Agricultural Community of Ardleigh 1794-1801', in *Obligation, Entitlement and Dispute under the English Poor Laws* ed. Peter Jones and Steven King (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015)

Survey of London: Battersea, vol. 49 and 50 ed. A. Saint and C. Thom (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013)

Szreter, S. and Sienna, K., 'The Pox in Boswell's London an estimate of the extent of syphilis in the metropolis in the 1770s', *Economic History Review,* 74 (2) (2020), 372-399

Tate, W.E., *The Parish Chest* (Stroud: Phillimore, Third edition 1969)

Taylor, J.G., O*ur Lady of Battersey* (London: George White, 1925)

Taylor, J.S., 'The Unreformed Workhouse', in *Comparative Development in Social Welfare,* ed. by Martin, E. W. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972)

Thane, P., 'Old People and their Families in the English past', in *Charity, self-interest and welfare in the English past,* ed. M. Daunton (London: UCL Press, 1996) pp.84-103

Thomson D., 'The Welfare of the Elderly in the Past. A family or community responsibility?' in *Life, Death, and the Elderly*, ed. Margaret Pelling and Richard M Smith(London: Routledge, 1991)pp.194-221

Thorne, R. G., *The History of Parliament, The House of Commons 1790-1820* , 5 vols (London: Secker and Warburg for The History of Parliament Trust, 1986), III

Tomkins, A., *The experience of urban poverty, 1723-82 Parish, charity and credit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006)

Walker, T., *The First Clapham Saints A London Village 1600-1720* (Privately published 2016)

Wallis, P.J. and R. V., *Eighteenth-Century Medics* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1988)

Williams, S., 'Poor relief, labourers' households and living standards in rural England c. 1770-1834: a Bedfordshire case study', *Economic History Review,* 58 (2005) 485-519

Williams, S., 'Practitioners' Income and Provision for the Poor: Parish Doctors in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Social History of Medicine,* 18 (2005) 159-186

Williams, S., *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law 1760-1834* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013)

Williams, S., *Unmarried Motherhood in the Metropolis, 1700-1850: Pregnancy, the Poor Law and Provision* (London Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

Unpublished Secondary Sources

Almeroth-Williams, T., 'Horses & Livestock in Hanoverian London' (Unpublished thesis, University of York, PhD, 2013)

Bailey, K. A., 'The Metamorphosis of Battersea, 1800-1914: a building history' (Unpublished thesis, Open University, PhD, 1995)

Hitchcock, T. V., 'The English Workhouse: A Study in Institutional Poor Relief in Selected Counties, 1696-1750' (Unpublished thesis, University of Oxford, DPhil, 1985)