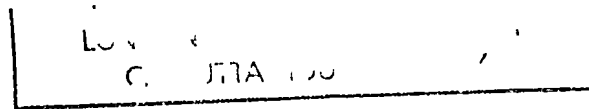


**PAUPER EDUCATION IN
VICTORIAN ENGLAND:
ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION
WITHIN THE NEW POOR LAW, 1834 - 1880**



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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements of the London Guildhall
University for the degree of
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PREFACE

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Kent Archives Office, Lambeth Archives Department, Lancashire Record Office, Leicestershire Record Office, Lewisham Library and Local History Centre, Lincolnshire Archives Office, Lichfield Joint Record Office (Staffordshire), Manchester Central Library, Museum of History of Education (Leeds), National Library of Wales, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Northamptonshire Record Office, Northumberland County Record Office, Nottinghamshire Record Office, Oxfordshire County Record Office, Rose Lipman Library (Hackney), Shropshire County Record Office, Somerset Record Office, South Humberside Area Record Office, Southampton County Record Office, Southwark Local Studies Library, Staffordshire Record Office, Suffolk Record Office, Surrey Record Office, The Labour Party (Transport House), University of Leeds Education Library and the Wigan Record Office.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BFSS	British and Foreign School Society
CLDS	Central London District School
CCE	Committee of Council on Education
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
GLRO	Greater London Record Office
ED	Education Papers, Public Record Office
HRO	Hertfordshire Record Office
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office
LGB	Local Government Board
MH	Ministry of Health Papers, Public Record Office
MSS.	Manuscripts
NSDS	North Surrey District School
P.P.	Parliamentary Paper
PLAA	Poor Law Amendment Act
PLB	Poor Law Board
PLC	Poor Law Commission
PRO	Public Record Office
SRO	Shropshire Record Office
SMDS	South Metropolitan District School
SSDS	South Shropshire District School

ABSTRACT

The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act led to the first national system of education for approximately 50,000 indoor pauper children each year in a decade of early initiatives on working class education to combat social unrest and political protest. Pauper schooling involved central supervision, inspection and local management and was inextricably linked with Poor Law strategies to depauperise and to administer strict relief policies. Poor Law organisation and administration are discussed in terms of the attitudes and motives of politicians and administrators. Kay Shuttleworth's ideas on pauper training and social control were acknowledged as an effective means to break the chain of pauperism, crime and social unrest. A specific Poor Law curriculum evolved in which gender differentiation became deeply entrenched. The development of pauper schooling, as part of the tensions of central-local government, is examined in the three Shropshire unions of Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere. An analysis of the type of pauper schooling, quality of teaching and nature of the curriculum has been undertaken, as well as an appraisal of the reputation of Atcham and Quatt as exemplars of nineteenth century pauper training. At Atcham, a model workhouse school was part of Baldwin Leighton's thirty-year strict relief policy. At Quatt, William Whitmore was closely identified with the establishment of one of the few successful rural District Schools. In Ellesmere, limited Poor Law schooling was developed by farmer guardians under the chairmanship of Robert Slaney, actively concerned with urban social reform. The local controversial Poor Law Schools Inspector, Jelinger Symons' advocacy of agricultural training is discussed as part of an evaluation of his role. An assessment of the hitherto neglected area of outdoor pauper children, who annually numbered 200,000-300,000 reveals more educational provision than previously described by the Webbs. Finally, the gradual and partial merging of pauper schooling into elementary education after 1870, and other changes in educational provision, are examined.

INTRODUCTION

In May 1856 a fifteen year old pauper youth scaled the wall of St.Asaph Workhouse School in North Wales. He escaped to become Henry Morten Stanley, the celebrated nineteenth century explorer, adventurer and Member of Parliament.¹ Stanley's life and career was far from typical of the experience of the vast majority of pauper children educated under the New Poor Law in the nineteenth century. ²

From 1834 the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were affected by the introduction of the New Poor Law - the dominant recipients of which were the aged,

¹ Dorothy Stanley(ed), *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morten Stanley G.C.B.* (1974).

² There are extensive writings on the New Poor Law. Although written at the beginning of the twentieth century, the major work remains the comprehensive study by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *English Poor Law Policy* (1920), *English Local Government. English Poor Law History*, Pt. II, Vols. I and II (1929). Since then there has been a wide variety of writings on different aspects of the Poor Law, including: H.L. Beales, 'The New Poor Law', *History* XV (1931); Mark Blaug, 'The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. XXIII (1963), 'The Poor Law Report Re-examined', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. XXIV (1964); Anthony Brundage, *The Making of the New Poor Law, The Politics of Inquiry, Enactment and Implementation, 1832-9* (1978), *England's Prussian Minister: Edwin Chadwick and the Politics of Government Growth, 1832-52* (Pennsylvania, U.S.A., 1989); M.A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929. The History of an English Social Institution* (1981); Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces* (1978), *The Poor Law in Nineteenth Century England and Wales* (1982); N.C. Edsall, *The Anti-Poor Law Movement 1834-1844* (Manchester, 1981); S.E. Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (1952); Derek Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (1976); John Knott, *Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law* (1986); Norman Longmate, *The Workhouse* (1974); Norman McCord, 'The Implementation of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act on Tyneside', *International Review of Social History* XIV Pt. I.(1969); Eric Midwinter, *Social Administration in Lancashire, 1830-1860* (1969); D. Roberts, *Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State* (New Haven, 1960, reprint 1969), 'How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law?', *Historical Journal* VI (1963); M.E. Rose, *The English Poor Law 1780-1930* (Newton Abbott, 1971), 'The Allowance System under the New Poor Law', *Economic History Review* XIX (1966), 'Rochdale Man and the Stalybridge Riot', in A.P. Donajgradski (ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1977), 'The Crisis of Poor Relief in England 1860-1890', in W.J. Mommsen (ed.), *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany* (1981), *The Relief of Poverty* (1972, 2nd ed. 1986), (ed.), *The Poor and the City. The English Poor Law in its Urban Context, 1834-1914* (1985), 'The Disappearing Pauper', in Eric M. Sigsworth, *In Search of Victorian Values* (Manchester 1988) ; P. Searby, 'The Relief of the Poor in Coventry, 1830-60', *Historical Journal* XX (1977); Frank Smith, *The Life and Work of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth* (1923); Pat Thane, 'Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England', *History Workshop* 6 (1978); J.H. Treble, *Urban Poverty in Britain 1830-1914* (1979); Karel Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty* (1981)

the sick, the insane and the children. During the nineteenth century children totalled about one third of all paupers resident in workhouses.³ The education of these children - approximately 50,000 per annum - was the responsibility of the Poor Law authorities. Under the terms of the Poor Law Amendment Act, the Poor Law Commission (and later the Poor Law Board and the Local Government Board) were to provide the first compulsory, centrally administered, education system for these, the most destitute children in Victorian society.

In 1834 children were not the primary concern of the New Poor Law administration. The main aims of the Poor Law Inquiry and the PLAA were to reduce the spiralling costs caused by the ad hoc provision of outrelief to adult male paupers, and to secure social stability, especially in the countryside in the aftermath of the Swing riots and parliamentary reform agitation. In resolutely supporting the Poor Law Bill, Robert Slaney, M.P. pleaded in the House of Commons that:

...now no village, hamlet or parish was safe from the work of the incendiary; and when the flames were raging at the highest the labourers instead of helping to extinguish them, were seen silently looking on. These were the lessons which they ought not to neglect...⁴

Slaney claimed that the provision of education for poor children was the most effective and economic means of breaking the chain of pauperism, crime and social unrest, so feared by many contemporary social investigators and reformers:

There was one thing much wanting in our system of Poor Laws, and if no person of greater influence than himself should endeavour to supply it, he would pledge himself to do so before long: he alluded to the want of any provision for the education of paupers

³ This is evident from successive annual reports of the central authorities, e.g. 'more than one third of the paupers are children under sixteen', Eleventh Annual Report, PLB, P.P. 1859 IX, p.166.

⁴ Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, May 9 1834 Vol. 23 col. 820-822.

who became chargeable to their parishes...if one-tenth of the sum which was applied to the relief of the aged poor were devoted to the education of the young, there would soon be a great improvement in the moral condition of the lower classes (emphasis added).⁵

The Act directed that outrelief for ablebodied adults be prohibited and those seeking relief enter a workhouse where conditions would be set at a standard lower than that normally experienced by the average labourer. The well known term used to describe this radical deterrent was 'the principle of less eligibility'. Poor Law reformers and administrators assumed that the ablebodied would make strenuous efforts to secure employment, if the only alternative was to enter a workhouse. Children were treated as dependents whose entry and exit from the workhouse was determined by the fate of their parents. To clear away the parochial maladministration of the Old Poor Law, the implementation of the new legislation would be standardised across England and Wales in order to achieve national uniformity.

In reality, national uniformity was more apparent than real, for there was considerable variation in local Poor Law practice. More seriously, the New Poor Law system displayed considerable potential for conflict between central and local authorities. Under the terms of the PLAA, elected Boards of Guardians in more than six hundred unions were directly accountable to the newly established Poor Law Commission and its successor bodies. However, local Guardians retained considerable powers and control over day to day management, although they were soon subject to the visits of the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners and, after 1847, the Poor Law Inspectorate and Poor Law Schools Inspectorate.

⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, June 19 1832, Vol. XIII col. 863; see also Apr. 17 1834, Vol.22 col.896.

As a result, even where there was increasing direction and supervision by the central authority, poor law administration by the guardians continued to be primarily dominated by local concerns of landowners and ratepayers. After 1834, the provision of pauper education was subject to the pressures and constraints inherent in the New Poor Law. Paradoxically, while Poor Law reformers attempted strict economy by the abolition of outrelief, they were often prepared to invest in education and training to secure the depauperisation of a future pauper host. At the same time, the number of dependent children in workhouses was directly affected by relief policies. In this way, the evolution of a national system of pauper schools after 1834 must be studied within the wider social, political and administrative contexts.

The Victorian Poor Law has been subject to much investigation by select committees and royal commissions, as well as analysis and interpretation by critics, social commentators, novelists and historians. Traditionally, 1834 has been described as a watershed, marking a radical change between parochial administration and centralisation - when outrelief relief was drastically curtailed and paupers forced into workhouses.⁶ The New Poor Law was criticised for destroying local autonomy through the dominance of a central bureaucracy, which in turn adversely affected the whole structure of society.⁷ Sidney and Beatrice Webb saw these changes as a 'revolution', a phrase also used by Benjamin Disraeli in 1841.⁸ The workhouse system established under the New Poor Law was categorised as cruel and despotic, with pauper families split up and forced into physical degradation. Those who later recollected their experiences as Poor Law children generally confirmed this picture.⁹

⁶ S. and B. Webb, *Poor Law Policy* (1910).

⁷ William C. Lubenow, *The Politics of Government Growth. Early Victorian Attitudes Towards State Intervention 1833-1848* (1971), p.43.

⁸ S. and B. Webb, *Poor Law Policy op cit.*, p.1; Benjamin Disraeli, *Parliamentary Reports* 1841, Third Series LVI, col.377.

⁹ See below chapter 3.

Between 1837 and 1842 The Times continually exposed and denounced the cruelty of the new law, epitomised soon afterwards by the Andover workhouse scandal.

More recent studies have suggested that physical cruelty was neither the intention nor the practice of the 1834 legislation.¹⁰ Less eligibility referred to the ethos of workhouse life rather than to any attempt to lower living standards. In particular, it was the institutional nature of the nineteenth century workhouse, with its tedium of work discipline combined with the humiliation and stigma of poverty, that created most horror and repulsion in the minds of the poor and destitute.¹¹ Although children were not normally held to be responsible for their pauper status, poor law reformers aimed to remove them from the contaminating influences of hereditary pauperism. As a result children frequently suffered the trauma of separate classification from parents.¹²

During the nineteenth century the average annual figure of about 50,000 pauper children resident in workhouses was approximately one third of all paupers. This is evident from successive annual reports of the central Poor Law authority.¹³ Yet these 'indoor' children who formed the majority of the pauper host, were still only equivalent to one quarter of the 200,000 - 300,000 children of parents on outrelief. Until The Denison Act of 1855, Boards of Guardians were forbidden to defray the school fees of outdoor children from public funds.¹⁴ Even after 1855 Denison's Act did not compel, but only permitted, the use of

¹⁰ See, for example, David Roberts, 'How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law?' *Historical Journal*, 1963 and Ursula Henriques, 'How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law?', *Historical Journal*, 1968.

¹¹ This view is developed in a comprehensive study: M.A. Crowther, *The workhouse System, 1834-1929* (1981)

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

¹³ E.g. 'more than one third of the paupers are children under sixteen', Eleventh Annual Report PLB, P.P. 1859 IX, p.166.

¹⁴ *The Education of Poor Children Act*, 18 and 19 Vic.c.34 (Denison's Act).

poor rates for this purpose, and this led to the education of these children being largely neglected by Guardians for a further twenty years.¹⁵

In the development of pauper education the relationship between central and local Poor Law authorities was of crucial importance. Attempts to guide and direct pauper education from the centre received varying responses from Boards of Guardians. First, there was often a disparity between local unions and the central Poor Law authority over both the philosophy and the implementation of pauper education on issues such as the recruitment and employment of teaching staff, accommodation, and the content and delivery of the curriculum. In particular the attempt to introduce a system of large District Schools by unions combining for educational purposes proved abortive for local reasons, including those of finance and geography. These difficulties are evident from many contemporary sources, in particular: correspondence between central and local authorities, correspondence between the PLB and their Inspectors, and in the Reports of the Inspectors for Poor Law Schools.¹⁶ At the same time some unions welcomed the opportunities provided by the introduction of the New Poor Law to implement schemes of education and industrial training which would break the thread of pauperism by producing a future generation of disciplined and independent labourers.

Despite the presence of nearly 300,000 pauper children in England and Wales in the nineteenth century there has still been no full scale published study of education within the New Poor Law. The extensive research undertaken by the Webbs at the beginning of this century has dominated New Poor Law historiography.¹⁷ Yet in their monumental history

¹⁵ In 1873 Denison's Act was made compulsory, *Elementary Education Act 1873*, 36 and 37 Vic.c.86. Sec3.

¹⁶ PRO MH 12; PRO MH 32; PRO ED 17.

¹⁷ S.and B.Webb, *English Poor Law Policy* (1910); *English Local Government. English Poor Law History*, Pt.11, The Last Hundred Years, Vols.1 and 2 (1929).

of the English Poor Law fewer than seventy pages were devoted to children and the emphasis was more on treatment than education.¹⁸

A few modern published works do specifically address some aspects of pauper education. Derek Fraser, in *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century*, has an informative chapter by Francis Duke on the development of education up to 1855, including an analysis of the failure of the District Schools movement.¹⁹ In *Pauper Palaces*, a comprehensive study of the New Poor Law in Norfolk, Anne Digby provides a regional, in depth analysis of nineteenth century pauper education in the county. Emphasis is given to the influence of Kay Shuttleworth and the relationship between social unrest and the development of Poor Law schooling.²⁰ More recently, John Hurt's innovative study of the evolution of special education traces its origins to the development of education under the New Poor Law.²¹

In addition to these few published accounts historians who wish to study developments in pauper education in the nineteenth century have to turn to unpublished research which has been concerned with - the aims of the 1834 Act with regard to pauper education, the role of the central Poor Law authority, the response of local Boards of Guardians, the quality of education and changes that occurred as the century progressed. Almost forty years ago, A.M.Ross' comprehensive doctoral study (1955) established the principal administrative features of the care and education of pauper children in workhouse and Poor Law schools.²² Since then, there has been Francis Duke's MA study, which investigated the District School Scheme, but only to 1855.²³ Most recently, Shelley Obermann's 1982

¹⁸ S. and B. Webb, *English Poor Law History* (1929), *ibid.*

¹⁹ Derek Fraser, *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century*, *op cit.*

²⁰ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, *op cit.*

²¹ John Hurt, *Outside The Mainstream: a history of special education*, *op cit.*

²² A.M. Ross, *The Care and Education of Pauper Children in England and Wales, 1834-1896*, PhD Thesis, London (1956).

²³ Francis Duke, *The Education of Pauper Children. Policy and Administration 1834-1855*, M.A. Thesis (Manchester 1968-69); for a study of the Metropolitan District Schools see

PhD measured the quality of educational provision from a national perspective and challenged earlier views that progress was the result of an active central authority.²⁴ In addition, R.J.Phillips has provided a useful study of the Poor Law Schools Inspector, E.C.Tufnell.²⁵

There have been a number of local studies of Somerset, Monmouthshire, Cumberland, Lancashire, the City of Hull and Worcestershire, some of which are derivative and of limited use, relying heavily on secondary sources, particularly the work of the Webbs.²⁶ A more effective study is Francis Crompton's thesis on Worcestershire, in which he concludes that the main differences between Poor Law unions was the size and density of population rather than their urban and rural nature.²⁷ G.F.Baker's study of Somerset examines the negative attitude of some local Boards of Guardians towards pauper education, with some analysis of the role of Joshua Ruddock, Inspector for Poor law Schools in the South of England.²⁸

So far previous studies, which have primarily had either a national perspective or been confined to a local investigation, have not considered the development of pauper education

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- 24 P.McCrory, *Poor Law Education and The Urban Pauper Child: a study of the Poor Law District School*, M.Ed Thesis (Leicester 1983).
- 24 Shelley Obermann, *The Education of Children in Poor Law Institutions in England and Wales during the period 1834-1870*, PhD Thesis (Belfast 1982)
- 25 R.J.Phillips, *E.C.Tufnell: Inspector of Poor Law Schools 1806-1886*, PhD (Sheffield 1973). For a reappraisal of Ross' critical view of the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate see Francis Cooke, *The Organisation and Work of the Inspectorate of Poor Law Schools. 1846-1904*, M.Ed (Manchester 1980).
- 26 G.F.Baker, *The Care and Education of Children in Union Workhouses of Somerset. 1834-1870*, External M.A.Thesis (London 1959-1960); D.B.Hughes, *The Education of Pauper Children in Monmouthshire, 1834-1929*, M.A.Thesis (Cardiff 1966); J.Purdy, *The Care and Education of Workhouse Children in North East Cumberland during the Nineteenth Century.*, M.Ed Thesis (Newcastle 1973); T.O'Brien, *The Education and Care of Workhouse Children in some Lancashire Poor Law Unions 1834-1930*, M.Ed Thesis (Manchester 1975); M.E.Groke, *The Care and Education of Children in Hull Poor Law Schools. 1834-1861*, M.Ed (Hull 1980); F.G.Crompton, *The Treatment and Education of Children in the Poor Law Institutions of Worcestershire 1834-1871*, PhD (Birmingham 1988).
- 27 Crompton, *Thesis*, *op cit.*
- 28 Baker, *Thesis*, *op cit.*

as part of the conduct of centre-local relations in nineteenth poor law history. The rise of the central authority was a distinct feature of nineteenth century Poor Law history, most clearly seen in the work of the Webbs. In particular, Beatrice Webb's *1909 Memorandum*, prepared for the 1905-1909 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, clearly delineated a chronology of Poor Law history based upon the three eras of the Poor Law Commission, the Poor Law Board and the Local Government Board.²⁹ Before the Webbs, other writers on the Poor Law were defenders of the central authority, such as Mackay and his predecessor George Nicholls who was a member of the first Poor Law Commission. Each looked back to Edwin Chadwick's Poor Law Inquiry Report, on which the PLAA was based, in providing a Benthamite blueprint of centralisation, designed to sweep away the inefficiency, corruption and costliness of the Old Poor Law administration of parish relief.

However, Chadwick realised the establishment of the New Poor Law had to be a balance between central supervision, inspection and local administration. The central authority had, for instance, no statutory powers to compel the construction of workhouses and District Schools, or to control union boundaries. Within pauper education, the Schools Inspectors in the nineteenth century only possessed powers to inspect, report and advise on local implementation; they had no authority to compel local unions to comply with central directives. Similarly, the failure of PLAA to reform local parochial rating and settlement (until these were changed in the 1860s) meant that the New Poor Law remained very much a local social and political responsibility, jealously guarded by the financially prudent and conservative gentry, clergy and middling classes.³⁰ Such committed parochialism fuelled opposition to central initiatives on pauper education, such as District Schools, which were

²⁹ A. M. McBriar, *An Edwardian Mixed Double: the Bosanquets versus the Webbs: a study in British Social Policy 1809-1929* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 222-223.

³⁰ Anne Digby, *The Poor Law in Nineteenth-century England and Wales* (1982), p.27.

often resented as costly and superior to the provision available to the children of the industrious and deserving poor.

At the same time, much of the old Poor Law system remained for more than thirty years, such as outrelief to the able-bodied disguised as sickness benefits.³¹ In particular, in some unions, the ability and influence of the traditional rural elites to retain and control power over the newly elected Boards of Guardians was often displayed in terms of agreement and co-operation with the central authority in implementing the new Poor Law structures, philosophies and procedures.³²

This study has four main aims:

First, this research examines the development of the first national system of education for approximately 50,000 indoor pauper children each year. In this respect, nineteenth century pauper education is considered to some extent in a social and political, as well as an administrative context. A detailed study of pauper education in three unions in Shropshire has been undertaken to examine relations between the central and local authorities, the making and implementation of policy and the extent to which there was agreement on key issues, such as classroom organisation, the nature of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the local operation of the Poor Law in general.

Shropshire has been chosen because the county contained exemplars of New Poor Law school administration at Quatt and Atcham. For more than thirty years the Atcham union

³¹ Michael Rose, 'The Allowance System under the New Poor Law', *Economic History Review*, Vol. XIV 1966, pp. 607-621; Anne Digby, 'The Labour Market and the Continuity of Social Policy after 1834: The Case of the Eastern Counties', *Economic History Review*, Vol. XXVIII 1975, 69-83.

³² For a county whose ruling elite actively welcomed and supported the New Poor Law, see William Apfel and Peter Dunkley, 'English rural society and the New Poor Law: Bedfordshire, 1834 - 1847', *Social History* Vol. 10 No 1 Jan. 1985.

embodied the principles of 1834 through the powerful regime of Sir Baldwin Leighton. Although praised by the central authority as models of pauper education, neither Poor Law union has attracted any detailed study. In addition, the county of Shropshire was part of the inspectorial district of Jelinger Symons, consistent advocate of farm schools and one of the more controversial Poor Law Schools Inspectors, who has also received scant attention from historians.

Second, previous research has given minimal attention to the educational opportunities for outdoor pauper children whose numbers far exceeded those of children in workhouses yet whose education was in the main neglected. Consideration is given to those Boards of Guardians who provided schooling for children on outrelief before they were permitted or legally required to do so, and comparisons are made between the plight of these children in the county of Shropshire and the rest of the country.

Third, the study examines the nature and content of the pauper curriculum with its distinct elements of academic, moral and industrial training and considers the importance attached to schooling in seeking to achieve the major objectives of the New Poor Law in the nineteenth century. In this context the ideas, motives and concerns of the politicians and administrators, directly concerned with policy making and implementation, are considered against the background of the various debates on the growth and machinery of nineteenth century government and the ideologies of social control.

Fourth, poor law history has largely been concerned with relief policies and able bodied male paupers. No detailed analysis has been undertaken into the specific impact of Poor Law schooling on women and girls. As a result, the education of pauper girls has remained largely invisible in histories of the Poor Law, especially in terms of educational opportunity and differentiation within the curriculum. This study attempts to reconstruct the

experience of the recipients of the New Poor Law, the children, who were categorised merely as dependents of their pauper parents.

Finally, attention is also given to the decline of the separate system of Poor Law education towards the end of the century when alternative methods of educating pauper children grew in popularity, in part owing to organised Poor Law education lobbies and a widening of the Guardian membership to include women and working class representatives.

Chapter One places the study in the context of the PLAA and considers the attention given by national politicians and administrators to the development of pauper education.

Chapter Two assesses the role and influence of the central authority, particularly in relation to the evolution of Poor Law policy on education in the period 1834-71.

Chapter Three analyses the Poor law curriculum between 1834 and 1880. The experience of schooling for pauper children is examined from the standpoint of both child recipients and Poor Law administrators. Gender differences within the curriculum are specifically addressed.

Chapter Four examines in detail the work of the Poor Law Schools Inspector Jelinger Symons, in the West of England and Wales including Shropshire, his volatile relationship with both central and local Poor Law authorities, and his attempts to promote agricultural training and District Schools.

Chapter Five examines the local implementation of Poor Law education in the unions of Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere in the county of Shropshire, including an appraisal of the reputation of the Atcham and Quatt schools as exemplars of nineteenth pauper

education. The role of the individual in local Poor Law administration is also considered through a study of three Poor Law Chairmen, Baldwin Leighton, William Wolryche Whitmore and Robert Slaney.

Chapter Six analyses the quality of pauper schooling in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere with particular reference to the local administration of the Boards of Guardians, the turnover of teachers, and the categories of children entering Poor Law schools.

Chapter Seven reappraises the Webbs' contention that no education was provided by the Poor Law authorities for outdoor children in England and Wales between 1834 and 1870, and includes a specific analysis of the situation in Shropshire.

Chapter Eight explores the gradual decline of the pauper education system and the alternative methods considered for the education of Poor Law children.

CHAPTER ONE

POLITICIANS, ADMINISTRATORS AND ATTITUDES TO PAUPER EDUCATION IN EARLY VICTORIAN ENGLAND

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the first industrial revolution was to make Britain the most powerful world economy by the mid Victorian period. At the same time between 1801 and 1851 the population of England and Wales doubled from nearly 8.9 million to almost 18 million, with this remarkable growth largely concentrated in fast growing cities and towns, especially in the industrial North of England. By 1851 more people lived in urban than rural areas and the textile regions of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire had the densest areas of population in Europe. For the emergent working class in the early nineteenth century, the combination of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation produced dramatic and unprecedented changes in working and living conditions and serious social problems associated with urban growth, housing, public health, poverty, education, crime and public order. At Westminster, and in the provinces, Victorian politicians, administrators, and officials who in the period 1830-1850 had for the first time to contend with these exceptional and urgent problems, named them collectively as 'the Condition of England' question.

The ruling elites in central and local government also expressed growing concern about the spiralling and unacceptable cost of poor relief in the depressed rural areas of England and Wales, which rose from £5.3 million in 1802-3 to £8.6 million in the early 1830s. Similarly, they feared the threat to the social order from the connections between pauperism, crime and social unrest, particularly associated with Swing Riots which enflamed rural Southern and Eastern England in 1830-32.¹

¹ The last recorded episode was the destruction of a threshing machine at Tadlow in Cambridgeshire in September 1832, E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rude, *Captain Swing* (Harmondsworth, 1973), p.139.

At the heart of the Lancashire cotton industry, Manchester symbolised the 'Condition of England' question, with an unparalleled mixture of industrialisation, unplanned urban growth and population explosion from 75,000 in 1801 to 303,000 in 1851. The appalling social conditions caused by this unbridled combination of inhabitants, industry and lack of civic amenities in parts of the city, such as 'Little Ireland' district, were the subject in 1844 of Frederick Engel's classic study *The Condition of the Working Class in Manchester*. Engels had drawn on Kay Shuttleworth's pamphlet *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester in 1832* which analysed the poor economic and social factors, such as oppressive factory and workshop conditions, bad sanitation and housing with a high incidence of typhus. However, like many of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, Kay Shuttleworth attributed the poverty of the Manchester working class to their own individual and moral deficiencies. In condemning the lax administration of the Poor Law, he observed that:

the sources of vice and physical degredation are allied with the causes of pauperism. Amongst the poor, the most destitute are too frequently the most demoralised-virtue is the surest economy-vice is haunted by profligacy and want. Where there are the most paupers, the gin shops, taverns, and beer houses are the most numerous ...²

Politicians and government officials, such as Kay Shuttleworth, Edwin Chadwick, Robert Slaney, Jelinger Symons, Baldwin Leighton, William Wolryche Whitmore, concerned about the cost and abuses of the poor law, were typical of the ruling groups and their advisers in central and local government. The society they ruled and administered as governors and policy makers in the 1830s and 1840s, underwent the most rapid economic, technical and social change ever experienced in this country. In particular, in the first four decades of the nineteenth century Luddism, 'Swing', parliamentary reform, early trade unionism and, in particular, Chartism represented a previously unknown range, degree and

² Kay Shuttleworth, *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes of Manchester in 1832 (1832)* in Trygve R. Tholfsen (ed.), *Sir James Kay Shuttleworth on Population and Education* (New York), p.56.

level of social disturbance with political protest underlying the growing power of different forms of working class consciousness and organisation. In 1834, at the time of the PLAA all these Poor Law reformers were either prominent in, or starting the most influential years of service in public and local affairs.

		<u>Age in 1834</u>
Kay Shuttleworth	1804-1877	30
Chadwick	1800-1890	34
Slaney	1792--1862	42
Symons	1809-1860	35
Leighton	1805-1871	29
Whitmore	1787-1858	47

There was a growing concern that this rapidly changing society would become out of control and that crime and pauperism among the labouring classes would escalate into the revolutions experienced on the continent. Links were made between a lax Poor Law system, the rapid rise in Poor Rates and the inability of adult paupers to find work. By the 1820s Malthusian ideas prevailed that indiscriminate relief was undermining the independence of the labouring classes and encouraging idleness and vice.³ Benthamites and political economists pointed to education as a solution to social problems associated with the working class. Strong and persistent connections were made between social disturbances and the dearth of education. In 1833 Edwin Chadwick wrote:

the most dangerous mobs were formed from the most ignorant and ill-educated of the labouring classes...In this, and I apprehend in all agricultural districts, there is very little reading of tracts or newspapers among the poor;...⁴

³ Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society ...* (1798 further editions, 1803, 1807, 1817, 1826); David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817, further edition 1821)

⁴ Extract from Reports made to the Poor Law Commissioners, Aug. 12 1833, *Chadwick MSS*, Item 23/423 UCL.

In 1832, aware of the lack of any adequate schooling for the children of the labouring population, Robert Slaney castigated the lack of educational provision which led children into crime. He urged Parliament:

to teach the children of the poor the way in which they should go. In the greater part of the country parishes these unfortunate children had scarcely any education at all. The consequence was, that...they, in most cases, became vicious members of society.⁵

The 1830s and 1840s were the formative years of state involvement in working^{class} education. Between 1831 and 1833 the new Whig government introduced a variety of measures: a state system of schools in Ireland in 1831; the 1833 Factory Act with the principle of schooling for factory children and the first Treasury grant for education of £20,000 in 1833 allocated to the National and the British and Foreign School Societies for the construction of school buildings.⁶ During the following year, the 1834 PLAA included the basis for the first system of national education to be established in England and Wales. Pauper education linked poverty, the Poor Law and education in the minds of those who governed and administered.

Although these were the first practical efforts by Parliament to become involved in education there had been warnings for many years that the children of the labouring classes were growing up in ignorance. A number of Select Committees on Education between 1816 and 1835 established links between ignorance, pauperism and crime.

The Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders, chaired by Henry Brougham, between 1816 and 1819, had a specific remit to investigate education for the 'children of paupers' and took evidence from a number of witnesses who linked the criminal activities

⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Third Series Vol XIII June 19 1832 col.863

⁶ *Commons Journal*, LXXII (1833), 692-3.

of pauper children to extreme poverty and ignorance.⁷ *The Select Committee on Criminal Commitments and Convictions* in 1828 concluded that the Poor Laws were to blame for much of the current degradation and crime and reiterated the 1817 proposal that schools should be established that would direct children away from criminality.⁸ Between 1834 and 1835 there was a further *Select Committee on the State of Education in England and Wales*.⁹ Brougham, by then Lord Chancellor, warned that any hopes that education could extirpate crime and pauperism within a 'generation or two' were 'extremely ill-judged'.¹⁰

though the ultimate effects of education be to diminish crime, the steps by which it works out this change are many, and slowly made, and nothing can be less judicious than to insist upon the diminution of vice as the due and variable result of elementary instruction.¹¹

The period 1830-1850 has provided a rich harvest for those historians who till the fields of social policy and social reform. In particular, the subject of the economic and social impact of industrialisation, the growth of the Victorian government and inspectorates in health, education, Poor Law, factories, mines, merchant marine, emigration traffic, railways, charities, burial grounds, noxious trades, and Welsh roads, as well as the social control ideologies and mechanisms of government experts and reformers, have generated major historical debates and discourses. Of these, the most firmly established and longest running controversy was the 'Standard of Living Controversy' centred on measuring whether, as a

⁷ Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders in the Metropolis, P.P. 816 IV; P.P. 1817 III; P.P. 1818 IV; P.P. 1819 IX, Pts I, II, III. Frequently referred elsewhere as the Brougham Committee. This was an extensive inquiry, producing eleven reports and lengthy appendices of evidence from witnesses, eg Henry Althens, Secretary to the East London Association of Schoolmasters, on the influence of gangs of juvenile criminals on each other; Mr. Lloyd, from a black well factory, on the effect of one child on another; Reverend Daniel Wilson on the reforming aspects of education for pauper and criminal children; P.P. 1816 IV *ibid.*, p.55, pp.78-79, pp.277-284. Lloyd, and Althens who was by then an Inspector for the British and Foreign Schools Society, were later called before the 1834-5 Select Committee on Education indicating their continued prominence in educational circles, see *Report of the Select Committee on Education* P.P. 1834 IX, pp.94-123. Althens also gave evidence to the 1838 *Select Committee on Education for the Poorer Classes*, P.P. 1838 VII, pp.129-143

⁸ *Report from the Select Committee on Criminal Commitments and Convictions*, July 17 1828, P.P. 1828 VI, p.6.

⁹ *Select Committee on the State of Education in England and Wales* 1834, P.P. 1834 IX..

¹⁰ Evidence of The Lord Chancellor, Lord Brougham and Vaux, Aug. 6 1834, *Select Committee on the State of Education in England and Wales*, *ibid.*, p.221.

¹¹ Evidence of Brougham, *Select Committee on the State of Education* 1834, *ibid.*, p.221.

result of the industrial revolution, living standards and the quality of life had improved or deteriorated in this country.¹²

More recently historians have examined the extraordinary growth in the machinery of Victorian government to deal with the social evils of urban and industrial society in the period 1825-75. The passage and implementation of the PLAA, and the beginnings of the provision of pauper education took place in this period of important administrative change that Oliver MacDonagh described as self-generating growth resulting in the 'Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government'.¹³ Macdonagh's five stage model of 'a genuine historical process' in action left little room for humanitarianism or Benthamite influence as an explanation of this growth and change in nineteenth century government.

Critics have challenged different aspects of MacDonagh's model, especially in undervaluing the importance and influence of Benthamite ideas and the role of individuals in the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Subsequently, Jennifer Hart criticised Macdonagh of extrapolating a general model out of a single narrow example of the emigrant traffic department and ignoring the importance of individual free will and the extent to which Benthamite ideas had shaped the general 'climate of opinion' of Victorian government and society.¹⁵

12 The main articles, especially those of Dr Max Hartwell and Professor Hobsbawm, in which this historical battle were enjoined are reprinted in A. J. Taylor (ed.), *The Standard of Living in Britain in the Industrial Revolution* (Bungay, Suffolk 1975).

13 Put briefly, Macdonagh's five-stage model was (1) intolerable social evil exposed, with concomitant demand which 'set an irresistible engine of change in motion', resulting in legislation; (2) appointment of executive officers to enforce and regulate inadequate legislation, leading to the demand for (3) further legislation and centralization by 'a superintending body'; (4) administration becomes dynamic with expertise (5) officials and their superiors empowered by legislation to take independent action which is translated into law and government. Oliver Macdonagh, 'The Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government: a Reappraisal', *Historical Journal*, I (1958). For an analysis of the limited impact of Benthamism on government reforms, see David Roberts, 'Jeremy Bentham and the Victorian Administrative state', *Victorian Studies*, ii (1959). pp. 193-210.

14 Henry Parris, 'The Nineteenth-century Revolution in Government: a Reappraisal Reappraised', *Historical Journal*, III (1960).

15 Jennifer Hart, 'Nineteenth-century Social Reform: a Tory Interpretation of History', *Past and Present*, No 31 (1965).

While the Poor Law and education have been considered by historians as part of this nineteenth century revolution in government, the debate has focussed primarily on the origins and nature of centralised government as a process in the mid-Victorian period. In deciding the relative influence of structure, policy or personality on the organisation and administration of pauper education within the New Poor Law, greater emphasis should be given to the study of central-local relations in this country in the nineteenth century. In 1834 the Whig Cabinet, composed mainly of aristocrats, put forward the Poor Law Amendment Bill which passed easily through Parliament, still overwhelmingly dominated by the landed interest. In 1837, in clarifying the differences between the Old and New Poor Laws, Lord John Russell claimed the PLAA had strengthened the local interests of the Boards of Guardians:

... the real object ... was to establish self-government - a principle found to be so useful in all matters of local concern ... ¹⁶

Anthony Brundage has clearly demonstrated that, in the rural areas at least, the landed interest, who remained as *ex officio* Guardians, did not lose control of the Poor Law as a result of the PLAA. Powerful factors such as political and social influence, wealth and patronage derived from land ownership and an unequal electoral system with plural voting underpinned their decisive hold on, and influence over, the establishment and implementation of New Poor Law in the localities.¹⁷ Shropshire was typical of a county where landed gentry were able to hold on to power and dominate the Guardians over the Poor Law and pauper education.¹⁸

A further area of debate has direct relevance to the development and progress of pauper education, namely the issue of social control, which Donajgrodski has characterised as the

¹⁶ Parliamentary Debates, Third series, 24 Feb 1837, vol xxxvi, col 1032.

¹⁷ Anthony Brundage, 'The Landed interest and the New Poor Law: a reappraisal of the revolution in government', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. LXXXVII No 342 Jan. 1972, pp. 27-48; and *idem* 'The Landed interest and the New Poor Law: a reply', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. XC No 355, Apr. 1975, pp. 347-351

¹⁸ See below, Chapters 5 and 6.

'study of relationships between rich and poor'.¹⁹ Richard Johnson has identified Kay Shuttleworth, Jelinger Symons and Edwin Chadwick as part of an important group of administrators and reformers who saw the power of popular education to control, transform and civilise working-class behaviour in order to minimise threats to middle class hegemony and the prevailing social order. Their ideas on education were transmitted to the aristocratic politicians in government who determined and controlled legislative policy.²⁰

In the 1830s and 1840s those who sought answers to the 'Condition of England' question drew on the findings of the private societies of the Victorian statistical movement as well as the evidence from Royal Commissions and Select Committees. A wide range of empirical enquiries was undertaken by government departments and agencies, statistical societies and private individuals. During this period investigators identified the issues of Public Health and Education as the most important areas requiring immediate government action and legislation. In a period of rapid urbanisation reformers were particularly concerned about the moral effects of the environment upon the character of the working class and the links between the dearth of education, poverty and crime.²¹

In particular, the Manchester Statistical Society, in the period 1830 to 1840, carried out eight major investigations including those in Manchester, Bury, Salford, Liverpool, York and Pendlebury which sought answers to the urgent social and urban problems identified by Kay Shuttleworth, William Langton and their group of friends from local banking and industry who had first founded the society in 1833. Using a number of investigators including William Wood, the Society collected valuable data which established education as a solution to crime.

¹⁹ A.P.Donajgrodski, 'Introduction' to A.P.Donajgrodski(ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1977), p.9.

²⁰ Richard Johnson, 'Educating the Educators', A.P.Donajgrodski, *ibid.*

²¹ For the work of the Victorian statistical societies, see M.J.Cullen, *The Statistical Movement in Victorian Britain* (Hassocks, 1975).

Similarly, the Statistical Society of London's enquiries further demonstrated the links between education and crime, for example Rawson W. Rawson's paper read before the Society on December 21st 1841 used official criminal tables to discuss the question 'the question of the influence which education exerts in the suppression of crime'. Amongst criminal offenders committed for trial in England and Wales he discovered that only 10% were able to read and write well and: '

.. of these only 4 in 1,000 has received such an amount of instruction as may be entitled to the name of education'.²²

Evidence of this kind led to the appointment of another Select Committee on Education in 1838, this time under the chairmanship of Robert Slaney.²³ Richard Johnson sees Slaney's return to Parliament as one of the important landmarks in educational progress in the late 1830s.²⁴ He had established a reputation as a statistician and social reformer interested in the Poor Laws, education and the health and welfare of workers in large towns. Despite Slaney's hopes for all party agreement, the effectiveness of the 1838 Committee was emasculated by sectarian and party differences and little was achieved.²⁵

Yet links between crime, pauperism and educational neglect were more clearly stated in 1838 than in previous Select Committees. Emphasis in the final report was placed on the evidence of witnesses such as Kay Shuttleworth, then Assistant Poor Law Commissioner

²² Rawson W. Rawson, 'An Enquiry into the Condition of Criminal Offenders in England and Wales, with respect to Education; or, Statistics of Education among the Criminal and General Population of England and Other Countries', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 3 Jan. 1841, pp.331- 352.

²³ *The Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes in England and Wales* P.P. 1838 VII. For Slaney's role in popular education and the health of towns, see J.R.B.Johnson, 'The Education Department 1838-1864. A Study in Social Policy and Growth of Government', PhD Thesis, (Cambs1968); Paul Richards, 'The State and the Working Class 1833-1841: M.P.s and The Making of Social Policy', PhD (Birmingham 1975). For Slaney's involvement with the Poor Law and pauper education Shropshire, see below Chapters 5 and 6.

²⁴ Richard Johnson, *thesis, op cit.*, p.44.

²⁵ The only definitive resolution was that current grants to the two Church societies, The National, and The British and Foreign Schools, should be extended, *The Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes 1838, op cit.*

in East Anglia, who was convinced that a lack of education led to misery, pauperism and crime.²⁶ In particular the Committee reported:

...they would especially beg to refer to the evidence of Dr Kay, Mr Riddall Wood, Mr Corrie and Mr Buxton. These gentlemen describe in strong terms the misery and crime likely to arise from the neglected education of the children of the working classes in popular places. Your Committee are fully persuaded that to this cause (embracing the want of religious and moral training) is to be chiefly attributed to the great increase of criminals, and consequently of cost to the country.²⁷

Slaney was particularly influenced by Kay Shuttleworth's ideas and requested to see an advance copy of the report on *The Training of Pauper Children* prior to publication.²⁸ His *Journal* contains many indications throughout the 1830s and early 1840s of the urgency he attached to the development of education for the poor:

without improving education and the morality of the working classes I foresee great evils and suffering for all.²⁹

Two years before the passage of the PLAA, Slaney had urged the House of Commons to give the education of pauper children more serious attention:

There was one thing much wanting in our system of Poor laws, and if no person of greater influence than himself should endeavour to supply it, he would pledge himself to do so before long: he alluded to the want of any provision for the education of children of paupers who became chargeable to their parishes.³⁰

²⁶ Evidence of Kay Shuttleworth, The Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes, *op cit.*, p.iii.

²⁷ Report from the *Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes in England and Wales*, P.P. 1837-38 VII, p. 164.

²⁸ Kay Shuttleworth to Frankland Lewis Mar. 19 1838, *Kay Shuttleworth Correspondence*, PRO MH 32/49.

²⁹ *The Journal or Diary of R.A.Slaney*, M.P. 1818-1849, *Morris Eyton Collection* Local Studies Library, Shrewsbury, Nov. 1837. Hereafter known as *Slaney Journal*.

³⁰ Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, Vol XIII June 19 1832, col. 863.

In April 1841 Slaney specifically remained in Westminster to attend the long debates on the Poor Law Amendment Bill, 'to support the plan for improved education of poor & pauper children in combined schools'.³¹ According to his *Journal* he carried out an extensive journey to the slum districts of London, including the St Giles' rookery, where he noticed at first hand 'swarms of children in all these places bringing up to evil vice & misery'.³² As a result, Slaney took a direct interest in those 1841 Reports on the Training of Pauper Children which had been specifically prepared by Kay Shuttleworth for the Poor Law Commission. In a revealing passage, Slaney noted Kay Shuttleworth's sterling work at Norwood and judged that his Reports would be of general appeal in parishes and unions to those concerned with educating pauper and deserted children in:

...lessening crime, improving moral character & eventually diminishing expence (*sic*).³³

By the end of 1837 Lord John Russell, then Home Secretary, took a closer interest in the educational views of both Brougham and Slaney.³⁴ Russell began to recognise the need to take education into government control and to lessen the hold over popular schooling enjoyed by the voluntary societies. This was a rational and pragmatic response from a politician who was not only a supporter of The British and Foreign Schools Society, but had also held a term as its President.³⁵ In particular Russell was influenced by the powerful and expert testimony of those concerned directly with the exercise of different forms of social control, such as certain Prison and Factory Inspectors who urged that effective education would effectively reduce the levels of crime.³⁶

31 *Slaney Journal*, April 1841.

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Slaney Journal*, April 1841.

34 Parliamentary Reports 1837 XXXIX Col.432; XLIV col. 1174; John Prest, *Lord John Russell* (1971); D.G.Paz, *The politics of working-class education*, *op cit.*, p.74.

35 *Ibid.*, p.78.

36 'Extracts from reports on crime prevention through education', *Reports of Inspectors of Prisons, December 1838, January to August 1839, Russell Papers* PRO 30/22 3c, p.107. Russell to Brougham, Aug. 27 1837, *Brougham Papers*, UCL 38163.

Recognition of the links between crime and pauperism led Russell while Home Secretary to take seriously the issue of educating children of the poor. Influenced by the views of Kay Shuttleworth, in 1839 Russell agreed the PLC's request to present a Bill in Parliament to establish District Schools. At this point he was prepared to consider educating poor children as well in these pauper establishments. However, these attempts at legislation were doomed as they were inextricably linked with the renewal of the extremely unpopular PLC. In this way, Russell's Bill failed in 1840 and again in 1841, because of the clause stipulating that a majority of Guardians had to support the scheme before it could be implemented.³⁷ Russell was also convinced by Kay Shuttleworth of the need to establish Normal Schools which would be beneficial for both pauper and elementary education.³⁸

Russell and Slaney's major contribution to education was the genesis of the CCE in 1839 which marked an undoubted turning point in the evolution of elementary education through the establishment of a system of grants monitored by inspection.³⁹ The creation of an education department had a major influence on the development of elementary education. Pauper education in turn benefited from the creation of the CCE, through the introduction of Parliamentary Grants towards teachers' salaries and the separate and specific Poor Law Schools Inspectorate created in 1847.⁴⁰

Slaney's *1838 Select Committee on Education* included two prominent politicians, Robert Peel and William Gladstone, normally more noted for their views on matters of high politics than the education of the poor. In fact, Peel had for some years expressed an interest in the development of popular education.⁴¹ He believed that education for the

³⁷ Paz, *The politics of working-class education, op cit.*, p.59.

³⁸ Kay Shuttleworth to Russell, Oct. 29 1838, *Russell Papers*, PRO 30/22 3b. Johnson, *thesis, op cit.*, p.55

³⁹ Johnson, *thesis, op cit.*, pp.40-54. J.L.Alexander, 'Lord John Russell and the Origins of the Committee of Council on Education', *Historical Journal* 20,2 (1977), p.395.

⁴⁰ See below, Chapters 3 and 4.

⁴¹ R.Aldrich, 'Peel, Politics and Education, 1839-1846' *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol.XIII No.1 Jan. 1981, p.11. For correspondence from Peel's constituents on education, see *Education in the Manufacturing and Mining Districts*, July 5 1843, *Peel Papers* BL Add MSS 40530.

labouring classes should be 'as liberal and comprehensive as it can be made without the compromise of important principles'.⁴² In an attempt to avoid the religious controversy which bedevilled schemes for education at this time, Peel tried to pursue a middle course between the doctrinal approach of the Established Church on the one hand, and the total exclusion of the Church from education on the other.⁴³ Peel turned to Kay Shuttleworth for advice on occasions, for example, seeking guidance on the education of poor children alongside the children of local tradesmen in a school he was endowing in his constituency of Tamworth and enquiring how much a 'thoroughly good master should cost?'⁴⁴

In contrast, Gladstone was adamant that the religious societies should continue to dominate developments in popular education. It was essential for education to be based on Christianity, and more specifically on the Church of England.⁴⁵ Crime and ignorance had to be fought from the strength of the Anglican faith.⁴⁶ Any other sectarian, or non sectarian, provision was unacceptable because it excluded essential Anglican dogma. Education had to be left within the 'efficient control of the clergy'.⁴⁷

Of the government ministers concerned with elementary education in the 1830s and 1840s, the austere conservative James Graham, Home Secretary in Peel's 1841-1846 administration confronted by Chartism, was most involved with pauper education. Graham acknowledged the importance of education in the elimination of ignorance and crime and in 1841 sent for reports on pauper schooling from the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners in different parts of the country.⁴⁸ In the House of Commons in May 1842 Graham expressed his approval for District Schools and of the Government's intention to

42 Peel to the Archbishop of Canterbury, July 9 1843, *Peel Papers*, General Correspondence June 10 to July 6 1843, BL Add MSS 40530.

43 R.Aldrich, *op cit.*, p.19

44 Peel to Kay Shuttleworth, *Kay Shuttleworth Papers*, *op cit.*

45 William Gladstone, *Memoranda on Education*, *Gladstone Papers*, BL Add MSS 44725, fol 53.

46 *Ibid.*

47 William Gladstone to Reverend D.Hook, March 12 1838, *Gladstone Papers* BL Add MSS 44,725, fol 4.

48 James Graham to the Bishop of London, Jan. 21 1842, *Graham Papers*, Cambridge University Library, MS 32 Bundle 46; *Reports 1841*, *op cit.*

make all Poor Law schools subject to the inspection of the CCE.⁴⁹ He emphasised the urgency to provide education where it was most needed, namely for the destitute:

I need hardly say how essential it is that the education of the people should commence there where the destitution is,unavoidably, the greatest;⁵⁰

Graham linked the 1842 Chartist riots with poor schooling. He had no doubt that inadequate education would be found to be an endemic problem if an enquiry was undertaken into the 'moral and religious instruction' of those manufacturing districts that had suffered most in the disturbances.⁵¹ As an Anglican, Graham was anxious to promote the links between elementary education and the Established Church. His Factory Education Bill of 1843, to establish factory schools and fund them partly from the Poor Rate, failed to get through Parliament because of sectarian disagreements over links between the schools and the Church.⁵² His subsidiary proposal that religious education for orphans in workhouses should be more securely linked to the Established Church was similarly lost.⁵³ Graham's Bill would have shifted much of the responsibility for education from the CCE to the Home Office.⁵⁴ This would have undoubtedly added to the power of the Home Secretary and, in turn, affected the future direction of all elementary schooling, including pauper education.

Within the general development of working-class education in the 1830s and 1840s Paz asserts that the contribution of Whig and Tory politicians has been undervalued in relation to elementary education.⁵⁵ However, these same politicians were less inclined to use their

49 Sir James Graham, *Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series 1842, May 11 1842, cols.442-443.

50 *Ibid.*

51 Graham to Peel, Sep. 17 1842, *Graham Papers*, *op cit.*, Mss 32 Bundle 53b.

52 A Bill for regulating the Employment of Children and Young Persons in Factories, and for the Better Education of Children in Factory Districts, March 7 1843, P.P. 1843 II; see *Eclectic Review*, Vol XIII 1843, for analysis of the religious objections to the Bill.

53 James Graham to The Bishop of London, Jan. 21 1842, *Graham Papers*, *op cit.*

54 A.Donajgradski, 'Sir James Graham at the Home Office', *The Historical Journal* 20 (1977), p.119.

55 D.G.Paz, *The Politics of working-class Education in Britain*, *op cit.*

role, power and influence to promote pauper education. Pauper children were only one group requiring education among the children of the labouring classes. Most politicians were more concerned with the children of the deserving, rather than the undeserving, poor.

The main impetus for national developments in pauper education in the 1830s and 1840s came from two administrators, Edwin Chadwick and James Kay Shuttleworth at the PLC and the CCE respectively. Edwin Chadwick, the prime mover behind the Poor Law Inquiry of 1832-1834, was the most well known administrator of the period, and became renowned for his work as an extremely active, if difficult, social reformer within the Poor Law, Sanitation and Public Health and the Police.⁵⁶

In 1831, concerned about the outbreak of incendiarism in different parts of the country, he expressed the view, gaining credence in governing circles, that education would diminish crime. He recommended that 'strenuous efforts should be made for an (*sic*) universal and efficient education of the rising generation.⁵⁷

Over a fifteen year period, between 1832 when he was appointed to the Royal Commission and 1847 when he lost his position as Secretary to the PLC, Edwin Chadwick was also conscious of a need to develop pauper education. His view that the provision of Poor Law education would be a means to reduce hereditary pauperism was an important part of his Benthamite thinking during the 1832 Commission. The role of education in the prevention of future pauperism became a dominant issue:

Finding in the examination of the inmates of workhouses so large a proportion of them children and youth of both sexes, the future disposal of them, and the diminution of the stock of hereditary paupers, became an important part of the inquiry; and this part I found turned upon the provision for their education.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ S.E.Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (1952); Anthony Brundage, *England's Prussian Minister* (1988).

⁵⁷ *The Examiner*, Feb. 20 1831.

⁵⁸ Extracts from Reports made to the Poor Law Commissioners: Education. August 22 1833, *Chadwick Papers*, University College Library, Item 23/423.

While Secretary to the PLC Chadwick was concerned to promote industrial training for pauper children. He recognised the need to ensure pauper education was not affected by the New Poor Law principle of less eligibility, intended for adult paupers.⁵⁹ Chadwick's Benthamite background led to his support for state intervention in education. He corresponded with W.E.Hickson, education writer, editor of the *Westminster Review* and handloom weaver commissioner, in 1832 and again in 1847.⁶⁰ He urged the continuing need to promote and develop a District School system that would be based on industrial education:

I very much wish you were at work with the
with the industrial arrangements for the
pauper district schools which will really
be the most important.⁶¹

Chadwick wrote to Lord Lansdowne as President of The CCE in 1839 asking him to promote a Bill to establish District Schools.⁶² As part of his duties, Lansdowne was later to be responsible for the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate whose specific remit was the inspection of Poor Law Schools.⁶³

However in correspondence with Robert Slaney in 1843, Chadwick warned that District Schools should not be brought in with too much haste.⁶⁴ There was always a danger of 'precipitancy in the ordinary career of parliamentary legislation'.

(which) If badly done will be lasting monuments
of reproach to all concerned in them.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ See below, Chapter 1, section 1.1.

⁶⁰ Correspondence between Edwin Chadwick and W.E.Hickson, *Chadwick Papers*, 1832 Item 10007/16; 1847, Item 10007/72.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² S.E.Finer, *The Life and Times of Edwin Chadwick*, *op cit.*, p.153.

⁶³ Lord Lansdowne (Henry Petty Fitzmaurice) was a committed Whig advocate for national schooling. He believed in the principle of grants to aid education, but only if supported by inspection, *DNB* Vol XLV, 1896. See below, Chapter 4.

⁶⁴ Chadwick to Slaney, 21 Nov 1843, *Chadwick Papers*, Item 1817.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Correspondence with the Chaplain of the Bath Union, the Reverend Whitwell Elwin, also reflected Chadwick's insistence on the importance of aftercare, in the process of depauperisation.⁶⁶ Elwin detailed the problems the Bath union was facing over the increasing numbers of pauper children that he, Elwin, wanted to be 'rid of'.⁶⁷ Chadwick urged Elwin to visit children after they had left the school 'in a systematic manner' so as to prevent their return to the workhouse.⁶⁸

Chadwick's influence with the PLC was however extremely limited. The personal animosity that developed between Chadwick and the Commissioners, most notably with George Lewis, culminated in 1841 in Chadwick's total exclusion from all decision making.⁶⁹

In a bitter letter to Henry Brougham in 1854 Chadwick defended his record during his time at the PLC, including his achievements in the field of pauper education:

wages having been increased, the hereditary pauper children having by an imposed education been converted into productive and honest labourers, better attention and relief having been given to the sick and forty millions of rates and more having been saved, and for my share in this I am still to be held up to execration!⁷⁰

Kay Shuttleworth was more successful than Chadwick in gaining support for his ideas on pauper education in the late 1830s and early 1840s, despite the fact that Kay Shuttleworth, like Chadwick, did not always work co-operatively with his colleagues and had a reputation, especially with school inspectors and the officials of the National and British and Foreign Schools Society, of being cold and devious.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Correspondence between Edwin Chadwick and the Reverend Whitwell Elwin, *Chadwick Papers*, 1841, Items 694/28, 694/37; 1842, Item 1330/5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct. 29 1841 Items 694/28, 694/37.

⁶⁹ S.E.Finer, *op cit.*, pp.193-207. This point is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

⁷⁰ Edwin Chadwick to Henry Brougham, July 10 1854, *Brougham Papers*, No 10,811.

⁷¹ D.G.Paz, 'Sir James Kay Shuttleworth: The man behind the myth', *History of Education*, 1985, Vol. 14, No.3, pp.185-198.

Kay Shuttleworth had also been a disciple of Bentham and believed that education would reduce both crime and pauperism. This became a dominant principle in the 1830s following his study of Manchester working class life in 1832.⁷² His research was to have an important influence on the development of elementary education and led to the establishment of the Manchester Statistical Society, and also the Central Society for Education in 1836. Rational and unsentimental, Kay Shuttleworth regarded education for pauper children as a route to future independence, rather than as a means to improve the quality of life. State involvement in education was a form of social control by which government could direct the lives of the labouring classes towards independence tempered by subservience.⁷³

Despite progressive views on certain aspects of education - for instance his opposition to corporal punishment⁷⁴ - Kay Shuttleworth regarded pauperism as an hereditary vice for which the poor themselves could be held responsible, and which they would need to be taught, through education, to conquer.

their means are too often consumed by vice and improvidence
they are in a great way the architects of their own fortune; that what
 others can do for them is trifling indeed compared with what they can do for
 themselves.⁷⁵

In 1835 Kay Shuttleworth was appointed as an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in Norfolk.⁷⁶ It was during this period in East Anglia that Kay Shuttleworth formulated ideas for the development of elementary education that were later to become so influential. Plans for a pupil-teacher scheme that was to revolutionise teacher training in England and Wales

⁷² Kay Shuttleworth, 'The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester' 1832, *op cit.*

⁷³ Richard Johnson, 'Education Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England', *Past and Present*, Nov. 1970.

⁷⁴ James Kay, *On the Punishment of Pauper Children in Workhouses* (1841, reprint, College of St. Mark and St. John, Portsmouth 1961)

⁷⁵ James Kay, *The Moral and Physical Condition... Manchester, op cit.*, p.50, p.71.

⁷⁶ Warrant appointing James Kay Shuttleworth to become an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, July 11 1835, *Kay Shuttleworth Papers*, John Rylands Library, Item 160.

originated from his observations of a thirteen year old pauper boy taking on the role of 'teacher' in a Norfolk workhouse.⁷⁷

Kay Shuttleworth was successful in convincing many local farmer Guardians in East Anglia, who were concerned to achieve social stability, that it was worthwhile spending money to staff and equip workhouse schools. He adopted a practical, positive approach producing, for instance, selections of books at Board meetings for Guardians to examine.⁷⁸ This had a marked effect on the implementation of pauper education in the more progressive Norfolk unions. His views on the value of education in the reduction of overall costs in the future had some appeal for local property owning ratepayers, anxious to cut the cost of pauperism.⁷⁹ Many East Anglian landowners, already keen supporters of the New Poor Law, were more receptive to these ideas than landowners in districts where the Old Poor Law had been less financially damaging.⁸⁰

In 1838 the Poor Law Commissioners, impressed with Kay Shuttleworth's efforts, directed him to produce a report on the training of pauper children which was subsequently included in their Fourth Annual Report.⁸¹ In *The Training of Pauper Children* Kay Shuttleworth recommended the establishment of District Schools to be formed by several unions combining their resources. Children from different unions within a district would be sent to a central, residential school which would be jointly financed by the contributing Boards of Guardians.⁸² Kay Shuttleworth's 1838 Report on Pauper Education can be regarded as seminal. It was the first detailed attempt to combine theory and practice in an effort to produce a blueprint for pauper education under the New Poor Law.⁸³

⁷⁷ James Kay Shuttleworth, *Four Periods of Public Education as reviewed in 1832, 1839, 1862* (1862, reprint 1973), pp.287-9.

⁷⁸ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces* (1978), p.183-5

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Anthony Brundage, *The Making of the New Poor Law 1832-1839* (1978), p.105.

⁸¹ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children* (1838), included in the Fourth Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1838 XXVIII. For District Schools and the PLC see below, Chapter 2; for an analysis of Kay Shuttleworth's views in *The Training of Pauper Training*, see below, Chapter 3.

⁸² Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op cit.*

⁸³ See below, Chapter 3.

In the same year Kay Shuttleworth also gave evidence to Slaney's *1838 Select Committee on Education*.⁸⁴ Kay Shuttleworth used evidence from Norfolk and Suffolk to support his contention that the poorer classes in England and Wales continued to remain in a state of extreme ignorance. He strongly urged the expansion of education as a means of reducing both pauperism and crime. The 1838 committee provided him with an opportunity to find a public and political platform from which to promote his educational philosophy.

moral expedients for the prevention of pauperism and crime, and for bettering the conditions of the poorer classes, appear to me to be infinitely more efficaciousthan any of those physical expedients which are adopted for the immediate suppression or prevention of crime, or of pauperism.⁸⁵

Kay Shuttleworth was transferred to the Metropolis in 1838, probably so that he could promote his District School plans, although this remains unsubstantiated.⁸⁶ However he only held this post for one year and by 1839 had been appointed Secretary to the CCE.⁸⁷ Here he was able to exert a more central influence on the development of elementary education. Kay Shuttleworth also drew inspiration from visits to schools abroad which confirmed his belief in the need for effective industrial education for the poorer classes. These inquiries informed his thinking and influenced politicians such as Russell, to whom Kay Shuttleworth wrote after visiting France, Switzerland and Holland in 1839.

The ignorance of the lower classes in any state encourages superstition, impairs industry and corrupts the manners of the people.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes...1838 *op cit.*

⁸⁵ Evidence of Kay Shuttleworth, Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes....1838, *op cit.*, pp.41-42.

⁸⁶ Francis Duke, 'The Poor Law Commissioners and Education', *Journal of Education Administration and History* Vol.III, No.1, Dec. 1970, p.7.

⁸⁷ Copy of Privy Council Minute appointing James Kay as Secretary of the Education Commission, August 26 1839, *Kay Shuttleworth Papers, op cit.*, Item 199.

⁸⁸ Kay Shuttleworth to Lord John Russell, 'Sketch of the Educational legislation needed for England', Oct. 11 1839, *Kay Shuttleworth Papers, op cit.*, Item 202 (4).

Kay Shuttleworth was becoming renowned as an educational expert. However his scheme for the establishment of a training college - a Normal School - for Poor Law schoolmasters was not supported. This was due to the continuing religious controversy over who should control elementary education - the Established Church, dissenting bodies or those who believed that no religious education at all should be given in the schools.⁸⁹ This *impasse* led Kay Shuttleworth, himself a communicant member of the Church of England, to open a Normal School to train teachers in Battersea in 1840.⁹⁰ He was joined in this venture by Tufnell who was to remain committed to the District School idea throughout his life.⁹¹ Battersea was the first college to train teachers, drawing its candidates from the pauper school at Norwood.

Both Kay Shuttleworth and Tufnell invested their own funds in Battersea and developed a close personal involvement with the college. Kay Shuttleworth even taught there himself, acknowledging that it gave him comfort and enjoyment.⁹² Prior to its imminent closure in 1843 Kay Shuttleworth appealed directly to Peel, informing him that the £1000 grant from the Government was about to run out:

The failure of these schools would be a shock and discouragement to elementary education...They have been useful in illustrating methods of organisation and instruction in Schools with which it was desirable the Inspectors should be familiar.⁹³

However his appeal was to no avail and the school at Battersea was only supported for three years.

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- 89 H.C.Barnard, *A History of English Education from 1760* (1947, Third impression 1964), p.99.
 - 90 Confusion over Kay Shuttleworth's religious persuasion was put right by Frank Smith in *The Life and Times of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth* (1923), pp.81-2.
 - 91 R.J.Phillips, 'E.C.Tufnell: Inspector of Poor Law Schools 1806-1886', PhD Thesis, Sheffield (1973).
 - 92 Fragment of a Journal (Battersea) June 28 to ? 1841, Extract No 10, Thursday n/d, *Kay Shuttleworth Papers, op cit.*, Item 219 (25).
 - 93 Kay Shuttleworth to Peel, July 3 1843, *Peel Papers*, June 10 to July 6 1843, BL Add MSS 40530.

Kay Shuttleworth's commitment to Poor Law education was also evident in his contribution to the Reports on Pauper Education produced by the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners in 1841.⁹⁴ The reports were officially requested by Edwin Chadwick in response to enquiries from the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the current state of pauper education. The Commissioners concluded from these Reports that although there had been some improvement since 1834, it was generally considered unsuitable for pauper children to 'be reared in workhouses' and that they would be better served in District Schools.⁹⁵ The Reports became a focus for all those anxious to accelerate moves towards the establishment of District Schools. They were officially published and immediately in demand from unions considering combination. Of the thirteen reports, five were produced by Kay Shuttleworth alone and a further one in conjunction with Edwin Tufnell.⁹⁶

Kay Shuttleworth was at the forefront of theoretical developments in pauper education. He was an administrator with a personal commitment to his work.⁹⁷ Despite many achievements, however, his plans to establish District Schools across the country failed. It was one of Kay Shuttleworth's abiding regrets that the system did not develop as he had envisaged.⁹⁸ Some of the responsibility for the failure of local Boards of Guardians to adopt a uniform system of pauper schools arose from misunderstandings over the fundamental nature of pauper education, particularly with regard to the principle of less eligibility.

1. Less eligibility and pauper education

The concept of 'less eligibility' established by the legislation of 1834 aimed to set standards

⁹⁴ Reports on the Training of Pauper Children, Seventh Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1841 XXXII, Appendices I-XIII.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.vi,ix.

⁹⁶ *Reports from the Commissioners of the Training of Pauper Children*, P.P. 1841 XXXIII, Appendix. XI, p.391, hereafter known as *Reports 1841*.

⁹⁷ D.G.Paz, 'Kay Shuttleworth : The man behind the myth,' *op cit.*, p.192.

⁹⁸ B.C.Bloomfield (ed.), *The Autobiography of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth* (1964).

below that generally experienced by the average ablebodied independent labourer. The principle was derived from the ideas of Jeremy Bentham, most notably in *The Panopticon*, and was later incorporated into both the 1834 Report and Act.⁹⁹ Finer has located the first reference to less eligibility in Edwin Chadwick's contribution to *Extracts of Evidence* for the Poor Law enquiry in 1833.¹⁰⁰

The main objective of the 1834 legislation was to reduce what was perceived as the abuse of the existing Poor Laws by adult ablebodied paupers who made unnecessary claims for relief. Less eligibility was primarily intended to discourage applicants through the imposition of a tedious, demoralising and prison-like regime.¹⁰¹ It was anticipated that idle paupers would quit the workhouse and make strenuous efforts to find employment outside if conditions inside were made sufficiently unhospitable. In this way it was hoped that less eligibility would result in effective depauperisation.

Contradictions over the principle of less eligibility were, however, apparent from the outset. The physical conditions of a workhouse were often no worse than those outside. A substantial brickbuilt institution was frequently superior to the homes of many agricultural labourers. The daily workhouse diet, although monotonous, was at least regular and adequate to sustain life. The formulators of the 1834 Act, in particular Edwin Chadwick, were aware that it was more realistic to establish the workhouse as a place of psychological, rather than physical, less eligibility.¹⁰²

Nowhere in the 1834 Report and Act was it stated that the principle of less eligibility was to be applied to the schooling of the children. Indeed it was soon apparent that the development of a scheme of education designed to lift children out of pauperism implied *more*, rather than less, eligibility. This was implicit in the final paragraph of the 1834 Act,

⁹⁹ S.E.Finer, *op cit.*, p.75; S. and B. Webb, *Poor Law Policy* (1910), pp. 3-5.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.45

¹⁰¹ M.A.Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929* (1981), p.41.

¹⁰² S.E.Finer, *op cit.*, pp.82-3.

with its emphasis on the positive capacity of education to elevate the 'the intellectual and moral condition of the poorer classes'.¹⁰³ The first sentence in Kay Shuttleworth's 1838 report on *The Training of Pauper Children* made it clear that although adult paupers could be held responsible for their own pauperism, their children could not.

'The pauper children maintained in Union workhouses are dependent, not as a consequence of their own errors, but of their misfortunes.'¹⁰⁴

Effective education would ensure that they did not become the next generation of paupers.

The 1834 legislation intended to depauperise on two fronts, firstly through the stringent application of relief procedures towards the the pauper, and secondly through the positive promotion of education for all indoor children. The final paragraph of the 1834 Report emphasised that the question of education should be addressed once the problem of relief costs had been solved.¹⁰⁵

Kay Shuttleworth was adamant that the prevailing low standard of education of the labouring classes should not impede the establishment of an effective system of pauper education.

'The duty of providing a suitable training for pauper children is simple and positive, and is not to be evaded on the plea of the deficiency of such instruction among the self-supported classes, though the duty of society towards the dependent class may serve to illustrate its responsibilities towards every other class.'¹⁰⁶

This positive discrimination was however only to be associated with education. Kay Shuttleworth supported the principles of the PLAA and saw no reason why the physical

¹⁰³ S. and G. Checkland (eds), *The Poor Law Report of 1834*, *op cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op cit.*, p.3.

¹⁰⁵ *The Poor Law Report*, Checkland, *op cit.*, pp.496-7.

¹⁰⁶ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op cit.*, p.3.

conditions of the children should 'be elevated above that of the household of the self-supported labourer'.¹⁰⁷

It is not difficult to see how Kay Shuttleworth's view could be misinterpreted by local Guardians for whom the theoretical niceties of less eligibility could appear irrelevant. Even at the Poor Law office there was a fundamental disagreement between Chadwick and the Commissioners over the precise nature of the term which resulted in a series of critical disputes.¹⁰⁸ In practice in the localities both the educational and physical condition of pauper children could easily be set below average standards outside the workhouse, despite the official policy of the Poor Law authority not to apply less eligibility to education.

Two statements from the PLC in 1836 and 1837 helped to clarify the central authority's attitude towards the schooling of pauper children. Neither statement was issued as a general order but as a specific response to an enquiry from an individual union.

An Instructional Letter to the Bedford Board of Guardians was subsequently included in the Second Annual Report of the PLC in 1836. It emphasised the importance of not withholding the teaching of writing from pauper children. The statement was a response to a request from the Bedford Board that they should be allowed to omit writing from the curriculum:

The Commissioners do not underestimate the weight and importance of the argument of the argument that the children of labourers should not be enticed into the workhouse by the prospect of a better education within its walls than they could obtain elsewhere; but they think that this inducement would to a considerable degree be counteracted by a distaste for the necessary constraints of workhouse discipline, and the mere fact of its being pauper education.....The Commissioners think it of the greatest importance that the workhouse children should be taught as to give them the greatest attainable chance of earning an honest and independent maintenance for the remainder of their lives,

107

Ibid.

108

Finer, *op cit.*, p.116.

and they cannot conceal from themselves that the acquisition of the power of writing greatly increases this chance.'¹⁰⁹

In this statement the Commissioners revealed a clear, positive and firm commitment to pauper education. A year later, in a letter to Frome Union, Edwin Chadwick stated that where there were no parents, Boards of Guardians were in *loco parentis* and as such were 'bound to protect' children, provide for their 'present wants' and:

'prepare them for Education and Industrial Training for gaining their own livelihood'¹¹⁰

Apart from this correspondence with the Frome and Bedford Unions, there was little evidence that the Poor Law Commissioners dissuaded Guardians from applying the principle of less eligibility to education in the years following the PLAA.

There was a reluctance on the part of many Boards of Guardians to implement an education system which appeared to give pauper children an advantage over the children of independent labourers, for whom there was as yet no guarantee of adequate schooling. It was generally accepted that a distinction should be drawn between pauper education and other elementary education. However the concept of compulsory schooling for workhouse children, financed from the rates, was disliked by most ratepayers and Boards of Guardians in the 1830s. In many cases the financial implications were seen as unacceptable and as a result unions were often slow to comply.

Assistant Poor Law Inspector Sir Edmund Head commented in his 1841 *Report on the Training of Pauper Children* that Guardians in the West Country were generally reluctant to make any effort to improve the educational provision for their pauper children.

'no persuasion will...induce the Guardians in rural unions

¹⁰⁹ Second Annual Report PLC P.P. 1836 XXIUX, Appendix C, No 8.

¹¹⁰ Edwin Chadwick to the Clerk of the Frome Board of Guardians, July 10 1837, From Union Correspondence, Somerset Record Office, Letters Received 1837 No.2.

to go to the necessary expense to give it (pauper education) efficiency.'¹¹¹

The notion that pauper children should not receive a better education than children outside workhouses was therefore strengthened by the argument that in any case numbers were too low to justify any changes. In the same *Reports*, Edward Twistleton and Alfred Power commented on the continued use of pauper school teachers in many rural unions. Twistleton was sympathetic, regarding the situation as a genuine dilemma for some Boards of Guardians. Owing to financial constraints unions could either employ pauper teachers and risk 'contamination', or provide no instruction at all.¹¹² Schools Inspector Ruddock argued that it was shortsighted of some rural Guardians to deliberately impede the education of pauper children in order to present the schooling of ordinary children in a better light.

The amount of education to be given to the pauper children ought not to be regulated by the defective standard of the usual educationare we to sink their education to the level of the most imperfectly educated or to fix some arbitrary standard grounded upon imperfect data, or modified by local opinion?...it is not by impairing the efficiency of the pauper schools...that justice can be done to the independent labourer, but it is by affording him facilities to obtain the same instruction for his own children.¹¹³

Many rural Guardians in the 1830s and 1840s were ill informed and resentful about the benefits of education and preferred the children's time to be spent on household duties.¹¹⁴ There was also resistance from some Guardians over giving pauper children a better

¹¹¹ Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Sir Edmund Head, Report on the Training of Pauper Children, *Reports 1841, op cit.*, Appendix VIII, p.395. Exceptions in the West of England were Guardians in the unions of Atcham and Bridgnorth in Shropshire, see below Chapter 5 and 6.

¹¹² Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Edward Twistleton, Report on the Training of Pauper Children, *Reports 1841, op cit.*, Appendix VIII, p.395. Commissioner Alfred Power, Report on the Training of Pauper Children, *Reports 1841, op cit.*, Appendix X, p.403.

¹¹³ Schools Inspector Ruddock, *General Report 1849*, Schools' Inspectors Reports, Minutes CCE P.P. 1849, XLII, pp. 44-5.

¹¹⁴ Anne Digby, 'The Rural Poor Law', in Derek Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (1976), p.163; David Roberts, *The Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State* (1960, New Haven 1969), p.100.

education than they themselves had received. According to Edwin Chadwick this was particularly true of some farmer Guardians.

The farmers say it is proposing to give to the children more than they received themselves and they do not see the necessity of doing so.¹¹⁵

In 1848, twelve years after the instruction to Bedford Union not to omit writing from the curriculum, the PLB still found teachers excluding both Writing and Arithmetic. However no measures were taken other than to send a letter of disapproval to the offending unions.¹¹⁶

Resistance by local Guardians not only delayed the development of pauper education but also led to great variety between one union and another. National uniformity was no more successful in education than it was in other areas of Poor Law administration. The dominant view of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century historians was that despite laudable intentions the principle of less eligibility was applied to the education of pauper children. Many of the problems that beset the establishment of system of pauper education grew from a fundamental misinterpretation of the Poor Law legislation on this point. The Webbs insisted there was a

....persistence of the idea that it would be disastrous to make the lot of the child paupers more advantageous than that of the children of the lowest paid independent workers.¹¹⁷

This was certainly true during the years of the PLC although less eligibility began to be less of an issue later in the century. Schools Inspectors noted improvements in Guardians' attitudes from the 1860s.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Edwin Chadwick to Lord Lansdowne, Dec. 2 1839, cited in *Finer, op cit.*, p.152. For farmer Guardians in Shropshire, see below Chapter 5 and 6.

¹¹⁶ *An Official Circular of Public Documents and Information*, No.17, July and August 1848, PRO MH 10/12, p. 264.

¹¹⁷ S.and B.Webb,*English Poor Law History, Part II. The Last 100 Years*, Vol. I (1927), p.254.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report* 1867-8, Appendix 28, p.149; Schools Inspector Bowyer *General Report* Mar. 1864, p.9. PRO MH 32/18.

Nevertheless fundamental misinterpretations persisted into the twentieth century. Even Kay Shuttleworth's biographer, Frank Smith, appears to have misunderstood Shuttleworth's attitude. Smith expressed surprise that Kay Shuttleworth opposed less eligibility for pauper education when he supported the principle for adults resident in workhouses.¹¹⁹

Taking Bentham's principle of less eligibility and applying it directly to the issue of reforming the Poor Law in this country was Chadwick's major contribution to the PLAA which established the new central authority. At the Poor Law Commission Chadwick found considerable misunderstanding of how this principle was to be applied in implementing the New Poor Law in the 1830s.

¹¹⁹ Frank Smith, *The Life and Times of James Kay Shuttleworth* (1923), p.46.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAUPER EDUCATION 1834-1871

1. Pauper Education in 1834

In his study of the history of pauper education Francis Duke noted that neither the Poor Law Report of 1834 nor the PLAA gave any detailed attention to the question of education, though the Commissioners touched on the subject in general terms in their final paragraph and included evidence of contemporary practice in the appendix to the *Report*.¹ The urgent requirement for the education of the labouring population was certainly uppermost in the minds of many Poor Law reformers.

In 1831 Edwin Chadwick, the prime mover behind the Poor Law Inquiry of 1832-1834, concerned about the outbreak of incendiarism in different parts of the country, expressed the view, gaining credence in governing circles, that education would diminish crime. He recommended that 'strenuous efforts should be made for a universal and efficient education of the *rising generation*' (emphasis added).²

Both the 1834 *Report* and the PLAA made only brief references to the importance the Commissioners attached to role and influence of education within the New Poor Law system. Their explanation was that 'the subject (of education) is not within our Commission'. However, the Commissioners emphasised the evidence accumulated in their appendix to the *Report* on the benefits to society of education. Furthermore, in noting 'the funds now destined to the purposes of education', the Commissioners publicly

¹ Francis Duke, 'The Education of Pauper Children: Policy and Administration, 1834-1855. MA Thesis, Manchester University, 1968, pp.21-23; idem 'Pauper Education' in Derek Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law In the Nineteenth Century* (1976), pp.67-68.

² *The Examiner*, 20 Feb. 1831.

recorded their conviction that after the Poor Laws had been established 'the most important duty of the Legislature is to take measures to promote the religious and moral education of the labouring classes'.³

Similarly, the PLAA laid down no policy on education except for the brief reference in clause 13 which gave the new PLC in London the general power to make rules 'for the management of the Poor, for the government of workhouses, *and the education of the Children therein ...* ' (emphasis added). While admittedly the only reference in the Act, it was an important national commitment to the provision of education for a new category of working class children at a time when the Whig government had only just entered the arena of elementary education in 1833 by instituting the Treasury capital grant of £20,000 to assist the National and the British and Foreign Schools Societies in the construction of school buildings. ⁴

Though the PLAA said little in detail about the education, a national compulsory system of education was fairly soon put into place in the 1830s and early 1840s for resident workhouse children. But, paradoxically, all three underlying principles of this new legislation denied education to the major group of pauper children who remained outside the workhouse.

The first principle of less eligibility decreed that the condition of the workhouse pauper should be worse than that of the independent labourer outside.

The second principle was the concept of national uniformity which meant that the relief and treatment of destitution should be standardised throughout the country.

³ S. G. and E. O. A. Checkland (eds) *The Poor Law Report Of 1834* , op cit., pp. 496-497.

⁴ For a discussion of the beginnings of state intervention in popular education, which gives a greater emphasis to the role of Whig ministers, see J. Alexander and D.G. Paz, 'The Treasury Grants, 1833-1839', *British Journal Of Educational Studies* XXII (1974), pp. 78-92.

The third principle applied the infamous workhouse test in an attempt to abolish all outdoor relief to the able-bodied.

As the Act regarded children as dependents within the family unit, access to education was determined by whether or not their parents entered the workhouse. But the principle of less eligibility was a 'self-acting' test of destitution designed to force the able-bodied to remain outside and seek employment on the labour market. Similarly, poor relief policies directly limited children's educational opportunities since, until the Denison Act of 1855, the central authority refused to allow guardians to pay the school fees of outdoor pauper children. The imposition of a national standard through the attempt to impose national uniformity would rule out any existing local variations. In Nottinghamshire, for example, the provision of schooling and meals previously given to children on outdoor relief in the 1820s ended following the establishment of the Southwell Union in 1836.⁵

In determining contemporary political attitudes towards the nature and content of education, Dr Paz has pointed to the important and related religious question of the conscience clause in the Poor Law Amendment Bill, which caused a stir in Parliament, but has been largely missed by contemporary and modern historians. While the newly established PLC now had almost unlimited power to determine the education of workhouse children, the conscience clause permitted freedom of choice in religious worship.⁶ After various manoeuvres by interest groups during the passage of the Poor Law Bill, this clause, which remained one of only five changes to the Bill, stipulated that workhouse children could not be given religious training in a creed to which their parents, or godparents (in the case of orphans), objected.⁷

⁵ Maurice Caplan, 'The Poor Law in Nottinghamshire, 1836-71', *Transactions Of the Thoroton Society Of Nottinghamshire*, LXXIV 1970, p.95.

⁶ The conscience clause was added as the result of the pressure of the Dissenter Charles Langdale and others in the House of Commons.

⁷ D. G. Paz, *The Politics Of working-Class Education In Britain 1830-1850* (Manchester, 1980), pp.52-53.

The PLAA was written in broad principles; the detailed rules and regulations which reveal how the London based commissioners laid down English Poor Law policy can be found principally in the various General or Special Orders, Circulars and instructional communications issued by the PLC to the Boards of Guardians and their officials, and in their annual reports to Parliament. In addition the New Poor Law generated considerable correspondence between the Commission, its Assistant Commissioners (who later became Inspectors under the PLB) and the local authorities on Poor Law policy and practice.

In theory, Boards of Guardians needed approval for a wide range of poor law matters, including the appointment and dismissal of teachers; in practice they often enjoyed a degree of autonomy. With the raising and control of the poor rate under their jurisdiction the Guardians effectively controlled the administration of the Poor Law at local level. In reality, therefore, the cardinal principle of national uniformity in the New Poor Law encompassed a great deal of local variation in practice.

The education of pauper children in workhouses was left to the Poor Law Commissioners in London to be defined as part of central poor law policy. In this respect the Webbs were clear that the Commission was only concerned with the resident workhouse children and followed a definite policy of non-intervention in relation to the far greater number of outdoor children:

No directions were given, either for its education or for any other of its needs. the only direction that we find is a decision that the local authority must not pay the school; fees for any such child; and must not even add with this view 2d. per week per child to the outdoor relief granted to the parent.⁸

⁸ Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *English Poor Law Policy* (1910), pp. 43-44.

2. The Poor Law Commission

The PLAA, in establishing the PLC, set the pattern for the New Poor Law of central supervision, inspection and local administration. Based in Somerset House in London, and organised along the lines of the eighteenth-century customs, excise and similar revenue boards, the Commission was a typical example of the type of Victorian administrative unit created in some number in the period 1832-1855.⁹

The three Poor Law Commissioners and their Permanent Secretary, aided by twenty-one assistant commissioners, were given the all embracing task of amalgamating thousands of parishes into unions, abolishing outdoor relief and providing guidelines on a wide range of over three hundred issues relating to the accommodation, medical care and general relief and treatment of paupers.¹⁰ After 1834, as the century progressed, the Poor Law system offered the authorities a readily available administrative framework for the development of basic social services for working class people. As Frances Power Cobbe later pointed out, each union workhouse was more than simple residential accommodation for its pauper inmates and their families. Many of the new larger bastilles contained within their walls over twenty poor law institutions, including asylums, three schools (for infants, boys and girls) and hospitals.¹¹

In this way, the education and training of workhouse children was an integral part of the New Poor Law and inevitably bound up with the general concerns of Victorian administrators and officials in national and local government who dealt with the management and organisation of the poor law as a whole. Within the Victorian Poor Law system reformers argued that the provision of education and training of workhouse children

⁹ F. M. G. Wilson, 'Ministries and Boards: Some Aspects of Administrative Development Since 1832', *Public Administration*, XXXIII (1955), pp. 45-46, 50-51.

¹⁰ Poor Law Commission, *General Index To Official Circulars Of Public Documents And Information Vols. I -IV.*, 1846.

¹¹ Frances Power Cobbe, 'The Philosophy of the Poor Laws And The Report Of the Committee On Poor Relief' *Fraser's Magazine*, (1864), pp 375-383.

had direct cost benefits, albeit of a long-term social and economic value. First, industrial training instilled appropriate habits of work and industry, thereby breaking the cycle of pauperism to which a generation of pauper children would otherwise be condemned in their adulthood. Second, moral education was essential to promote social discipline and character formation which would sever the links between pauperism and crime, social unrest and political protest.

In 1874, employing Benthamite reasoning, Edward Carleton Tufnell gave evidence that this policy of education and training had worked over many years (especially when provided in District or separate schools):

The surest criterion of the utility of any course of action is the final outcome of it. Now this is a test to which I have always been desirous of submitting our present system of pauper education, by discovering what has been the success in after life of children so reared ... the children are nearly all of the lowest class, knowing nothing but evil when they enter the schools ... and of the lowest type physically, mentally, and morally. ... I have never been able to discover from the numerous returns I have collected and printed in past reports that more than four per cent, fail to gain an honest and independent livelihood.¹²

The Poor Law Report had recommended the classification of paupers and the building of separate well regulated workhouses for each group. In a well-known major departure in policy the PLC sanctioned the construction and use of the general mixed workhouse which became the grim symbol of the New Poor Law to many in the nineteenth century.¹³

From the outset this new central Poor Law office in London was plagued by political difficulties and clashes of personnel. Any assessment of pauper education in the formative years of the 1830s and 1840s must take into account the problems and difficulties which covered the whole range of Poor law business and administration, for which the PLC was

¹² Tufnell, *General Report*, 1873-74, PP 1874 XXV, p.245.

¹³ For a comprehensive discussion of this decision and the public image of the deterrent workhouse, see M. A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929* (1981), pp.30-53.

responsible in establishing the operation of the New Poor Law, based on the workhouse system.

In 1834 three permanent Commissioners, Thomas Frankland Lewis, John George Shaw-Lefevre and George Nicholls, were appointed to preside over the central supervision of the new government department. The composition of the PLC was flawed from the beginning by aristocratic jobbery as Edwin Chadwick was passed over in preference for men with an upper class background and higher social standing. Chadwick's most recent biographer sees this as a monumental blunder by the Whig Cabinet who ignored the Benthamite lawyer's undoubted merits and qualifications, especially as the author of the Poor Law Inquiry Report, in their selection of the PLC. As a result, a very disgruntled Chadwick, who had expected to be automatically offered one of the three posts at a salary of £2,000, had to be persuaded to accept the subordinate role of Permanent Secretary to the Commission at the lower salary of £1200. Pouring oil on troubled waters, the Commissioners moved quickly to strictly curtail Chadwick's influence at their meetings to one of only formal attendance.¹⁴

Nearly a century later, Sidney and Beatrice Webb favourably described the members of this new commission as 'not badly chosen'. At 54 the Tory M.P. and member of various parliamentary committees, Frankland Lewis, became the new chairman, to be succeeded by his son, George Cornwall Lewis, in 1838. Shaw-Lefevre was regarded as a talented Whig politician and intelligent academic who was a leading light in the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and possessed abilities in many languages. The triumvirate was completed by a retired sea captain and successful banker George Nicholls, described by the Webbs as an honest, plodding official with a valuable practical knowledge of administration.¹⁵

¹⁴ Anthony Brundage, *England's "Prussian Minister": Edwin Chadwick and the Politics of Government Growth 1832-1854* (Pennsylvania, 1988). pp. 39-41.

¹⁵ S. and B. Webb, *English Poor Law History: Part II: The Last Hundred Years*, Vol I (1929).

Of the three Commissioners, George Nicholls was the more experienced Poor Law reformer. He had been consulted by the Poor Law Inquiry because of his experience in the 1820s as an active overseer, waywarden and churchwarden at Southwell in Nottinghamshire where he had reformed local practice by a reduction in outdoor relief expenditure. His measures became famous through his 'Eight Letters on the Management of Our Poor and the General Administration of the Poor Laws. By an Overseer', published in 1823 in the *Nottingham Journal* and later printed as a pamphlet. Nicholls was also noted for the establishment of a pauper school at Southwell. As a result, he was consulted by the Poor Law Commissioners whose report contained favourable references to the administration of the Old Poor Law at Southwell, as advocated in Nicholls' 'Letters of an Overseer'.¹⁶

Nicholls remained a member of the PLC from 1834-1847. Although he was the most knowledgeable on educational matters he was frequently out of the country. Directly involved with the Irish Poor Law, he resided in Ireland from September 1838 to November 1842 and his reports formed the foundation of the Irish Poor Law Act of 1838.¹⁷

Sir John George Shaw-Lefevre was a Whig lawyer whose work on the county boundaries for the purposes of the First Reform Act was largely accepted by Parliament. As Under-secretary at the Colonial Office he had briefly been a member of the slave compensation committee. Appointed to the PLC in 1834, this post took its toll on his health and in 1841 he was moved to the Board of Trade as joint-Assistant Secretary. His obituary in *The Times* recalled his passion for languages - he was fluent in fourteen - and his patience of inquiry and quickness of insight.¹⁸

¹⁶ G.Nicholls, *A History of the English Poor Law*, (1898), Vol. 2, pp. 227-236. For a study of the New Poor Law in Nottinghamshire, see above, Maurice Caplan, *The Poor Law In Nottinghamshire*, *op cit.*

¹⁷ S.E.Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (1952) p.142.

¹⁸ *The Times* Aug. 22 1879.

Sir Thomas Frankland Lewis was a politician who was employed in 'second rank' political and administrative posts, one of which was as a member of the Commission on Irish Education from 1825 to 1828.¹⁹ The Whig administration appointed him Chairman of the PLC 'where he displayed much administrative prudence'. He was responsible for sending George Nicholls to Ireland to report on the need for extensive reclamation works and was later a member of the Rebecca Riots Commission in Wales.

Finer makes it clear that the acrimony between Chadwick and Lewis wrecked the administration of the Poor Law from the outset.²⁰ However, the PLC suffered from other fundamental weaknesses which affected the development of policy on pauper education.

In the first instance, the PLC only had a temporary tenure, which was subject to renewal after five years. While they had to submit all their regulations to the Home Secretary for approval, as a Board rather than a Ministry, the Commissioners had no representative in Parliament. This unsatisfactory situation only increased Parliamentary suspicion of the Commissioners' activities, particularly when criticism mounted as the New Poor Law was introduced in different parts of the country in the 1830s.

One immediate casualty of the differences within the Poor Law Office were Chadwick's plans for the reformatory education of pauper children as part of his attack on the abuses of the Old Poor Law. Together with his ideas on sanitary reform, the education of workhouse children was part of his scheme to eradicate the causes of pauperism.²¹ The edited edition of the varied publications of this indefatigable Victorian social investigator and reformer reveals the extent of his ideas and observations over many years on national

¹⁹ S.E.Finer, *op cit.*, p. 108.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-119.

²¹ Francis Duke, 'The Poor Law Commissioners and Education', *Journal of Educational History and Administration*, III, 1, (1970), p.7.

education, half-time systems, physical and mental training, music, drill and other aspects of school organisation, including the treatment of pauper children.²²

As an unremitting Benthamite, Chadwick advocated the education of workhouse children which he believed would prevent pauperism, delinquency and mendicancy. Here he shared common ground with the two Assistant Commissioners Kay Shuttleworth and E. C. Tufnell on the questions of the Poor Law, Public Health and Education.²³ According to Finer, he was responsible for several initiatives in promoting pauper education in the 1830s, including the investigations into industrial training in Scotland and the Netherlands which were so influential in helping to form Kay Shuttleworth's views.²⁴

Chadwick had encouraged Kay Shuttleworth to become an Assistant Commissioner and this eventually resulted in the publication of *The Training of Pauper Children* in 1838. Finer quotes at some length from Chadwick's letter to Lord Lansdowne in December 1839 in which he complained of the indifference not only of the majority of the Boards of Guardians to the proper education of pauper children but also one of members of the government.²⁵

2.1 Policies

As indicated in its first report to Parliament, the PLC laid down regulations for each union to provide three hours education each day in reading, writing and principles of religion, plus, most critically industrial training - to be taught by a salaried schoolmaster and

²² W. B. Richardson, *The Health of Nations* (1887). In his will Chadwick funded a medal for the manager of a Poor Law District School who achieved 'the largest proportion of scholars got into productive industry'. Finer, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

²³ Edwin Carleton Tufnell was later to become one of the first Poor Law Schools Inspectors. Throughout his career remained totally committed to District Schools as the best system of educating pauper children

²⁴ S.E.Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (1952), pp. 152-153.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.152. This was clear in Kay Shuttleworth's 'Notes ..on the Training in Schools of Industry of Children dependent from Crime, Orphanage, Etc.', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* Vol. I 1839, pp. 245-251.

schoolmistress.²⁶ During the 1830s and 1840s the PLC pioneered two main policies in relation to the establishment of District Schools and the improvement of teacher supply.

Duke has demonstrated that the genesis of the District School movement can be found in the 1838 scheme proposed by Kay Shuttleworth and Edward Tufnell and enthusiastically supported by Edwin Chadwick.²⁷ Advocates of the benefits of district schooling could point to Mr Aubin's establishment at Norwood, used by certain unions in London for the education of its workhouse children, which became influential in elementary as well workhouse education. With around 1000 pupils, Norwood employed Scottish teachers and was regarded as a model school in the education and training of pauper children. The origins of Kay Shuttleworth's well-known pupil-teacher system can also be traced to the promising pupils sent from Norwood to the Battersea College, the private establishment associated with Kay Shuttleworth and Tufnell for the training of Poor Law teachers.

Kay Shuttleworth's scheme for District Schools envisaged education and industrial training establishments of around 500 pauper pupils where appropriate qualities of character and work skills would be developed for a future adult life of industry and independence without resort to poor relief.²⁸ As the majority of unions only had at most 50 pauper children, in theory they would achieve economies of scale by combining to provide one large District School, instead of maintaining many smaller workhouse schools. Above all, as *residential* establishments where pauper children were boarded several miles away from their native union workhouse, District Schools provided the opportunity to totally separate pauper children from the contaminating influence inherent in adult pauperism.²⁹

²⁶ First Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1835 XXXV Appendix A No 9, Section XVIII. Arithmetic was not included until 1847.

²⁷ Francis Duke, *The Poor Law Commissioners and Education*, *op cit.*

²⁸ Kay Shuttleworth mentioned three figures (400, 450, 500) as the optimum number of resident pupils. See James Phillips Kay, *The Training of Pauper Children* (1839, 1970 Didsbury edition), pp. 15-16, 37.

²⁹ In his published accounts on pauper education, Francis Duke does not describe the daily routine and boarding arrangements of District Schools nor make explicit why they were designed to be residential. His point that 'it was assumed that the geographical limits of any school district would be defined by the round trip which a pony and trap could make in a day. On this basis a maximum of fifteen miles from workhouse to school was, rather optimistically, considered viable'

This was not without its problems. Poor law Schools Inspector Browne later stressed that although District Schools needed large numbers of children in order to keep down costs, travel expenses in particular could be high where children were only resident for a short periods. In these instances, reduced fees should be considered for those unions where the cost of travel was exorbitant. Furthermore, building expenses would also be less keenly felt if they were shared on a more equitable basis.³⁰

The District School Scheme demonstrated many of the difficulties and shortcomings of the development of education within the New Poor Law in the mid-nineteenth century. The PLC, always worried by its own temporary tenure, lacked the statutory powers to begin the formation of school districts until the 1844 Poor Law Amendment Act.³¹ Four years later, even the permissive District Schools Act of 1848, which removed the 15 mile restriction on school districts imposed in the previous Act, still did not give the Commission the power to compel Boards of Guardians to construct new District Schools.

Powerful arguments, underpinned by financial considerations but often expressed in terms of work discipline and less eligibility, were raised in the localities. In many unions Guardians claimed, on behalf of their ratepayers, that the education of a generation of pauper children would give them expectations beyond their station and, at the same time, be seen by industrious and deserving poor parents as more favourable schooling than *their* children could receive. As a result, out of the hundred District Schools Kay Shuttleworth

even implies the possibility that some pauper children returned regularly to their workhouse. See Francis Duke, 'Pauper Education' in Derek Fraser (ed.) *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century*, op cit., p. 73.

³⁰ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report*, 1848. *Correspondence CCE 1840-1850* Part I, 1840-1848, April 1848, PRO MH 19/14. Browne was keen to make use of the new railway systems but it is not clear whether in practice this actually occurred. Duke comments that 'not even the Victorian railway mania could provide a line to link every workhouse to its district school!'

³¹ Francis Duke, 'Pauper Education', *ibid.*, p. 73.
1844 District Schools Act, 7 and 8 Vic c101 Section 26.

originally envisaged would cover the country, only eleven were ever established. Of these six were in London.³²

It was on the subject of cost that most objections to District Schools were founded. According to Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Twistleton 'expense is the point on which everything will turn'.

Small farmers, and many of the gentry, have a decided repugnance to educating the poor ... no state of moral or distant advantages will have much effect, unless a good argument to the pocket can be maintained.³³

Similar criticisms were expressed by Poor law Commissioner Head in 1841 over the reluctance of many Guardians to spend any money at all on pauper education, let alone the amounts necessary to establish District Schools.³⁴

It was the initial cost of establishing these large schools that deterred many Boards of Guardians. Prior to 1848 the cost of building a District School was limited to 20% of the combining unions' annual average poor relief expenditure.³⁵ Assistant Commissioner Hall protested strongly to the PLC over the unrealistic nature of this condition and the problem it was causing, even within the Metropolis where unions were more prepared to combine.³⁶ After the District School Act of 1848 the cost limitation clause was removed and the first District Schools were established but the financial problems were still not resolved. Plans to build a large District School for Warwickshire and South Staffordshire foundered on cost. Despite promises of private donations from local proprietors and landowners, of cheap land and more than a thousand pounds in cash, the unions still needed a further

³² Central London (1849); South Metropolitan (1849); North Surrey (1849); Forest Gate (1868); West London (1872); Kensington and Chelsea (1880). See below, Appendix II.

³³ Poor Law Inspector Twistleton to the PLC, Mar. 24 1840. PRO MH 32/72.

³⁴ Poor Law Commissioner Edmund Head, *Reports 1841, op. cit.*, Appendix IV, p. 395.

³⁵ 1844 'District Schools' Act, 7 + 8 Vic c101 sec. 26.

³⁶ Assistant Commissioner Hall to PLC, Reports, Feb.1 1845, Jan.1 1847, *Poor Law Inspectors Correspondence*, PRO MH 32/36.

£3,500. The PLB applied for a loan on the school's behalf to the Treasury but the request was rejected.³⁷

Furthermore, after the first schools had been functioning for some time it became apparent that they were much more costly to administer than had been anticipated. Tufnell, by then Poor Law Schools Inspector for the Metropolis, was unreservedly in favour of district schooling and had been very influential in the establishment of the Metropolitan District Schools. Tufnell estimated the financial liabilities of the schools and later stated that the average cost per child in a District School was £3.17s., compared with £8.7s.3d. in a workhouse school.³⁸ However Tufnell was calculating the costs on basic tuition only. He omitted to include the wider costs associated with the high numbers of auxiliary staff needed to service these large institutional communities, or the cost of any interest on loans that had been received.³⁹

Besides being unable to insist on the establishment of District schools the PLC were also not able to prevent a few unions deciding to pay for the education of outdoor pauper children whose schooling was not included within the confines of the 1834 Act.⁴⁰

In 1843 in response to an application from the Berwick-upon-Tweed guardians to pay for the schooling of outdoor pauper children, the PLC made it clear that Boards of Guardians only had a statutory duty to educate pauper children resident in workhouses:

'... there is no legal authority to charge the rates for this purpose. When children are maintained in the workhouse, under the immediate care and control of the guardians it is undoubtedly competent to the Guardians to provide suitable training and instruction for such children; and the Poor Law Amendment Act (sec. 15) expressly enables the Commissioners to make and issue regulations for the attainment of the objects. But the education of children relieved out of the workhouse and placed under other control, is not a matter within

³⁷ CCE to the PLB, July 21 1853, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/15.

³⁸ Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report 1862*, *Minutes CCE*, PRO ED 17/28, Appendix. 3, Poor Law Schools, p. 336.

³⁹ In an attempt to promote the South East Shropshire District School William Wolryche Whitmore was similarly circumspect with the figures, see below Chapter 5.

⁴⁰ See below, Chapter 7.

Under the administration of the PLC the appointment and dismissal of teachers was controlled locally, with salaries paid entirely from the poor rate. If a union did not comply with central policy the PLC had no financial sanctions it could apply, as was the case at Atcham in Shropshire where the Guardians refused to appoint a schoolmistress.⁴² Until more detailed instructions were laid down as to the duties and responsibilities of teachers it was only too easy for unions to resort to the simple option of employing a pauper inmate. An Instructional Letter sent to all unions in 1842 left no doubt as to the Commissioners' view of pauper teachers:

The Commissioners strongly disapprove of the practice of having recourse to a pauper as the instructor of either male or female children. In no department of the workhouse is a careful selection of the person employed of greater importance than in the office of Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress. Their incompetence (pauper teachers) and those habits which are generally the cause or consequence of pauperism affect not only the present comfort and conduct of the children entrusted to their care but exercise a most pernicious influence on the subsequent welfare of those children and on the likelihood of their permanent chargeability.⁴³

In cases where Assistant Poor Law Commissioners had already tried unsuccessfully to effect improvements in teaching the Commissioners were prepared to enter into direct correspondence with an individual union. Throughout the 1840s at Penrith in Cumberland Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Hawley constantly criticised the union for employing pauper teachers. He was supported by the PLC who wrote to Penrith on several occasions urging the Guardians to improve the situation. However until the intervention of Schools Inspector Browne in 1847 the union remained intransigent, typically replying that they were 'not inclined to disturb their present school arrangements'.⁴⁴

⁴¹ PLC, *An Official Circular Of Public Documents And Information : III. Education Of Pauper Children*, Dec. 23 1843.

⁴² See below, Chapter 5.

⁴³ *Ninth Annual Report PLC*, Instructional Letter, Feb. 4, 1842.

⁴⁴ *Penrith Union Correspondence*, Aug. 1847, PRO MH 12 1685.

Although they possessed no powers to influence salaries the PLC did attempt to lay down the duties expected of schoolmasters and mistresses. Article 212 of a Circular sent to all unions on March 6, 1846 listed their responsibilities in detail. In addition to their teaching role, the schoolmaster and schoolmistress were to help the Master and Matron maintain 'due subordination in the workhouse'.⁴⁵ Teachers were listed in the Circular in order of their importance in the workhouse hierarchy, following after the Master, the Matron and the Chaplain. Working under the Master and Matron in a subordinate capacity led to many disagreements in workhouses between teaching and non-teaching staff. This was clearly recognised in 1841 in the Commissioners' conclusions to the *1841 Reports* on pauper education.⁴⁶

From the mid-1830s there is evidence to suggest that the central authority began to encourage the development of schooling for indoor pauper children. Each annual report included a section on education. The Third and Fourth Annual Reports, in 1837 and 1838, clearly demonstrated the Commissioners' support for District Schools.⁴⁷ In particular their request in 1841 for reports from the Assistant Commissioners on the state of pauper education in different parts of the country, revealed their concern.⁴⁸ The main difficulty highlighted by the Commissioners was the lack of good teachers, particularly in small workhouse schools where even adequate salaries were not cost effective.⁴⁹

3. The Poor Law Board

As a result of the Andover inquiry into the appalling conditions at the Andover workhouse the Whig government decided to reconstitute the Poor Law authority and in 1847 the PLC

⁴⁵ PLC Circular to Unions, Mar 6 1846, PLC Circulars 1844-1847, PRO MH 10/11.

⁴⁶ *1841 Reports, op cit.*, p.viii. See below, problems at Atcham and Bridgnorth unions, Chapters 5 and 6.

⁴⁷ *Third Annual Report, PLC* 1837.P.P. XXXI; *Fourth Annual Report, PLC* 1838, P.P. XXVIII.

⁴⁸ *1841 Reports, op.cit.*, p.60.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.vii.

was replaced by the PLB. George Cornwall Lewis pointed out the central weakness of the PLC to the radical M.P. George Grote:

Lord John (Russell) completely threw over the report of the Andover Committee, and said that the Government intended to found no measure upon it. But he added that there was a state of feeling in Parliament, and a relation between the Home Office and the Commissioners, which rendered a change in the constitution of the department expedient, when the question of the renewal of the commission came before the House. He proposes to retain the present central control unimpaired, transferring the issue of general orders to the Queen in council; constituting the department differently, enabling it to be represented directly in the House of Commons. At the same time I believe, the department will be made perpetual, instead of being, as at present only temporary'.⁵⁰

In 1848 the PLB took up the matter of education in the union workhouse. In a test case the Guardians of an unnamed board had instructed the mistress of the workhouse school not to teach writing or arithmetic as:

they felt that the system of giving pauper children in the workhouse a better education than the children of poor people out of the workhouse, was subversive of the principle on which they had always conducted their duties...⁵¹

In a long reply the PLB pointed out that the teacher would be in breach of the law in not providing instruction in arithmetic and writing and clarified the official attitude of the central authority to the principle of less eligibility in relation to the education of workhouse children.

the Poor Law Board desire to point out to the guardians, that the law leaves them no discretion on this point. By the 114th Article of the Consolidated Order, which has the force of law, the schoolmistress is bound to give instruction in writing and arithmetic, and for the wilful neglect of the duty prescribed by the order of the Poor Law commissioners, she is not only liable to dismissal, but the law has rendered her subject to pecuniary penalties.⁵²

⁵⁰ Lewis to Grote, Jan. 26 1847, in Gilbert Frankland Lewis (ed.), *Letters Of The Right Hon. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, Bart. To Serious Friends* (1870), p. 150.

⁵¹ Poor Law Board, *Official Circular Of Public Documents And Information: IV- Education. 1. In Union Workhouse School*, July 26 1848, p.264.

⁵² *Ibid.*

In considering the resolution passed by this Board of Guardians the PLB added:

The object of the policy which prescribes the condition of paupers in the workhouse should not be rendered more eligible than that of the poor who support themselves by their own labour, is to diminish pauperism, by promoting habits of industry and prudence, and by discouraging eleemosynary relief. The object would not be answered by lowering the education of children in a workhouse below the standard of that which is ordinarily given by the industrious poor to their own children ... few, indeed, would be induced to become paupers in the hope of procuring for their children such an education as the law provides for boys and girls in a workhouse school.⁵³

Moreover the PLB felt that 'the children of parents reduced to destitution by improvidence or crime, are not themselves to blame for their unfortunate position', the point that had been firmly stressed by Kay Shuttleworth ten years earlier in *The Training of Pauper Children*.⁵⁴

The PLB also made two other important points to the Guardians:

In order to give the child in a workhouse the best chance of becoming an independent and useful member of society, the great distance which separates his condition from that of a self-supporting labourer's child must be diminished by education.⁵⁵

The PLB were also at pains to point out that 'obedience to the law in this matter will be a wise economy in the end, for the well trained child will be more unwilling to re-enter the workhouse which he has once quitted, and more able to provide for himself out of it.'⁵⁶

Finally the PLB reaffirmed the important principle that Boards of Guardians were *loco parentis* to deserted and orphan children:

the guardians are for some purposes placed in *loco parentis* to the children, many of them orphans and deserted, who are the inmates of

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

the workhouse; and they would ill fulfil the duties of guardianship, if they were voluntarily to leave these children exposed to the evils, moral as well as physical, which experience proves to result from a defective education, united with the early habits of pauperism.⁵⁷

At the same time the PLB attempted to spread good practice throughout the Poor Law unions of the country by citing the farm school at Quatt in Shropshire as an exemplar of industrial training for pauper children including, the Board noted, at times - 'the children of out-door paupers of the Bridgenorth (*sic*) Union'. To underline its guidance the PLB went to some lengths to circulate a letter on the farming methods employed and a detailed balance sheet, obtained by Poor law Schools Inspector Symons from Henry Garland, the Quatt schoolmaster, which demonstrated the financial viability of this agricultural enterprise. The PLB had a powerful case, it wished to advance, that the direct benefit of this industrial training was depauperisation:

this school is exclusively for the instruction of the pauper children of the union. They often amount to sixty in number; the object not being to get rid of them as soon as possible, but to give them such an industrial *training* as may remove habits of idleness and incapacity, which are productive of future pauperism, and to facilitate the means of a permanent and independent livelihood when they leave school.⁵⁸

This was not the only occasion that the PLB publicised farm work as a suitable and effective form of industrial training for pauper children. In May 1850 the Board made use of the written testimony of the Master of the Guiltcross Union workhouse on the beneficial depauperising effects of this training, which had transformed land unsuitable for agriculture into productive use:

My only object in preparing this statement has been , to point out to those who have the charge of children in union workhouses, a means of training them in habits of industry and preparing them for future usefulness. The fact that there are sixty boys and girls trained at this workhouse now earning their own living, is some evidence of the

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-265.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4. *Some Facts Respecting The Farm-School Of The Bridenorth At Quatt, Salop.*

success of the system pursued there.⁵⁹

As in the case of the Quatt farm school, the PLB published details of the financial accounts for three quarters of 1849, which demonstrated that this cultivation produced an annual profit of £15 per acre.⁶⁰

In another important announcement in 1848 the PLB wrote to Kay Shuttleworth, then Secretary to the Committee of Council on Education, about educating boys and girls together:

in consequence of the opinions recorded in the Visitor's Book by some of the School Inspectors'⁶¹

In an important decision the PLB largely adhered to the previous ruling by the PLC concerning the segregation of boys and girls in workhouse schools, with the only modification that in some circumstances mixed teaching in the schoolroom for two or three hours each day would be permitted in the presence of both the schoolmaster and school mistress.⁶² Kay Shuttleworth was himself uneasy about mixed teaching for pauper children although in general he agreed with the principle.⁶³

In 1849-50 the PLB gave considerable attention to matters of education. With the introduction of the Parliamentary Grant system in 1846 the PLB was in a stronger position to influence the teaching in Poor Law schools. Its first report included proposals to raise the standard of teachers by accepting inspection from the Education authority. In conjunction, 'larger sums' would be granted:

⁵⁹ Walsham to PLB, May 22 1850; Rackham to Walsham and Bowyer, n.d. (May 1850) in *An Official Circular III Education Industrial Training Of Pauper Children In The Gilt Cross Union, Norfolk*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ PLB Official Circulars No's 18 and 19, Sep. and Oct., 1848.

⁶² Even on these occasions the PLB insisted that the boys and girls should 'occupy separate forms or benches, and that they should enter and leave the school separately and in order, accompanied by their respective teachers.' PLB to Kay Shuttleworth, Oct. 6 1848. *loc. cit.*

⁶³ See below, Chapter 3.

to the boards of guardians who possess efficient schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, than to those whose officers possess inferior qualifications.⁶⁴

The grant was allocated by Parliament through the Treasury as a merit award to encourage unions to appoint better teachers on higher rates of pay. Boards of Guardians would still fix and pay teachers' salaries but these would be refunded, in part or in whole, according to the quality of certificates issued by the newly appointed Inspectors for Poor Law Schools.⁶⁵ These Schools Inspectors would be under the control of the CCE. The fact that the PLB was prepared to accept Inspectors who would not be directly under their jurisdiction also points to cooperation between the two authorities at this time.

The Board published its important criteria for assessing the quality of workhouse schoolteachers based on the classes of certificate awarded after the examination of the teachers by the Poor Law Schools Inspectors:

There is little doubt, that by the appointment of teachers possessing higher qualifications, the salaries of teachers and the sums specified in the certificates awarded to them, will ultimately be so adjusted as to render any payment from the rates in respect of their salaries unnecessary.⁶⁶

In 1848 a draft circular from the PLB to all unions set out the scale of the proposed annual grants. There were four levels:

⁶⁴ PLB Official Circular, Jan 1849 No. 21, pp. 4 - 5.

⁶⁵ See below, Chapter 4.

⁶⁶ PLB, *Official Circular No. 33 Workhouse Schools*, Jan.1850.

Permission	£5 - 15
Probation	£15 - 30
Competency	£30 - 40
Efficiency	£40 - 50

This table shows the rates for Schoolmasters; the awards for Schoolmistresses were set at two thirds of the amounts allocated for male teachers. The Circular clearly denoted the PLB's approval of the grants scheme, emphasising that the overall aim was to improve pauper education by the creation of more efficient schools. The Board acknowledged that some improvements that had been made in the previous ten years but now urged the need for more uniformity regarding 'acceptable qualifications' required for teachers in Poor Law schools.⁶⁷

The PLB quickly demonstrated their determination to make the Grants system effective as quickly possible. Headington Guardians, in January 1848, were unwilling to make any educational arrangements until the PLB had advised them regarding the proposed salary level for any prospective teacher. The reply from the PLB was uncompromising - the Guardians should appoint a teacher immediately - 'in accordance with the decision of the Commissioners'. The percentage of the Parliamentary Grant to be given:

in no respect affects the necessity which exists as regards the education of children.⁶⁸

In due course the PLB also brought to the attention of Guardians the importance of registering school attendance correctly. It ensured national uniformity by issuing instructions for the use of 'School Admission and Discharge Books' and 'School

⁶⁷ PLB to CCE. Mar. 14 1848, *Correspondence CCE 1840-1850, PRO MH 19/14.*

⁶⁸ PLB to Headington Union, Jan. 23, 1848, PRO MH 2/21.

Attendance Books'. The payment or otherwise of the Parliamentary Grant was one area where the PLB were able to exercise authority more effectively and directly than the PLC.

As the amount of the fees will be regulated by the average number of children in the school during the year, an accurate record of the daily attendance in the school must be kept, and the Guardians are requested to give the necessary directions for effecting this object.⁶⁹

The importance of correct record keeping was underlined in the following Circular letter from the Secretary of the PLB:

This record will not only enable the school inspector, when visiting the school, to see how long each child has been under instruction, but will also enable him to ascertain the average number of scholars in attendance during the year.⁷⁰

The responsibility to ensure that registers were regularly completed rested with PLB as the CCE were at pains to point out in 1851 when the workhouse school at Atcham failed to keep accurate records. It took the threat of withdrawal of the Parliamentary Grant before Atcham complied.⁷¹ As such withdrawal resulted in a financial loss for the union concerned it was an effective measure of control. Through use of the power to withhold payments from the Grant the PLB was able to be far more effective than the the previous Poor Law authority in ensuring standards and uniformity. This applied not only to essential procedural matters like the keeping of registers but also to the resourcing of the schools.

The CCE were prepared to give the PLB a discount for the supply of books and maps for use in workhouse schools. The central Poor Law authority were then able to achieve more uniformity by making the same resources available to Boards of Guardians throughout the country, even though at times there was criticism over the choice and quantity of books

⁶⁹ PLB Official Circular No 40 Aug. 1850.

⁷⁰ Ebrington to the Clerk of the Board of Guardians, July 12 1850, in *Official Circular IX School Record Of Attendance At Workhouse Schools*, August 1850.

⁷¹ See below, Chapter 5.

purchased by individual unions.⁷² A comprehensive 15 page list of *Lesson Books for Workhouse Schools* was included in a Circular sent to all unions in 1849.⁷³ As similar books and maps were in use in elementary schools there was some attempt at correlation between the two sectors.

Clear examples can be found of the PLB using the power of the Grant to maintain curriculum standards. When Newport Union refused to order maps of England and the Holy Land on the grounds that 'they did not consider maps necessary for the education of pauper children' the PLB responded:

As long as the Guardians refuse to provide maps for the schools no payment from the Parliamentary Grant can be made for the salaries of the Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress of the Union.⁷⁴

3.1 Disputes with the Committee of Council on Education

The relationship between the CCE and the PLB was not however to remain conciliatory. The CCE had come into existence amid continuing controversy over the involvement of the state in education. The original intention of the Whig government - that the Committee should have a broader role involving, for instance, the establishment of a national non-denominational teacher training college - had to be discarded in the face of intransigent opposition from the Established Church.⁷⁵ The Committee, consisting of the Lord President, Lord Privy Seal, Home Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer, was given a purely executive function - responsibility for the overall management of education which

⁷² E.g. Atcham Union refused to comply with the choice of books suggested by the Schools Inspector Symons, *ibid.* See below, Chapter 5.

⁷³ PLB Official Circular No 22 Feb. 1849.

⁷⁴ Minute Book, Newport Union, 1851, cited in D.B. Hughes, 'The Education of Pauper Children in Monmouthshire 1834-1929', M.A. Thesis, Cardiff (1966), p.34.

⁷⁵ J.L. Alexander, 'Lord John Russell and the Origins of the Committee of Council on Education' in *The Historical Journal*, 20, 2 (1977), pp. 395-6. For a detailed consideration of the role of the CCE see D. Paz, *The Politics of Working Class Education in Britain 1830-50* (Manchester, 1980).

chiefly involved the supervision of any funds allocated for educational purposes, and of the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate. The Inspectors were to make recommendations and report to the CCE on both the quality of teaching and the state of Poor Law schools. The CCE would then forward these recommendations to the PLB. It was thus intended that the two departments should work together to effect improvements.

Relationships between the CCE, and the PLB deteriorated from the early 1850s. In retrospect it is clear that there were bound to be problems where two authorities were both responsible for elements of workhouse inspection. The Poor Law Inspector would make general comments on a workhouse school as part of an overall inspection, whereas the Schools Inspector's examination was more detailed and provided the basis upon which decisions were made concerning the Parliamentary Grant. The Schools Inspectors had to rely on the Poor Law authority's goodwill for admission to the schools and for general co-operation during their six monthly visits. For Inspectors from another authority to be responsible in some degree for financial incentives affecting the appointment of a workhouse officer - i.e. the teacher - was inevitably a sensitive issue for the PLB.

Lack of appropriate communication between the two departments brought problems for their Inspectors. Similarly, poor relationships between the Inspectorates had repercussions on the central authorities. In 1849 Poor Law Inspector Doyle criticised Schools Inspector Symons for his plans to establish District Schools in areas where the general feeling of the local Boards of Guardians was antagonistic. Doyle argued it was wrong that discussions should continue without reference to him as the Poor Law Inspector for the district. In an almost overt criticism of his own employers, the PLB, Doyle urged the Board to sort out the principles covering disputes of this nature with the CCE.⁷⁶ The long drawn out wrangle that ensued led to a deterioration in the relationship between the two departments. By 1850 letters between the PLB and the CCE were openly antagonistic. Statistical errors

⁷⁶ Poor Law Inspector Doyle to PLB. Mar. 3 1849, *Doyle's Correspondence* PRO MH 32/17.

by Symons in his 1849 Report were strongly refuted by Poor Law Inspectors Doyle, Graves and Hurst who received the support of the PLB.⁷⁷

In the next ten years relationships between the two authorities did not improve and by the time *The Royal Commission into the State of Popular Education* (Newcastle) reported in 1861 they had become polarised. The Newcastle Commissioners had presented a blistering attack in 1861 on poor facilities in workhouse schools.⁷⁸ Strong criticisms were voiced by the PLB because Schools Inspectors called to give evidence had pressed the case for District Schools at the expense of workhouse schools.⁷⁹ In a series of reports in 1862 the Poor Law Inspectors responded by strongly defending workhouse schools.⁸⁰

By 1863 any goodwill that had existed between the two authorities had virtually disappeared. From the surviving records it is difficult to ascertain whether the disagreements were the result of personality clashes or genuine disputes over policy. The CCE argued that without co-operation from the PLB the position of the Schools Inspectorate was untenable. Their solution was one of retreat. It was proposed that the Schools Inspectorate should be transferred to the PLB and that consequently all CCE responsibility for Poor Law Schools should end. At this point the atmosphere was such that correspondence almost ceased. A letter from the CCE to the PLB in July 1863 complained about the lack of communication and enquired whether Schools Inspectors Tufnell, Browne, and Bowyer were now under the authority of the PLB, as they were unsure and 'anxious to know'.⁸¹

⁷⁷ PLB to Lingen, Oct. 29 1850, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/14. See below, Chapter 4.

⁷⁸ Reports of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the State of Popular Education in England P.P. 1861 XXI (Newcastle Commission).

⁷⁹ Dr. Ross argues strongly that the Newcastle Commission deliberately ignored evidence from workhouse schools, Ross, *thesis op. cit.*, pp. 35-7.

⁸⁰ Reports of Poor Law Inspectors Weale, Walsham, Hawley. P.P. 1862.(510) XLIX Part I. See below, Chapter 8.

⁸¹ CCE to PLB, July 16 1863, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/14.

Correspondence between the two authorities resumed acrimoniously over the actual transference of the Inspectorate. In July Lingen wrote to the PLB:

I am directed by the CCE to state that very serious inconvenience is arising from the delay to complete the transfer of the inspection of Poor Law Schools from this office to the PLB pursuant to the Minute of 21st March 1863.

My Lords cannot issue the proper instructions to the Officers whose transfer is in question until they receive an answer to their letter of the 17th instant referring to former communications.

I have received their Lordships' special instructions to request that you will bring the subject under the notice of the President of the PLB.⁸²

When by December documents relating to the transfer had still not been accepted by the PLB, Lingen again complained, only to receive the reply:

I am directed by the PLB to acknowledge receipt ... and to state in reply that the space at this Office for the deposit of official papers is so very limited that they find it impracticable to receive the reports and papers in question. The Board understand, moreover, that the documents will rarely, if ever, be required by them for reference.⁸³

The transfer was eventually completed but not before the two central authorities responsible for the administration and progress of pauper education had been locked in a long and acrimonious dispute.

Despite the deteriorating relationship with the CCE over a period of ten years there is tangible evidence that attempts were made by the PLB to promote pauper education, particularly in the early 1850s. How far this was reflected in the implementation of the curriculum in Poor Law schools varied according to the influence of the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate and the priority that was given to education by individual Boards of Guardians .

⁸² CCE to PLB, July 23 1863, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/17.

⁸³ CCE to PLB, Dec. 23 1863, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/17.

CHAPTER THREE

SCHOOLING AND EXPERIENCE: THE POOR LAW CURRICULUM

1834 - 1880

1. The Pauper Child's Experience of Schooling

In commenting on the lack of research on the working class child's experience of school , Harold Silver included pauper schooling in his list of examples:

there is an absence of work on reactions to school experience, on the use of basic schooling by largely self-educated working men ... There are no published studies of possible varieties of educational experience in monitorial schools, in workhouse schools, factory schools, dame schools - and indeed all schools.¹

In part, the historian's choice of subject has been constrained by the type of historical sources which have survived and are available. Silver's own study of a National School, based on a rare complete set of school records, reflects the common use of parliamentary papers, inspectors' reports, the records of religious societies and school log books, rather than other sources such as first-hand working class testimony and the use of census material.²

In somewhat redressing the balance, David Vincent *et al's* three volume publication provides a comprehensive list of working class autobiographies but emphasises nevertheless the very limited number of accounts by former workhouse children, especially

¹ Harold Silver, *Education as History* (1983), p. 22.

² Harold and Pamela Silver, *The Education of the Poor .The History of a National School 1824-1974* (1974). For a study of working class schools run by the working class (and the methods used to recapture this neglected sector of educational provision) see Phil Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England* (1984).

pauper girls.³ In terms of their experience of education and training, they remain still virtually hidden from history, even by feminist historians reconstructing the experience of working class girls in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴

A few memoirs of life in Poor Law schools were published earlier this century but have received no detailed attention in any subsequent writing on pauper education.⁵ Although the accounts came from a cross-section of individuals, all the authors were men. The autobiographies reflected the unique experience of indoor pauper children in the latter part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These memoirs were written by both the famous and the unknown, including accounts from two men who became household names, Henry Morten Stanley and Charles Chaplin, and from working class politicians such as George Edwards and Will Crooks. Despite different life experiences each author recalled a similar experience of Poor Law schooling.

The dominant memory they portrayed was of physical cruelty, hard industrial labour and psychological deprivation. The physical cruelty meted out by school officials was starkly documented. However, severe discipline was common at all levels of the Victorian education system and Poor Law children probably suffered no more than other groups. Henry Morten Stanley's early experiences in the St Asaph Workhouse School in North Wales coincided with the establishment of the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate in 1847. Stanley's description of treatment at the hands of schoolmaster James Francis in no way fits the impression given of the teacher by Inspectors Symons and Doyle. Stanley remembered that:

³ David Vincent (et al.), *The Autobiography of the Working Class; an annotated critical bibliography*, Vol. I, 1700-1900, Vol. II, 1900-1945, (Brighton 1987).

⁴ June Purvis, "The Experience of Schooling for working class Boys and Girls in Nineteenth Century England 1800-1870", Len Barton and S. Walker (eds), *Defining the Curriculum: Histories and Ethnographies* (1984); Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (1981).

⁵ E.g. Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (1903, Facsimile edition, 1979); Dorothy Stanley (ed.), *Autobiography of Sir Henry Morten Stanley GCB* (1914); Frank Steel, *Ditcher's Row* (1939); A.E. Guest, *An Historical Sketch and Personal Reminiscences* (Swinton and Pendlebury Public Libraries, 1961); Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (Harmondsworth, 1964); George Edwards, *From Crow Scaring to Westminster*, (1922).

Day after day little wretches would be flung down on the stone floor in writhing heaps, or stood, with blinking eyes and humped backs, to receive the shock of the ebony ruler, or were sent pirouetting across the school from a ruffianly kick while the rest suffered from a sympathetic terror during such exhibitions, for none knew what moment he might be called to endure the like.⁶

By comparison, Schools Inspector Symons included James Francis in a list of teachers who had 'distinguished' themselves through their 'capacity and zeal' and Poor Law Inspector Doyle commented that the children at St Asaph's were 'well instructed'.⁷

Charles Chaplin's and E. Balne's lasting memory of the school at Hanwell was of boys receiving weekly beatings - strapped by the legs to a table and held down by the drill master, known as the 'sergeant'.⁸

The spectacle was terrifying and invariably a boy would fall out of rank and faint ... the strokes were paralysing, so that the victim had to be carried on one side and laid on a gymnasium mattress where he was left to writhe and wriggle.⁹

Charles Shaw also included vivid recollections of brutality imposed by a 'militant and menacing' schoolmaster.¹⁰ Although Frank Steel did not depict as cruel a view of schoolteachers as that portrayed by Stanley, Chaplin, Balne or Shaw, he nonetheless recalled being beaten regularly with a strap.¹¹

The rigours of hard industrial labour also feature prominently in the memoirs. In 1850, James Francis introduced 'spade labour', or digging, at St Asaph's to replace the

⁶ Dorothy Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁷ Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report 1850, Schools Inspectors Correspondence*, P.P. 1850, XLIII, p. 229; Poor Law Inspector Doyle, *Correspondence 1848-52*, PRO MH 32/17;

⁸ Charles Chaplin, *op. cit.*, E. Balne, 'Autobiography of an ex-Workhouse and Poor Law Schoolboy', (unpublished 1972).

⁹ Chaplin., p. 23.

¹⁰ Charles Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹¹ Frank Steel, *Ditcher's Row* (1939), p.127.

traditional oakum picking. This impressed Symons who recommended an increase in Francis' salary.¹² However Stanley remembered:

... sweeping the playgrounds with brooms more suited to giants than little children, the washing of slated floors when one was stiff from caning, the hoeing of the frostbound ground, ...in these and scores of other ways our treatment was ferocious and stupid.¹³

A.E. Guest recalled that at Swinton he was required from the age of seven to clean out stables, feed pigs and peel potatoes.¹⁴ Other boys spent hours 'tailoring or shoemaking' which even in the 1890s remained a staple part of the curriculum.¹⁵

While discipline, punishment and the dreary daily routine dominate their accounts of workhouse education, few former inmates recall school lessons. Teaching and learning were clearly of less significance to the pauper child than physical wellbeing. A visitor, John Buckley, who went to a large Poor Law school in the 1860s was similarly more concerned about the poor physical conditions than with the lack of an efficient education.¹⁶ Both Guest and Balne made brief references to an 'academic training' which differed little from the curriculum of the 1840s - reading, writing, arithmetic, with some geography and history.¹⁷ Stanley recalled the emphasis on rote learning and being compelled in the evenings 'to commit whole pages to memory' after working for hours in the garden.¹⁸ Charles Shaw graphically described how less able children received harsh treatment with 'nothing but blows' from unsympathetic schoolmasters.¹⁹

¹² James Francis to Andrew Doyle, Doyle Correspondence, 1850, PRO MH 32/17; Symons, *Report on St Asaph's School*, Nov 25 1850, *op cit.*

¹³ Dorothy Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁴ Guest, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶ John Buckley, *A Village Politician: The Life story of John Buckley*, (1897), p. 250.

¹⁷ Balne, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Guest, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Dorothy Stanley, *op cit.*, p.15.

¹⁹ Charles Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

Any physical cruelties endured were however less pervasive than the psychological deprivation. This aspect of life in Poor Law institutions is now recognised as the chief abuse of the workhouse system and is borne out by these memoirs.²⁰

The shock of being thrust into a Poor Law School environment was compounded by the separation from parents, brothers and sisters. Agricultural trade union leader and Labour M.P. George Edwards recalled how on entering the workhouse at the age of five he was not permitted to remain with his mother.²¹ Chaplin and his brother Sydney were transferred from Lambeth Workhouse to the Central Metropolitan District School at Hanwell and then separated.²² Will Crooks described his removal from his brothers and sisters as the 'worst part' of his Poor Law school experience.²³ His biographer, George Haw, recounted Crooks' futile search for his brother. He was 'never to set eyes on him' again until the day they went home.²⁴ The ensuing monotony and lack of stimulation had a stultifying psychological effect on Crooks who reminded the Departmental Enquiry into large Metropolitan Poor Law Schools in 1896 of the numbing effect of hours spent on Sundays with nothing to do.²⁵ Crooks was clearly still so affected by the experience as to doubt whether his evidence was 'worth anything'.²⁶ Yet he had since spent years working to improve conditions for children similar to himself and recognised the importance of firsthand testimony such as his. William Sanders, a working man who grew up in a

²⁰ Ursula Henriques, 'How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XI, 1968. Anthony Brundage, *The Making of the New Poor Law*, *op. cit.*, Anne Digby, *British Welfare Policy. From Workhouse to Welfare*. (1989); M.A.Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929* (1981).

²¹ George Edwards, *From Crow Scaring to Westminster* (1922), p. 22. Edwards left the workhouse a year later, was put to 'scaring crows' and appears to have received no formal education, *ibid.*, p. 23.

²² Chaplin, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

²³ Evidence of Will Crooks, 1896 Departmental Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 494.

²⁴ George Haw, *From Workhouse to Westminster. The Life Story of Will Crooks M.P.* (1907), p. 104.

²⁵ Evidence of Will Crooks, *op. cit.*, p. 494. A graphic description of the listlessness of workhouse children and their inability to play was given by Frances Power Cobbe in 1861, Frances Power Cobbe, 'Workhouse Sketches', *Macmillan's Magazine* Vol. III (1861).

²⁶ Evidence of Will Crooks, *Departmental Committee ... 'enquiry into the system for the maintenance and education of children in Metropolitan District Schools*, P.P. 1896 XLIII, p. 491.

workhouse school, knew it was pointless to inform the "gentlemen", i.e. the Board of Guardians, about poor conditions as no notice was ever taken of children's complaints.²⁷

This stigmatisation of the pauper child throughout nearly a century of Poor Law administration was aptly expressed by Balne in the final words of his memoir:

... it was when scoring for the Hanwell team.. at an away game that I first became conscious of my lowly status in society ... I was considered to be a member of the lowest form of human creation I have never fully recovered... it left a feeling of a deep and profound inferiority complex which generally has overshadowed everything I have tried to accomplish over the years.²⁸

Evidence from Schools Inspector Tufnell in 1873 points to a different conclusion. In a unceasing attempt to promote District Schools Tufnell included letters from children who were successful in later life and remembered their schooling with gratitude. The accounts described life at Forest Gate District School, the South Metropolitan District School and the North Surrey District School, which were included in Tufnell's Metropolitan inspection region. All were in a similar vein :

If it had not been for the kind friendly hands that led my childhood's erring heart in that straightforward path in your orphan home, I almost dread to think what, without friends or home, I might have been at this hour. May the Almighty Father bless and prosper the kind masters, teachers, and patrons of loved old Forest Gate.²⁹

In view of the other evidence, together with Tufnell's obsessive belief in the District School system, it is difficult to view these accounts as representative of the average pauper child's experience of schooling.

²⁷ William Sanders, "A Workhouse Waif", *Temple Bar*, Feb. 1866, p. 420.

²⁸ Balne, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

²⁹ Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report 1873-74*, P.P. 1874 XXV, p.246.

By the end of the century both poor and pauper children were beginning to be perceived as pathetic rather than criminally dangerous or 'infected' by hereditary pauperism.³⁰ However the child's experience of schooling never became a priority for Poor Law administrators. The central requirement of the PLAA was to produce young adults who had acquired diligent habits and sufficient skills to keep them out of pauperism and ensure their future employment and there was no attempt to provide emotional support. This philosophy prevailed in the schools throughout the century despite the slowly changing attitudes of society.

2 Kay Shuttleworth and Boys' Industrial Training

The curriculum in Poor Law Schools evolved from central Poor Law policy directives after 1834 and from the views and opinions of Poor Law administrators and officials, most notably the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate.

The most important work on the pauper curriculum originated from James Kay Shuttleworth. As Secretary to the CCE from 1839-1849, Kay Shuttleworth established a position as the pre-eminent figure in popular education and social reform during the formative years of development in working class education. W. E. Forster, in his introduction to the Elementary Education Act in 1870, referred to Kay Shuttleworth as:

a man to whom probably more than any other we owe national education in England.³¹

³⁰ Martin J. Wiener, *Reconstructing the criminal: Culture, law and policy 1914* (1990), pp. 197-201.

³¹ Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, Vol. CXCIX Feb. 17 1870.

in England, 1830-

Since then, historians have continued to portray him in a similar vein - as the founding father and pioneer of popular education.³² Frank Smith's two celebrated studies, although published in 1923 and 1931, remain the principal secondary sources for understanding Kay Shuttleworth's contribution to elementary education.³³ Smith's portrait firmly established Kay Shuttleworth's predominant role in key developments - such as the creation of the CCE in 1839, the Factory Bill of 1843, and the 1846 *Minutes* which introduced a national system of teacher training.³⁴ Richard Johnson tends to this view and stresses the strong influence Kay Shuttleworth had over Home Secretary Russell in the late 1830s.³⁵ More recently studies have depicted Kay Shuttleworth as the servant rather than the master of the CCE.³⁶ Paz asserts that the politicians at the head of the education department had far more experience than Kay Shuttleworth who was at that time a young Assistant Poor Law Commissioner'.³⁷ A forthcoming biography by Richard Selleck is also likely to adopt this approach.³⁸

In the development of *pauper* education Kay Shuttleworth was the administrator who also provided the ideas. Despite reappraisals over his influence in popular education, Kay Shuttleworth's report on *The Training of Pauper Children* remains a seminal document for the study of the curriculum in Poor Law Schools yet has received no detailed analysis, in any published or unpublished.

The Training of Pauper Children was produced in 1838 at the request of Edwin Chadwick, three years after Kay Shuttleworth was appointed as an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner

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- 32 Hugh Pollard, *Pioneers of Popular Education* (1956), pp. 214-7. W. A. Stewart, *Progressives and Radicals in English Education 1750-1970* (1972), p. 85.
 - 33 Frank Smith, *The Life and Work of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth* (1923), *A History of Elementary Education 1760-1902* (1931).
 - 34 Smith, *A History of Elementary Education*, *op. cit.*
 - 35 Johnson, thesis, *op. cit.*, p.55.
 - 36 Nancy Ball, *Her Majesty's Inspectorate*, (1973); D.G.Paz, *The Politics of working-class Education in Britain 1830-1850*, *op. cit.*
 - 37 D.G.Paz, 'Working-Class Education and the State, 1839-1849: The Sources of Government Policy', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol XVI No1 Fall 1976.
 - 38 Richard Selleck, 'Kay Shuttleworth and the Manchester Statistical Society', Seminar Paper, Institute of Historical Research, Feb. 18 1988.

in East Anglia.³⁹ It was subsequently included in the Fourth Annual Report of the PLC and reprinted several times.⁴⁰ As Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, Kay Shuttleworth was the driving force behind the development of workhouse education in both Norfolk and Suffolk.⁴¹ His experiences in East Anglia led to proposals for the establishment of large District Schools for pauper children throughout England and Wales. Frank Smith and A.V. Judges have attributed the District School scheme directly to Kay Shuttleworth.⁴² More recently, Francis Duke asserted that Kay Shuttleworth showed little interest in education before 1838 and was more concerned with labour migration and medical clubs.⁴³ This point should not be overemphasised: Kay Shuttleworth was the only Assistant Commissioner who made any references to education in his correspondence with the Central Poor Law authority between 1834 and 1836.⁴⁴

There has, however, been a reappraisal of Kay Shuttleworth's educational philosophy which challenges Smith's view that Kay Shuttleworth simply saw education as a cure for social evils.⁴⁵ Recent scholarship suggests Kay Shuttleworth's immediate goal was the preservation of social order in which education was to be an instrument of class control.⁴⁶ Evidence for this can be found in *The Training of Pauper Children* which was the first attempt to combine the theory and practice of pauper education. Kay Shuttleworth emphasised that it was the maintenance of social order that was the key requirement. There was no trace of sentimentality in Kay Shuttleworth's approach.⁴⁷ He was anxious to protect the *status quo* by cutting the cost of pauperism and counteracting any signs of

³⁹ S. E. Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick*, op cit., p. 152.

⁴⁰ Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, P.P. 1837-8 XXVIII; James Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, op. cit., 1839

⁴¹ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces* (1978), p. 184.

⁴² Frank Smith, op. cit., A.V. Judges, *Pioneers of English Education* (1952).

⁴³ Francis Duke, *Thesis*, op. cit. D. G. Paz, *The Politics of working-class Education in Britain*, op cit p. 56

⁴⁴ See Correspondence of Assistant Commissioners Kay, Neave, Parker, Mott, 1834-36, PRO MH 33/4; Twistleton, Voules, Wade, 1834-6, PRO MH 33/6.

⁴⁵ Frank Smith, *A History of Elementary Education*, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in early Victorian England', *Past and Present*, Vol. XLIX, Nov. 1970. Brian Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870* (1974), p. 168.

⁴⁷ Severity also dominated Kay Shuttleworth's relationships with his family and his colleagues, D. G. Paz, 'The Man Behind the Myth', op cit. .

insurrection among the labouring classes. Good standards of education were necessary to effect the eventual elimination of pauperism, but Kay Shuttleworth was not concerned with the welfare of pauper children *per se* but with the pauper child's educational deficiency. This had to be rectified if children were to be raised from pauperism.⁴⁸ Kay Shuttleworth gave a pragmatic account of the low standard of education prevailing among the labouring classes. He insisted that this poor national standard should not be taken as a guideline for the future development of pauper education.⁴⁹

To support his case, Kay Shuttleworth drew upon his earlier experiences as a medical doctor in Manchester, and an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in East Anglia where he began to recognise the vital importance of education in the process of depauperisation.⁵⁰ Kay Shuttleworth contended that the educational standard of the indoor pauper child remained low, even after the introduction of the New Poor Law. Out of 903 children in Norfolk and Suffolk workhouses between the ages of 9 and 16, only 379 could 'read well', and 473 'could not write' at all.⁵¹

Kay Shuttleworth set out in detail the industrial training he considered to be essential in any remedial scheme. He interpreted and expanded the minimum requirement, expressed in the First Annual Report of the PLC, that children should be trained to 'habits of usefulness, industry and virtue'.⁵² Kay Shuttleworth's aim was to depauperise children so that 'their future dependence on the ratepayers (would be) improbable'.⁵³ The 'District School of Industry' for 500 children he recommended for Norfolk and Suffolk was a model that was universally applicable.⁵⁴ Every minute of a child's day would be spent acquiring suitable

⁴⁸ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op. cit.* See above.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, See below, Chapter 1.

⁵⁰ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes of Manchester in 1832* (1832); *Report on the Training of Pauper Children*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² First Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1835 XXXV, Appendix A No 9 Section XVIII.

⁵³ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

mental and industrial skills, chiefly through industrial labour.⁵⁵ Kay Shuttleworth was critical of current training which had failed to habituate children to 'patient and skilful industry'.⁵⁶

It was the training of boys that was uppermost in Kay Shuttleworth's thinking; girls' industrial training was to be wholly concerned with domestic activities and was seen in narrower terms.

The great object ... is the rearing of hardy and intelligent working men, whose character and habits shall afford the largest amount of security to the prosperity and order of the community.⁵⁷

Kay Shuttleworth was seeking industrial rather than vocational training and did not advocate preparing 'children for some particular trade or art'.⁵⁸ His intention was broader - to enable the children to acquire basic manual skills which would result in universal employability.⁵⁹

Much of the training advocated by Kay Shuttleworth was directly linked to the land, initially concentrating on the cultivation of gardens. Each District School would be surrounded by a garden of 6-10 acres which the children would tend. He drew upon his experiences abroad, particularly from De Fellenberg's institution in Switzerland.⁶⁰ De Fellenburg's ideas were later adopted by the Children's Friend Society at Hackney Wick and Ealing Grove.⁶¹ Kay Shuttleworth particularly commended the notion that as well as working for the school community, each boy should have his own strip of land. Diligent boys would be paid and then allowed time to work their own plots, for which they would

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*

59 Letter containing Instructions to the Inspectors of Poor Law Schools, Minutes CCE, P.P. 1847-8 L.

60 Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

61 *Ibid.*

pay rent and buy seeds. Any profit gained would belong to the boys. Accounts were to be punctiliously kept; Kay Shuttleworth cited a boy at Ealing Grove who had managed to make an annual profit of £1.18s.10d.⁶²

These solutions for depauperisation were intended to persuade Poor Law Commissioners and Guardians alike that much could be achieved at a simple practical level. The essential factors were detailed planning and organisation. A regular and taxing school routine was seen as a necessary component for success. Industrial training should be undertaken in the mornings, an appropriate time for boys' agricultural work and girls' domestic service. Far more variety was evident in the routine proposed for boys than for girls:

In weather suitable for outdoor employment, the boys ... proceed to the garden, where they are employed under the instruction of the schoolmaster. At other seasons useful indoor employment (such as making baskets, carpentering, shoe making, tailoring, whitewashing, and repairing the premises) is pursued...an effort is made to mend and make all the boys' clothes and shoes ...the girls ventilate the bedrooms, make the beds, scour the floors, clean the dining hall. Certain of the older girls are employed in the wash-house and laundry, or in the kitchen. ⁶³

Kay Shuttleworth did not envisage that activities should be exclusively agricultural. Some aspects of labouring tasks for boys were applicable to both rural and town children. At Hackney Wick he observed children erecting a new building and learning how 'to make mortar...set a brick, saw and plane a piece of wood'. These skills would be useful to them when repairing their own cottages or making a bench.⁶⁴

Kay Shuttleworth's emphasis on the importance of a broad industrial training was recognised by the CCE in their Instructions to the Poor Law Schools' Inspectors in 1848.

⁶² *Ibid*, p.19.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

A child should not for misfortune be condemned to some mean mechanical drudgery, such as sorting hair or bristles, or picking oakum; such work... does nothing .. to prepare him for after-life. For indoor employment in towns and for winter work in the country, coopering, basket-making, tinman's and blacksmith's work, carpentry and printing, are preferable to tailoring and shoemaking, which are now commonly resorted to, because more easily taught, and of more immediate use in the establishment.⁶⁵

It was in the implementation of Kay Shuttleworth's ideas that problems arose. His plans were intended for large institutional rural schools, catering for 400-500 children. However of the few District Schools that were established, only three were in rural communities.

The one that came nearest to implementing Kay Shuttleworth's curriculum was in Shropshire. It began as the Quatt Workhouse School for Bridgnorth Union and later developed into the South East Shropshire District School.⁶⁶ In 1849, just prior to its establishment as a District School, a short *Memoir* was published describing how the agricultural activities at Quatt were organised. Written by Wolryche Whitmore, Chairman of the Bridgnorth Board of Guardians, it revealed that the school had developed along the lines proposed by Kay Shuttleworth.⁶⁷ Whitmore emphasised that although elementary schools sought to equip boys with the requisite skills for independent work, the emphasis on industrial training was far more essential for pauper boys as:

'Health of body, habits of labour, moral training, knowledge of gardening and the removal of a sense of inferiority and degradation - are blessings of incalculable amount'.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools for Pauper Children in England and Wales, Minutes CCE Feb. 5 1847, P.P. 1847-8 L, p.vii.

⁶⁶ See below, Chapter 5, Section 3.2.

⁶⁷ William Wolryche Whitmore, *A Memoir Relating to the Industrial School at Quatt. Addressed to the ratepayers of the South East Shropshire District School* (Bridgnorth 1849), pp. 33-4, SRO 5018. See below, Chapter 5, Section 3.2.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

The regime at Quatt reflected some of the industrial opportunities that Kay Shuttleworth was seeking. The children did not just learn to dig, but acquired a general understanding of the nature of agriculture.⁶⁹

The South East Shropshire District school was one of the few Poor Law Schools that concentrated primarily on agricultural pursuits or made any valid attempt to teach a broad range of skills. Whitmore agreed with Kay Shuttleworth that children should not be trained for specific trades. However Whitmore's concern was not to 'over stock' any particular trade and so differed from Kay Shuttleworth's broader aim of producing a self-sufficient labourer.⁷⁰

There was more scope for the development of industrial training at District or large separate schools where a greater number of children led to more specific staffing. A number of different trades were represented in the occupations of the fourteen Industrial Trainers at Kirkdale Industrial School in Liverpool. However these trades had more to do with running a large establishment than training for future employment:

3 Shoemakers	1 Bandmaster
1 Tailor	1 Engineer
1 Joiner	1 Plumber
1 Gardener	1 Blacksmith
1 Baker	1 Sewing Mistress
1 Drillmaster	1 Laundress ⁷¹

In the smaller schools training that could loosely be termed 'agricultural' was attempted but there was far less variety. Work was often 'spade labour' - digging, hoeing and weeding the few acres of ground that might surround a workhouse. Symons reported an increase

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ T. O'Brien, *The Education and Care of Workhouse Children in some Lancashire Poor Law Unions 1834-1930*, M.Ed. *thesis*, Lancashire. (1975), p. 284.

in 'spade work' in 1849 with the proportion of boys so employed having risen from 12% to 22% in a year.⁷² Eulogies about the benefits of spade husbandry are to be found in union records and in Inspectors' reports. 'Digging' was taught to pauper children:

... so that they may labour truly to get their own living and to do their duty in that state of life into which it shall please God to call them.⁷³

By 1859 Schools Inspector Ruddock reported that in the southern district it was common for land to be 'rented for especial instruction of children and agricultural superintendents engaged'.⁷⁴

However, despite the cultivation of land around workhouses, the dominant occupations were commonly those regarded by Kay Shuttleworth as the least useful for future depauperisation. In a list of Industrial Teachers employed in District and Workhouse Schools in 1853, teachers employed for 'Spade Husbandry', 'Gardening' and 'Agricultural Management' were ranked numerically below those employed for 'tailoring' and 'shoemaking'.⁷⁵

There were a few attempts, however, to introduce other forms of agricultural training. In the Somerset Unions of Taunton, Frome, Axbridge and Bath there was some successful pig-rearing, although most of the Guardians were more concerned with making a profit than with depauperising.⁷⁶ A few unions purchased agricultural or gardening books, but this was not the purposeful long term training Kay Shuttleworth had envisaged.⁷⁷ In the smaller schools it was difficult to eradicate the inherent tendency to involve children in

⁷² Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report* 1849, *Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1849 XLII.

⁷³ Symons, *General Report* 1849, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-5. Francis Duke states that 'metaphysical qualities' were attached to spade husbandry 'as a form of moral training', Francis Duke, 'Pauper Education', *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁷⁴ Ruddock, *General Report* 1849, *Minutes CCE* P.P.1849 XLII.

⁷⁵ List of Industrial Teachers Employed in District or Workhouse Schools, 1853, *Minutes CCE*, 1854, PRO MH 19/15.

⁷⁶ Taunton Union Guardians' Minute Book 12, p.144, cited in Baker, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁷⁷ At Walsingham in Norfolk the Guardians were directed to obtain 50 copies of a pamphlet entitled *Industrial Schools for the Peasantry*, Walsingham Guardians Minutes Book, Oct. 4 1837, Norfolk Record Office.

useless pursuits such as bristle sorting and oakum picking and to replace these activities with work that was generally more beneficial and less demeaning.

Despite the work of Kay Shuttleworth there was little guidance from the central authority respecting industrial training. The Webbs maintained that there 'was not much pretence of technical instruction in the earlier Orders'.⁷⁸ Few circulars were issued by the PLB on any aspect of education, and in 1850 the PLB admitted there was a lack of definition over the duties of industrial trainers. Their solution was to pass responsibility for monitoring industrial education to the Schools Inspectors but little guidance was provided other than to urge the Inspectors to ensure that children were given 'satisfactory' instruction.⁷⁹

Most of the Schools and Poor Law Inspectors were critical of the industrial training they witnessed in the schools. Training for specific trades took precedence over broader skills. Boys were frequently taught tailoring and shoemaking - trades that were over-subscribed outside the workhouse but had economic and utilitarian relevance within it. Bowyer criticised the industrial training at Nottingham in 1848 where 40 boys learned shoemaking and tailoring.⁸⁰

Some areas did not achieve even this level of training. In the Hull City workhouse in 1843 the only industrial training was that which facilitated the daily maintenance of the 'House'.⁸¹ The situation elsewhere in the North of England was similar. In the York Workhouse the only industrial occupation by 1847 was the picking of 'cocoa and fibre'.⁸²

⁷⁸ S. and B. Webb, *Poor Law Policy* (1910), p. 193, n. 1.

The Webbs used the term 'children' although they clearly referred to boys only.

⁷⁹ PLB Circular, March 12 1867, Appendix 2, cited in R.A. Leach, *Pauper Children and Their Education and Training* (1890), p. 44.

⁸⁰ Cited in David Wardle, *Education and Society in Nineteenth Century Nottingham* (Nottingham 1971), p. 81. In 1891 Poor Law Guardian Albert Pell was still stressing the benefits of learning tailoring and shoemaking, Albert Pell, *Reports of the North Western District Poor Law Conference*, 1891, p. 380.

⁸¹ Poor Law Inspector Clements, *Ninth Report PLC*, Appendix A, No. 2, cited in M.E. Groke, 'The Care and Education of Children in Hull Poor Law Schools 1834-1861', M.Ed. thesis, Manchester (1975), p. 212.

⁸² Poor Law Inspector Hawley to the PLC, March 5 1847, cited in R.P. Hastings, 'Poverty and the Treatment of the Poor in the North Riding of Yorkshire 1780-1847'. Ph D thesis, York (1973).

Henry Farnall, Poor Law Inspector for the North of England, recorded that in the 19 unions in his district, eight taught shoemaking, seven tailoring, two baking and one carpentry but that these figures covered only 10 of the 19 unions, as five of these unions each taught shoemaking, tailoring and baking.⁸³ The situation in Cumberland was little better. Although most unions had several acres of land on which boys worked, minimal training was provided.⁸⁴ Even in 1867 Poor Law Inspector Hurst reported 21 unions with no 'bonafide' (sic) instructions.⁸⁵

Symons criticised unions in the West of England in the 1840s where although Guardians were required to provide industrial training it was frequently the most neglected aspect of the curriculum.⁸⁶ It was often difficult for Guardians to accept that traditional workhouse occupations did not provide the skills that were needed to gain employment.

There was, however, a discernible trend towards the improvement of agricultural training by the 1860s. Schools Inspector Ruddock reported progress in the South West with more boys - up to a quarter - under the paid supervision of an Industrial Instructor. Ruddock regarded 25% as a significant improvement which indicated how low the previous percentage must have been.⁸⁷ More advances were made in the Eastern and Midland region where the influence of Kay Shuttleworth was greatest. Schools Inspector Bowyer commented in 1857 that nearly half the Eastern and Midland Unions had acquired land for boys to cultivate vegetables.⁸⁸

⁸³ Poor Law Inspector Henry Farnall, *Third Report PLB*, P.P. 1851 XLIX.

⁸⁴ Purdy, *thesis, op cit.*

⁸⁵ Poor Law Inspector Hurst to the PLB, March 10 1851, PRO MH 32/47.

⁸⁶ Cited in Rev. C. Richson, *Pauper Education Its Provisions and Defects with Certain Objections to its Extension* (1850).

⁸⁷ Ruddock, *General Report 1860, Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1860 LIV, p. 527.

⁸⁸ Bowyer, *General Report 1857, Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1857 XXXIII, Appendix A, p. 122.

The emphasis that was placed on improving the training of boys resulted in girls being generally neglected. Yet girls were exploited even more than boys in the utilisation of their labour to run Poor Law institutions.

3. A Gender Specific Curriculum: Industrial Training for Pauper Girls.

'The destination of females in life is much more easily foreseen than that of the other sex'.⁸⁹

The extent to which Victorian middle class ideology influenced the education of girls has only recently been addressed.⁹⁰ The working class girl was doubly disadvantaged by both gender and social class. Firstly, her choices were limited by the fact that she was a member of the labouring classes and was only allowed access to a minimal level of education. Secondly, as a female, her parameters were further restricted by the expectations of a dominant male ideology. Girls spent less time at school than boys - leaving earlier to go into domestic employment, within their homes or elsewhere. School attendance was also affected by days spent at home on household chores.⁹¹ At all levels of Victorian society, across class divisions, the woman was based in the home, either as homemaker or domestic servant.⁹²

Recent feminist writers have attempted to analyse the educational experience of working girls in the nineteenth century.⁹³ The sexual division of labour was very clear. The man

⁸⁹ Anonymous, 'Female Education', *The Quarterly Journal of Education*, Vol. VIII 1834 p. 216.

⁹⁰ There has been a growth in recent feminist literature: E.g. articles in Sara Delamont, Lorna Duffin (eds.), *The Nineteenth Century Woman* (1975); Ivor Goodson, S. Ball (eds) *Defining the Curriculum: Histories and Ethnographies*, (1984); Len Barton, S. Walker (eds) *Schools, Teachers and Teaching* (1981); June Purvis, *Hard Lessons* (1989).

⁹¹ See especially June Purvis, 'The Double Burden of Class and Gender in the Schooling of Working-Class Girls in Nineteenth Century England, 1800-1870', in Len Barton, S. Walker, *ibid.*

⁹² Purvis, *ibid.* Within the Poor Law the first woman Guardian was not appointed until 1875, Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect* (1987), p. 207.

⁹³ June Purvis, 'The Double Burden of Class and Gender, *op cit.*, and *idem.*, "Women's life is essentially domestic, public life being confined to men" (Comte): Separate Spheres and Inequality in the Education of Working Class Women, 1854-1900', *History of Education*, 1981, Vol. 10 No 4; 'The Experience of Schooling for Working Class Boys and Girls in Nineteenth Century England' (1989), Ivor Goodson, S. Ball (ed.), *Defining the Curriculum: Histories and Ethnographies* (1984); *Hard Lessons: The Lives and Education of Working Class Women in Nineteenth Century England* (1989). Carol Dyhouse, 'Social Darwinistic ideas and the

was the external wage earner, the woman the homemaker and 'guardian of the hearth' - physically, morally and spiritually.⁹⁴ This concept of 'separate spheres' for men and women was espoused by the middle classes.⁹⁵

The rationale for the domestic ideology that developed in girls' elementary education from the early decades of the nineteenth century was that future poverty could be averted if girls were taught prudent housewifery from an early age.⁹⁶ In most nineteenth century elementary schools, the curriculum differed with girls being taught domestic subjects and boys a variety of trade skills.⁹⁷ This is not to suggest that boys were never taught domestic skills: knitting was occasionally taught to both girls and boys in Dame Schools.⁹⁸

The extent to which a differentiated curriculum was provided for children under the Poor Law remains largely unresearched. Brian Simon, the Marxist historian makes no reference to the Poor Law curriculum in his volume on the history of nineteenth century education.⁹⁹ John Hurt, who devoted two chapters to pauper schooling in his recent history of special education, has only a minimal discussion of the Poor Law curriculum and only one paragraph on the training of pauper girls.¹⁰⁰ Francis Duke and Anne Digby give details of

Development of women's education in England, 1880-1920', *History of Education*, 1976, Vol. 5. No 1; and *idem*, 'Good Wives and Little Mothers: Social Anxieties and the Schoolgirl's Curriculum, 1890-1920', *Oxford Review of Education*, VI. 3, No. 1 1977; and *idem*, 'Towards a "Feminine" Curriculum for English Schoolgirls: The Demands of Ideology 1870-1963', *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 1978, Vol. 1. Sara Delamont, 'The Domestic Ideology and Women's Education', Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin (eds), *The Nineteenth Century Woman* (1975).

94 Carol Dyhouse, 'Towards a "Feminine" Curriculum ...', *op. cit.*

95 *Ibid.*

96 *Ibid.* June Purvis, 'The Experience of Schooling ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.

97 The existence of the differentiated curriculum is denied by Sara Delamont, but accepted by most other feminist historians, Sara Delamont, *The Domestic Ideology and Women's Education*, *op. cit.*

98 E.g. Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (1903, Reprint 1977), p. 3; Mary Paley Marshall, *What I Remember* (Cambridge 1947), p. 2. In 1880 J Mouatt stated that boys should also be taught to cook in order to help run the 'poor man's home' more efficiently, J.Mouatt, 'On the Education and Training of the Children of the Poor', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol XLIII, 1880, p.222.

99 Brian Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870*, (1974).

100 John Hurt, *Outside the Main Stream: a history of special education*, (1988).

the mental and industrial training provided for both girls and boys but do not specifically address gender issues.¹⁰¹

June Purvis has provided a useful organising concept in the 'double burden' of class and gender experienced by working class girls.¹⁰² Pauper girls also suffered from the further indignity of pauperism. Recent feminist writing on working-class girls' education is almost totally devoid of references to Poor Law Schools. June Purvis has one footnote on Quatt School in Shropshire but makes no reference to the fact that Quatt was a school for Poor Law, rather than just working class children.¹⁰³ No-one has specifically examined the differentiated curriculum provided for pauper girls.

For pauper girls, even more than other working class girls, future prospects were limited to a life of domestic drudgery. The most that could be expected was a minimal level of training as domestic servants. From 1835 all pauper girls housed in workhouses or larger Poor Law institutions were expected under the terms of the PLAA to be given some form of industrial training.¹⁰⁴ There was a continuing acceptance, however, that their mental training would be inferior to boys:

'... as the girls assist in the housework their education is not equal to the boys'.¹⁰⁵

Improved instruction in domestic training for pauper girls would 'contribute...to the happiness of the poorer classes' and, more pertinently, please the upper and middle classes by reducing levels of pauperism.¹⁰⁶ At Bath, The Reverend Elwin, complained that there was insufficient housework to occupy all the girls adequately.¹⁰⁷ There is no indication

¹⁰¹ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, (1978); Francis Duke, 'Pauper Education', *op cit*.

¹⁰² June Purvis, 'The Double Burden of Class and Gender ...', *op. cit*.

¹⁰³ June Purvis, *ibid.*, p. 104, n. 54.

¹⁰⁴ First Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1835, XXXV Appendix A No 9, Section XVIII.

¹⁰⁵ Ninth Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1843 XXI, Appendix A No 2, p. 328.

¹⁰⁶ Evidence of Kay Shuttleworth to the Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes in England and Wales, P.P. 1837-8 VII, para. 173.

¹⁰⁷ Reverend Whitwell Elwin to Edwin Chadwick, Nov. 13 1841, *Chadwick Papers*, Item 694/37.

that he considered giving training rather than merely utilizing the girls to do the workhouse chores. Using girls in this way was later endorsed and encouraged by the CCE as a means of providing 'constant and appropriate domestic training'.¹⁰⁸ The workload of those girls 'lucky' enough to be employed in the Bath workhouse school was extremely heavy:

We have about seventy working girls in our school. Six of these can do the whole washing and and three all the scrubbing of their department - while the same girls and less, are able to light the fire, prepare the meals, and execute all the other incidental occupations of their situations. This does not therefore afford one Day's labour in the week to each member in the establishment.¹⁰⁹

As the century progressed it was clear that the training given to pauper girls in large Separate or District Poor Law Schools was more varied than that provided in either workhouse, or ordinary elementary, schools. In 1852 the South East Shropshire District School provided 'House and Dairy work', washing, baking, sewing and knitting for sixty-five girls.¹¹⁰

It was only in the large Poor Law Schools that such facilities were available and the number of pauper girls that benefited was correspondingly small. The work was directly linked to the daily management of schools and was considered a suitable training for future employment. The Fifth Annual Report of the PLC used Kay Shuttleworth's account of Norwood School as a guideline for the training of pauper girls in other institutions.

'... girls are employed ... in scouring the floors, making the beds, and waiting upon the teachers; in washing, ironing and mangling the clothes of the establishment, in knitting and in sewing and in marking linen. The special instruction of their school renders them acquainted with the duties of a maid of all work, a dairy maid, a lady's maid, a nurse, and with the household economy of a

¹⁰⁸ Mins CCE 1848-1850, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁹ Reverend Elwin, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ Henry Garland to PLB, March 1849, Bridgnorth Union Correspondence, PRO MH 12 9853. Evidence of William Wolryche Whitmore, *Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children*, 1852-3 P.P. XXIII, Vol. 2, Q.2938 For Whitmore and Quatt see below, Chapter 6.

labourer's family. Their attention is directed to the duties and rewards of females generally in humble stations of life'.¹¹¹

In smaller schools there was even less variety. Most workhouses girls' industrial training was reduced to cleaning floors, washing and mending workhouse clothing. Girls occasionally helped in workhouse kitchens but their labours were menial and rarely involved any cookery. In 1853 there was not a single cookery instructor employed in any District or Workhouse School in England and Wales.¹¹² Workhouse cooking was, by definition, limited by the nature of frugal workhouse diets. The Central London and North Surrey District Schools, where small amounts of food were brought in to help girls learn the rudiments of cookery, were exceptions.¹¹³

The situation was similar in elementary schools. In his evidence to Slaney's Select Committee in 1838 on the education of the poorer classes, Kay Shuttleworth highlighted the lack of essential basic training, noting that cookery was in particular badly neglected in the majority of elementary schools.¹¹⁴ Thirty years later Schools Inspector Bonner noted that whereas needlework was taught in all the Church of England elementary schools in Shropshire under his inspection, cooking was taught in only two.¹¹⁵

With sewing however, there was a notable difference between pauper and elementary schools. In elementary schools industrial training for girls often consisted of little else - at least until the introduction of the Revised Code when needlework began to be superseded by the teaching of basic literacy.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Kay Shuttleworth, Report on the Norwood School of Industry, Reports from the Commissioners 1841 - The Training of Pauper Children, Appendix IV. P.P. 1841 XXXIII.

¹¹² Report CCE, P.P. 1859 XXI Appendix IV, pp. 470-71; Report CCE, P.P. 1861, XLIX, p. 479; List of Industrial Teachers Employed in District or Workhouse Schools, 1853, Minutes CCE, 1854, PRO MH 19/15. No grants were however available for industrial instruction until 1855.

¹¹³ Schools District Correspondence, PRO MH 27/2.

¹¹⁴ Evidence of Kay Shuttleworth, Report from the Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes in England and Wales, July 1838 P.P. 1837-8 VII, p. 190. In Shropshire an exception to this was at the Sandbach National School where Norris found girls preparing and serving 'Christmas dinner of roast beef, plum pudding and ale to 26 aged persons', Inspector Norris, *General Report on Church of England Schools* 1857, P.P. 1857-8 XLV, p. 439.

¹¹⁵ Reverend Bonner, *General Report* 1867, P.P. 1867-8 XXV, p. 127.

¹¹⁶ Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred* (1965), pp. 161-62.

Only girls in some of the larger Poor Law Schools were taught needlework. They cut out designs for plain clothes and learned simple sewing skills but anything more elaborate was seen to be of no practical value. Symons noted with satisfaction in 1857 that he had 'effectively abolished all fancy work'.¹¹⁷ In small schools girls were only employed at mending. There was some concern expressed over exploitation. Schools Inspectors Tufnell and Tremenheere were uneasy about Tooting Pauper Schools where the Superintendent stated that 120 shirts were produced each day by 150 girls. If correct, this meant that probably 'more than four and a half hours a day' were spent on the work.¹¹⁸

It was not only the pauper girls who were exploited. Female Poor Law Industrial Trainers received the lowest pay of all teachers in pauper institutions - between £5 and £15 per annum. There was a correspondingly high turnover in posts. At Ludlow workhouse school in Shropshire there were four female Industrial Trainers in as many years who received pay ranging from £6 to £15.¹¹⁹ Even at the South East Shropshire School pay was poor and there was a high turnover of staff.¹²⁰ In elementary schools the Industrial Teacher for needlework was also likely to occupy an inferior position to the teacher of academic subjects.¹²¹ In all teaching sectors female teachers received less than men until well into the twentieth century. Concern over salary differentiation began to be voiced by the end of the nineteenth century but only as an issue that concerned women and there was no official rationale offered to account for the differences. In 1897, with regard to elementary education, the 'authorities at Whitehall' had 'no explanation to offer on the subject'.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Symons, *General Report* 1857, P.P. 1857-8 XLV, p. 193.

¹¹⁸ Reports of Assistant Poor Law Commissioners, PP 1847 XXLIX, p. 34.

¹¹⁹ Ludlow Correspondence 1864-68, SRO, 456/6/26 Bundle 171. See also below, Chapter 6.

¹²⁰ See below, Chapter 6.

¹²¹ Reverend P. Norris, *General Report* 1855, P.P. 1856 XLVII, p. 385.

¹²² C.S.Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain* (1897), p.44.

This devaluing of girls' training was common. In Somerset, most Boards of Guardians were more concerned that their schools were run efficiently than with providing an adequate education. Wells Board of Guardians, for instance, placed more importance on girls' industrial employment than on mental training.¹²³ During the period under review there were, however, some important innovations and developments in techniques. The 1862 *Select Committee on the Administration of the Relief of the Poor* noted that in the Metropolis wash-houses and laundries were being introduced into most workhouses and girls were obtaining better employment.¹²⁴ The need for such improvements had been registered some eleven years earlier by Poor Law Inspector Walsham who stated that wash-houses and laundries were 'essential to good workhouse management'.¹²⁵ Progress was, however, generally slow. Few unions were as progressive as Norwich where the Guardians opened a separate home to train girls for domestic service.¹²⁶ The practice at Norwich was rare and still being referred to as praiseworthy and unusual as late as 1880.¹²⁷

Apart from these improvements there were few real advances made in the work undertaken by the majority of pauper girls. Even the developments in laundries did not extend much into the North or West of England where only a few were established.¹²⁸ Symons strongly disapproved of laundries, regarding them as unnecessary expense.¹²⁹ Under his guidance unions in his district failed to introduce them.¹³⁰

In the second half of the century industrial training for girls may have been better organised than in earlier decades but otherwise there were few changes. This lack of development

¹²³ Baker, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 213.

¹²⁴ *Select Committee on the Administration of the Relief of the Poor* P.P. 1862 X, p. 743.

¹²⁵ Poor Law Inspector Walsham to PLB, Jan 16 1851, PRO MH 32/82.

¹²⁶ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces, op. cit.* The Norwich Girls Home was separate from the workhouse and followed the successful establishment of a separate boys' home.

¹²⁷ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of Workhouse Visiting and Management* (1880), p.148.

¹²⁸ E.g. Stockport, Stroud. Returns to Symons, Minutes CCE, P.P. 1854-5 XLII, p.164.

¹²⁹ Symons, *General Report* 1854, P.P. 1854-5 XLII.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

was criticised by Jane Senior, the first woman Local Government Board (LGB) Inspector. Senior was appointed by James Stansfield, President of the LGB, who was determined not to see matters 'through the eyes of men alone'.¹³¹ It was a controversial and unpopular appointment. LGB officials viewed it as an invasion into traditional male territory.¹³² Senior adopted a gender-specific role, involving herself solely with the education and training of pauper girls, but her conclusions had implications for all areas of the Poor Law curriculum.

Senior alleged that in most large pauper institutions domestic training for girls was not given sufficient priority. Her research was painstaking and thorough. She visited all the Poor Law Schools in the Metropolis, several rural workhouse schools, and elementary schools in England, Scotland and Paris.¹³³ In addition, six hundred and fifty girls who had left poor law schools between 1871 and 1872 were traced and interviewed.¹³⁴ Senior concluded that huge institutions did not provide a suitable environment for pauper girls.¹³⁵ A large number of girls placed together were likely to become morally damaged. She also felt that practical domestic training should be given priority over abstract theoretical knowledge.

'A girl is not necessarily a better woman because she knows the height of all the mountains in Europe and can work out a fraction in her head, but, is decidedly well fitted for the duties she will be called upon to perform in life, if she knows how to tend and wash a child, cook simple food well, and thoroughly clean a house'.¹³⁶

Senior reiterated the original intention of the PLAA forty years earlier that academic work on Poor Law schools should be as basic as possible. Her efforts to highlight inadequacies in the vocational training of girls represented the first serious attempt to investigate

¹³¹ *English Woman's Review* Nov. 14 1875, Vol. XVI No 11. p. 516.

¹³² J.L. and B. Hammond, *James Stansfield - A Victorian Champion of Sex Equality* (1932), p. 112.

¹³³ LGB Inspector Jane Senior *General Report* 1873, *Third Annual Report LGB*, P.P. 1874 XXV Appendix 22, p.311.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Poor Law Schools Inspector Tufnell, a lifelong advocate of District Schools, vehemently disagreed, E.C.Tufnell, *Observations on the Report of Mrs. Senior to the Local Government Board*, Feb.8 P.P. 1875 LXIII. See below, Chapter 8.

¹³⁶ Jane Senior, *General Report* 1873, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

conditions for girls in Poor Law schools. In elementary schools there had been concern for some time over the balance between mental and industrial training. Over emphasis on mental education was given twenty years earlier by Schools Inspector Norris as one reason why industrial training was neglected in the schools he inspected in Shropshire.¹³⁷

This neglect continued. Criticisms of poor standards in 1887 by Miss Headdon, a member of the newly formed National Association for the Promotion of Housewifery, could well have been written twenty or even forty years earlier.

'There is a great demand for *skilled* domestic labour, and no adequate supply to meet it, partly owing, we are assured, to the fact that ...its cultivation (is) left out of the girl's education'.¹³⁸

In 1889 Poor Law Inspector Mozeley attributed the lack of progress by pauper girls to 'the depression of the weaker sex..the lower one goes in the social strata'.¹³⁹ Throughout all elementary education, including the Poor Law, an apathetic attitude was adopted to girls' training despite the need for 'good servant girls'.¹⁴⁰

Only by the 1880s was it beginning to be recognised that pauper girls needed care and protection, as well as education and training.¹⁴¹ Throughout the century, the standard of a pauper girl's education was of less importance than her cleaning ability.

¹³⁷ Reverend P. Norris, *General Report* 1852, p.464.

¹³⁸ Miss Headdon, 'Industrial Training for Girls', in Lord Brabazon (ed.), *Some National and Board School Reforms* (1887), p. 130.

¹³⁹ LGB Inspector Mozeley, cited in W. Chance, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

¹⁴⁰ Reverend P. Norris, *General Report* 1852, *op. cit.*, p. 464. In 1863 the Reverend Stokes criticised the total lack of resources for girls in Catholic Schools in Shropshire, Reverend N. Stokes, *General Report*, 1862, P.P. 1863 XLVII, p. 114

¹⁴¹ LGB Inspector Miss M.H.Mason, 'Prolonged Protection for Pauper Girls', *Poor Law Conferences* 1880, p. 264.

4. The 'Academic' Curriculum

The methods employed in teaching the different curricula subjects altered only gradually during the course of the century. When the PLAA was passed in 1834 the monitorial method was frequently used in elementary schools. It was later adopted only in those Poor Law Schools where there was a sufficient number of children to make the system workable. The model taken was that of the National Society, whose schools exceeded numerically those of the British and Foreign Schools Society.¹⁴² The monitorial system was, however, not without its critics in the elementary sector. The system was criticised for the inadequate intellectual ability of the monitors and for the lack of progress of individual monitors who were too fully occupied instructing others.¹⁴³

These criticisms were rarely raised in connection with pauper education where teaching methods were not so closely debated. In many small workhouse schools the teacher was more likely to have taught the children simultaneously. In some schools pauper girls and boys were taught separately; in others, in mixed groups. This often depended upon the size of the school, although there were some notable exceptions. At Atcham Workhouse School in Shropshire mixed teaching for a large group of children continued under one schoolmaster until 1871, solely because it was the system favoured by the Chairman of the Board of Guardians.¹⁴⁴ Mixed teaching in Poor Law Schools was generally disapproved of by the central authority.¹⁴⁵ An 1848 Circular criticised it mainly because it cut across workhouse classification boundaries.¹⁴⁶ Consequently the PLB only recommended its use in exceptional circumstances and then only allowed the children to be together in the same room for no more than two to three hours. Both the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress

¹⁴² Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Edward Senior, 'Report on the Training of Pauper Children in Workhouses and District Schools' *Reports 1841, op. cit.*, p. 391.

¹⁴³ 'Controversial Monitorial System', *The Educational Magazine*, Vol 1, 1840, p. 316 *et seq.*

¹⁴⁴ See below, Chapters 5 and 6.

¹⁴⁵ Report of the Commissioners for Administering the Laws for the Relief of the Poor in England, P.P. 1849 XXV, Appendix No. 5, p. 19. Atcham Board of Guardians was frequently admonished and urged to appoint a schoolmistress to teach the girls separately, see below Chapter 5.

¹⁴⁶ Report ... Relief of the Poor P.P. 1849 XXV, *op. cit.*

were to be present and the boys and girls were to enter and leave separately and sit on separate benches.¹⁴⁷

Kay Shuttleworth was not opposed to mixed schooling in principle but regarded it as unsuitable for workhouse children as women teachers would not be able to manage mixed classes.¹⁴⁸ However, Poor Law Schools Inspector Ruddock encouraged it in Somerset as teachers' salaries would rise if they taught larger classes and it was the only sensible way to organise teaching in smaller schools.¹⁴⁹ Robert Slaney also favoured mixed teaching.¹⁵⁰ He argued that in elementary schools girls often received inferior mental training because it was difficult to obtain female teachers who were of a sufficiently high calibre. Girls' education was therefore more liable to 'suffer from want of attention' when the girls were taught separately.¹⁵¹ The pupil-teacher scheme which Kay Shuttleworth initiated successfully at Norwood led to the introduction of the system into elementary schools and other large Poor Law schools.

Whichever system was used, gender differences were apparent in mental as well as industrial training. There was a commonly held view that the 'separate spheres' occupied by men and women should be reflected in the text books used by boys and girls. Comments from The Reverend Norris, Church of England Schools Inspector in Shropshire, aptly illustrated this view. Teaching points for girls were to be taken from domestic life, e.g. laundry and kitchen examples - whether for mathematical problems or English compositions.¹⁵² The importance of this could not be overstressed. Norris linked

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Kay Shuttleworth, Fourth Annual Report PLC, *op. cit.*, Appendix. B No 3.

¹⁴⁹ Baker, *thesis, op. cit.* p. 199.

¹⁵⁰ R. A. Slaney, *The State of Education of the Poorer Classes in Large Towns* (1837), p. 20.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* This view was also put forward in the 1837-8 Select Committee on Education, evidence of J. Simpson, *Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes*, P.P. 1837-8 VII, p. 129. The issue of mixed versus separate schooling has yet to be researched in relation to the quality of education received by elementary school girls, June Purvis, *'The Double Burden ...'* *op. cit.*, p. 106.

¹⁵² Reverend P. Norris, *General Report* 1852, P.P. 1852-3, Vol 2 LXXX, p. 46. Reverend P. Norris, *General Report* 1855, P.P. 1856 XLVII, p. 386-7.

the 'future life of the country' to the content of the girls' curriculum.¹⁵³ In the case of pauper education gender differentiation was both explicitly and implicitly reflected in the subject matter of the curriculum.

4.1 Religious Instruction

The Minutes of the CCE stated in 1839:

"Religion (is) to be combined with the whole matter of instruction and to regulate the entire system of discipline".¹⁵⁴

Attempts to provide an appropriate balance between academic and industrial instruction rested heavily upon the inculcation of religious and moral beliefs. No pauper school was permitted to omit religion from its syllabus. Instruction was not intended to be just Bible study. A more 'moralising' form of education was sought so that a child's future role in society could be correctly established.¹⁵⁵ Bible teaching could be linked to History and Geography and even, Kay Shuttleworth argued, to Arithmetic.¹⁵⁶

Religion was a basic tenet of pauper education, but the nature of its content led to controversy. Although the instruction of Anglican dogma was not intended, the PLAA required the appointment of Anglican chaplains to workhouses. They were to make monthly visits to examine and catechize the children and, although they had no control over secular education, they were permitted to suggest books for purchase and to give reports on general educational progress.¹⁵⁷ The role of the Anglican chaplain was viewed

¹⁵³ Reverend P. Norris, *General Report* 1852, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Minutes CCE, April 13 1839, P.P.1840 XL.

¹⁵⁵ *Instructional Letter from the Poor Law Commissioners to the Chaplain of ... Norwood*, P.P. 1841 XXXIII, Appendix IV, p. 122.

¹⁵⁶ Kay Shuttleworth, Introductory Remarks, *Fourth Annual Report PLC*, P.P. 1837-8, XXVIII, Appendix B No 3.

¹⁵⁷ *First Annual Report PLC*, P.P. 1835 XXXV, Appendix A, p. 64.

with suspicion by Dissenters and Catholics alike who feared the indoctrination of 'their' paupers, despite the fact that the PLAA stated that inmates could practise their own faith. Many Boards of Guardians were so concerned that they did not appoint chaplains at all. At Wisbech in 1855 the Board of Guardians was involved in an internal dispute over the advisability of appointing a chaplain, that lasted many months and was published *verbatim* in the local press.¹⁵⁸ An 1844 Return revealed that almost one third of the workhouses in England and Wales were without a chaplain.¹⁵⁹

Other unions determined to teach only the creed of the Established Church and resented the freedom of religious choice that was available under the 1834 Act. Berwick upon Tweed Guardians objected to an Order from the PLB in 1859 directing unions to ascertain the religious persuasion of orphan children so as not to educate them into the wrong faith.¹⁶⁰ The union had received no complaints from parents when they took all the workhouse children, regardless of faith, to the Parish Church.¹⁶¹

Poor Law Inspector Hall saw the religious issue as an important factor in the refusal of many unions to form school districts. Guardians were concerned about the possible loss of control over religious instruction.¹⁶² The role of the workhouse chaplain was therefore critical. In the *Diary of a Workhouse Chaplain* The Reverend Cousins lamented the lack of religious education outside the schools. He saw the Chaplain's role as not only to give Religious Instruction, but to maintain a good moral standard and keep a check on the general management of the school.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ *The Wisbech Advertiser*, July - December 1855. See below, Chapter 7.

¹⁵⁹ *Return of the Total Number of Unions in England and Wales stating in which of them Chaplains have been appointed....*P.P. 1844 XL, pp.1-4.

¹⁶⁰ Berwick upon Tweed to the PLB, Dec. 29 1859, PRO MH 12 8985.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Poor Law Inspector Hall to the PLB, July 23 1850, PRO MH 32/37.

¹⁶³ Reverend D.L. Cousins, *Diary of a Workhouse Chaplain* (1847).

The Instructional Letter from the PLC to the Chaplain at Norwood School in August 1843 emphasised the heavy responsibility placed upon the Chaplain, as many of the children received no religious instruction prior to school entry. Although the Commissioners refrained from instructing the Chaplain in exactly what he was to teach, they determined when and where the instruction was to be given.¹⁶⁴

In most schools, District or Workhouse, the child's day began and ended with Bible reading, singing and praying. Instructions to the Inspectors of Elementary Schools in 1840 included a section entitled 'Religious and Moral Discipline' which began:

Are the children assembled and dismissed every day with a psalm or hymn and a prayer?
Is the Holy Bible read every day?
In the classes or in the gallery?¹⁶⁵

The weekly timetable of Norwood Boys' School in 1843 revealed that the pupils spent four hours a week on 'Bible Reading, Examination and Catechism'. This was roughly equivalent to the time they spent on Reading and Arithmetic.¹⁶⁶

Much of the classroom material was of a religious nature. This was not so much a feature of Poor Law Schools as of all elementary schools for children of the poor. In the early years after the passage of the PLAA the Bible was often the only book available. This was partly to do with a lack of resources and partly a deliberate attempt to centre the curriculum on religion.

Although there was no direction that pauper girls should receive a different religious education from boys, the gender specific nature of religious texts presented girls with a

¹⁶⁴ Report on the Inspection of Mr. Aubin's School of Industry at Norwood 1843, Appendix 1, p. 170, *Minutes CCE* P.P. 1842-3, PRO ED 17/6, p. 170.

¹⁶⁵ *Instructions for the Inspectors of Schools*, July 15 1840, *Minutes CCE* 1839-40 (University of London Press, 1967), p. 35.

¹⁶⁶ Schools Inspector Tremenheere, Report on the Inspection of Mr. Aubin's School of Industry at Norwood, *Minutes CCE* P.P. 1842-3, PRO ED 17/6, p.164.

hidden agenda. This was not true just of poor law schooling but of elementary education in general where the choice of Biblical texts emphasised the different roles of boys and girls.¹⁶⁷

4.2 Reading

The permeation of religion into all aspects of elementary education resulted in a curriculum based almost exclusively, especially in the 1830s and early 1840s, on the Bible and other religious tracts.¹⁶⁸ In pauper education this limited resource was further narrowed in some workhouses where only certain sections of the Bible were considered suitable. Poor Law Inspector Hall found that in Berkshire and Oxfordshire it was often *ne plus ultra* to read the Old Testament and children were limited to New Testament Gospels.¹⁶⁹ Such heavy reliance on the scriptures meant that the content was often too difficult for children just learning to read, and that better readers often read mechanically, without understanding.

Browne considered that a large percentage of the reading material offered to pauper children contained words they neither used nor heard. This led to a lack of comprehension and knowledge of 'common things'.¹⁷⁰ This was exacerbated by the insularity of the workhouse life which distanced pauper children from ordinary experiences.

The methods of teaching reading in many elementary schools in the 1830s, concentrating on memorising letter names and syllables, did not facilitate the reading process.¹⁷¹ By the 1840s there was some recognition that such methods were both unsuitable and unsuccessful. In 1840 the CCE criticised the heavy reliance on memory and advocated

¹⁶⁷ June Purvis, 'The Double Burden ...', *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁶⁸ The Bible continued to be the key text used throughout the century. Early working class M.P.s acknowledged its influence on their lives, W.T.Stead, 'The Labour Party and the books that helped me to make it', *Review of Reviews* 33 (1906).

¹⁶⁹ Poor Law Inspector Richard Hall, Fourth Annual Report PLC P.P. 1837-8 XXVIII No 4. p. 161.

¹⁷⁰ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report* 1847, Minutes CCE (PUS), P.P. 1847-8-9, pp. 134-5.

¹⁷¹ Book Review, 'Reading Made Easy', *The Quarterly Journal of Education* Vol. I, Jan.- April 1831, pp. 344-49.

first teaching children simple sounds.¹⁷² Kay Shuttleworth's report on Norwood emphasised the importance of comprehension in the reading process. The children were not allowed to read any combination of letters which were not real words and lesson books were 'selected to afford useful information.'¹⁷³

In an attempt to bring some cohesion and structure to the teaching of reading in his district, Schools Inspector Browne sub-divided the reading results in the North of England into:

- children reading letters and monosyllables
- children reading easy narratives
- children reading Holy Scriptures
- children reading general information books.

The majority of the children examined had not progressed beyond the first two categories.¹⁷⁴

One of the few published works that discussed the curriculum content of workhouse schools was by an Irish prison governor, James Organ. Organ urged the same approach towards the teaching of reading as Kay Shuttleworth and was still critical in 1860 of pupils who repeated words mechanically, 'remembering little and understanding less'.¹⁷⁵

4.3 Writing

The teaching of writing was even more controversial than the teaching of reading. The acquisition of the skill of writing by the labouring classes had long been considered a

¹⁷² Constructive Methods of Teaching Reading, Writing and Vocal Music, Minutes CCE, 1840-1 PRO ED 17/4, p. 19.

¹⁷³ James Kay, 'Report on Norwood School of Industry', *Reports, 1841*, Appendix IV, p. 110.

¹⁷⁴ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report 1847*, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5.

¹⁷⁵ James P. Organ, *Hints on the Educational, Moral and Industrial Training of the Inmates of our Reformatories, Prisons and Workhouses* (Dublin 1860), p. 12.

possible threat to the social order. There was a fear that working class children who learned to write might acquire aspirations above their station. This was particularly true of girls who might be tempted to seek work other than domestic labour.¹⁷⁶

However in the guidelines laid down for the Poor Law curriculum in 1835 learning to write was held in equal importance with reading, for both pauper boys and girls.¹⁷⁷ The attitude of the PLC was clearly outlined in the refusal to allow Bedford Union to omit writing from their pauper curriculum.¹⁷⁸ The Commissioners emphasised that it was important for pauper children to be able to write in order to become independent adults in the future.¹⁷⁹ However there was a lack of consistency in their approach. Although the Commissioners were quick to admonish the Bedford Guardians, other Boards managed to omit the teaching of writing for some years without being censured.¹⁸⁰ This partly reflected the continuing misunderstanding about less eligibility but was also an indication of the reluctance of the PLC to enter into disputes with Boards of Guardians. One way to avoid the danger of over-educating pauper children was to take great care in the selection of the material for copy-writing. At Norwood only texts that bore a relation to the future social duties of the children were chosen.¹⁸¹

As with reading, different methods were used to teach writing. Kay Shuttleworth urged that reading and writing should be taught simultaneously so that children would recognise letters in the written form at the same time as they learned the names of the sounds.¹⁸² This method also received approval from the editor of a contemporary journal which recommended that the process of learning to write should begin immediately a child entered

¹⁷⁶ W. Davis, *Hints to Philanthropists ... improving the condition of the Poor and Labouring Classes of Society* (1821), p. 152.

¹⁷⁷ First Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1835, XXXV Appendix A, No 9. Section XVIII.

¹⁷⁸ See above, Chapter 1.

¹⁷⁹ *Second Annual Report PLC*, P.P. 1836 XXIX, Appendix C, Vol. 8, p. 479. See above, Chapter 1.

¹⁸⁰ Obermann has noted eight more unions still not teaching writing in 1847 - Droitwich, Aylesbury, Northleach, Headington, Upton upon Severn, Newport, Martley, Ross and Melksham, Obermann, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 178.

¹⁸¹ Kay Shuttleworth, *Reports 1841, op. cit.*, Appendix IV, p. 128.

¹⁸² Kay Shuttleworth, *ibid.*

school.¹⁸³ In practice writing continued to take second place to reading. James Organ, writing in 1860 was still urging workhouse schools to adopt the simultaneous approach.¹⁸⁴

The most popular method of teaching writing, Mulhauser's, emphasised the mechanical aspects of holding a pen and in 1841 was recommended by the CCE for all elementary schools.¹⁸⁵ There is little evidence however that any systematic approach was used in workhouse schools owing to the limited knowledge of the teachers. Similarly, although pupil-teachers at Norwood were expected to acquire a detailed knowledge of grammar, such as knowing the chief prefixes in the English language or giving the 'etymology and meanings of words such as 'retribution' or 'beneficient', it is unlikely that most workhouse teachers acquired such knowledge or taught such a curriculum.¹⁸⁶ The teaching of grammar was regarded by most Boards of Guardians as unnecessary as it was not included in the basic requirements of the pauper curriculum.¹⁸⁷ Such detailed analysis was not held to be a useful skill for Poor Law children. A more fundamental and realistic approach was sought for pauper children who had only a limited experience of the outside world.¹⁸⁸

4.4 Arithmetic

Arithmetic was not included in the regulations set down for pauper education until 1847.¹⁸⁹ In *The Training of Pauper Children*, Kay Shuttleworth wrote little on the subject, simply stating that Poor Law schools should follow the example of the National and Lancastrian schools and develop mental agility.¹⁹⁰ However after 1847 Arithmetic rapidly developed in complexity. According to Poor Law Schools Inspector Browne ten-year-old children at

¹⁸³ William Martin, "Practice in the Schoolroom", *The Educational Magazine* (1838), p. 194.

¹⁸⁴ Organ, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁵ *CCE Minute on Constructive Methods of Teaching Reading Writing and Vocal Music* Mins CCE 1840-41, PRO ED 17/4, p. 19.

¹⁸⁶ *Reports of Assistant Poor Law Commissioners* P.P. 1847, XLIX, pp. 29-30.

¹⁸⁷ General Order July 24 1847, Article 114.

¹⁸⁸ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report* 1858, Minutes CCE, PRO ED 17/24.

¹⁸⁹ Article 114, General Consolidated Order, 1847, *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁰ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

Swinton School in 1862 were taught compound addition, subtraction and multiplication.¹⁹¹ The Inspectors deplored this tendency to insist on children mastering advanced mathematics:

While toiling through calculations only suited to a member of the Stock Exchange they lose the power of applying the lower rules to the business of everyday life.¹⁹²

In Symons' 1848 Report Arithmetic received particular criticism. Out of 17 unions with 468 boys and 429 girls, only 33% of the boys and 31% of the girls could do simple arithmetic after spending twelve months in a workhouse.¹⁹³ Symons commented that even these figures did not show the 'poor mental knowledge and understanding' of the children. Many children could not answer any simple questions at all.¹⁹⁴ These poor standards were 'very worrying'. Children who were not well instructed would remain ignorant of the rate of their own expenditure and so 'have no check on their own improvidence' on their own improvidence.¹⁹⁵

Nearly twenty years later, although standards had improved, Bowyer still criticised the tendency to teach higher levels of arithmetic before children had mastered the simple rules.¹⁹⁶ Organ agreed and was critical of schools where the majority of the pupils although advanced in the theory of arithmetic were 'quite unable to solve the simplest questions of everyday life'.¹⁹⁷ As the intention was to enable children to budget their meagre incomes when independent adults - for example 'check their score with shopkeepers' - the level of arithmetic used in many of the schools was irrelevant.¹⁹⁸ In

¹⁹¹ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report*, 1864, *Minutes CCE*, PRO ED 17/28.

¹⁹² Schools Inspector Bowyer, *General Report* 1864, *Minutes. CCE*, PRO ED 32/108.

¹⁹³ Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report* 1848, *Minutes CCE*, PRO MH 9/14.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Schools Inspector Bowyer, *General Report* 1864 (PUS), *Minutes CCE*, PRO MH 32/108.

¹⁹⁷ Organ, *op. cit.*, p.16.

¹⁹⁸ Francis Duke, 'Pauper Education', *op. cit.*, p. 85.

addition, many teachers were poor at the subject themselves. As late as 1873, Mozeley complained of difficulties arising in arithmetic because of poor quality teaching.¹⁹⁹

Throughout the century much was learned by rote and one of the interesting facts to emerge from closer study is the dislike most Schools Inspectors had for this method of learning. In 1848 Tufnell criticised rote learning which taught children to cope with examinations, but left them with a lack of understanding of the subject. Tufnell quoted children who could answer such questions as 18 multiplied by 4, but could not say how many half-crowns there were in a pound.²⁰⁰

Gender differences were also noticeable. In most Poor Law Schools although the same amount of time for arithmetic was generally allocated to both boys and girls, expectations differed. Girls were not required or expected to achieve the same standard as boys. They merely needed to be taught:

'those parts of arithmetic which are calculated to be useful to them in the ordinary duties of female existence'.²⁰¹

A similar situation pertained in elementary schools, even at the end of the century. In 1897 a Treasury rule was in force that instructed Schools Inspectors to accept lower standards in arithmetic for girls than for boys. The dominance of domestic training was still very evident.:

...inspectors are instructed to accept a lower standard of Arithmetic from girls than from boys, because of the encroachment on their time by cooking and sewing.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Schools Inspector Mozeley, *General Report*, 1873, PRO MH 32/109.

²⁰⁰ Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report* 1848-9, *Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1850 XLIII, p. 72.

²⁰¹ Schools Inspector Bowyer, *General Report* 1862, *Minutes*. CCE PRO ED 17/28, p. 364.

²⁰² C.S. Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women*, *op cit.*, p. 47.

By the end of their arithmetic education Browne thought that pauper children should be able to handle:

- numeration and notation
- subtraction
- multiplication and division
- fractions and decimals.²⁰³

In practice it is difficult to find evidence of the standards reached in the schools. Expectations such as those of Browne indicate that some understanding of the term 'good' in the teaching of arithmetic would, in his district anyway, presumably be based on these criteria.

In the 1850s some improvements in arithmetic were reported by the Schools Inspectors although comments such as 'sounder than had been' or 'decided progress in casting accounts' give little idea of the standards reached.²⁰⁴

4.5 Geography and History

Whereas the value of both Geography and History was recognised in the elementary curriculum in 1840, these subjects only began to appear on the pauper curriculum in the second half of the century. This reflected a growing recognition of the need to broaden the range of subjects.²⁰⁵ It was also a response to the improved standards of teaching that developed after the introduction of Parliamentary Grants in 1851 encouraged Boards of Guardians to appoint better quality teachers.

²⁰³ Browne, *General Report* 1858, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5.

²⁰⁴ Bowyer; Symons, *General Reports* 1850, *Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1850 XLIII, pp. 52, 160.

²⁰⁵ W.J.Parker, *An Address to the Teachers of the Manchester Moral and Industrial Training Schools* (1845).

Geography gradually became seen as a worthwhile addition to the curriculum; a useful subject where the knowledge gained could be used to encourage both migration and emigration. There was a hope that the teaching of Geography might lead to more movement of labour as more knowledge was acquired about different countries.²⁰⁶

However teaching was fundamentally utilitarian, involving the recitation of long lists of rivers and towns, often with little understanding of their position or relevance. Tufnell considered this to be totally unsatisfactory.²⁰⁷ Louisa Twining recalled some workhouse children who could impress visitors by reciting heights of mountains and lengths of rivers but had no understanding of what they had learned.²⁰⁸ Organ regretted:

... that so little care is taken ...to teach the pupil what, to him, is the most useful and most interesting, viz. the geography of his own country....some teachers seem to think that to enable the pupil to name the rivers, towns, lakes etc. of foreign lands, is of far more importance ... it strikes me that before we attempt to teach the geography of other countries, we should make the pupils conversant with that of his own.²⁰⁹

In practice, most Inspectors recognised the confusion that occurred between the acquisition of facts and genuine educational learning, and by the late 1850s there were distinct improvements. In his 1858 Report Symons stated that some schools in his district had thankfully abandoned the acquisition of geographical facts in favour of a more meaningful appreciation of the subject.²¹⁰

History was less favourably regarded than Geography. Organ made no mention of the subject in his treatise. History teaching was regarded by Tufnell as a worthless exercise

²⁰⁶ Minutes, CCE, P.P. 1846, p. 40.

²⁰⁷ Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report* 1851, *Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1852 XXXIX, p. 60.

²⁰⁸ Evidence of Louisa Twining, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England*, P.P. 1861 XXI part V, p. 432-33.

²⁰⁹ Organ, *op. cit.*, p. 120-121.

²¹⁰ Symons, *General Report*, 1858, *Minutes. CCE*, P.P. 1857-8 XLV, p. 192.

with too many muddled facts being presented for rote learning.²¹¹ Louisa Twining similarly criticised the learning of 'dates and facts without end'.²¹² Schools Inspector Browne thought History could not be taught very effectively to children who left school before the age of 13, but that it was important for:

enlarging and elevating the mind and character and ... leading even poor children to attach some importance to knowledge which is not convertible into money.²¹³

Such 'knowledge' was however, subjective. History texts reinforced the message of the New Poor Law that paupers were not only idle and improvident, but also dangerous.²¹⁴

From the 1850s Inspectors' Reports revealed an increasing percentage of children learning extra subjects. By 1855, 36% of children in Browne's district were taught Geography and 16.6% were instructed in History. In Bowyer's district only 10-11% of the children were taught Geography, but this figure gradually increased and compared favourably with the 16% given by Schools Inspector Mozeley for children learning Geography in ordinary elementary schools in the same region.²¹⁵

4.6 Drawing, Drill and Music

These subjects were developed with varying success in the second half of the century. Little is known of the teaching of Drawing; it was rarely mentioned in Inspectors' Reports. Organ considered it a peripheral but important subject for developing skills useful in many trades. He quoted Stowe:

²¹¹ Tufnell, *General Report*, 1864, *Minutes*. CCE, P.P. 1857-8, *op. cit.*

²¹² Evidence of Louisa Twining, Newcastle Commission, *op. cit.*

²¹³ Browne, *General Report*, 1858, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

²¹⁴ Valerie Chancellor, *History for Their Masters* (1970), p. 34.

²¹⁵ *Minutes* CCE (PUS), Tables taken from Schools Inspectors Reports, F. Duke, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 282.

Drawing simple lines and outlines of the forms of objects, natural and artificial, especially of buildings and articles of furniture, exercises the eye ...²¹⁶

Drill and Music, however, with their strong military associations, were the areas of pauper education that received the most publicity and admiration in the latter part of the century. Although these subjects were generally only taught in District rather than workhouse schools, they became particularly associated with Poor Law education. District Schools were the first to include military drill in the curriculum. CCE Minutes, PLB and LGB Reports were full of praiseworthy references to both subjects and emphasis on these areas of the curriculum was said to create a laudable 'military spirit'.²¹⁷

There were three main reasons why Military Drill was so highly regarded. It was seen as a means to establish the control that was required in the training of large groups of undisciplined pauper children. In his evidence to the Newcastle Commission Tufnell alleged that a 'riot' was common when a District School was opened for the first time and that firm discipline was essential for pauper children.²¹⁸ Secondly, Drill was considered beneficial to the children's health, so much so that *The Times* recommended that in future army recruits could - and should - be chosen from District Pauper schools.²¹⁹ Chadwick recommended that the drill taught in Poor Law schools should be copied in elementary schools. Improvements in the physical condition of the children would pay dividends later:

the improvement of the bodily condition
of the pupils by drill and of their
aptitudes for labour increases their
value as labourers in after life.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Organ, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

²¹⁷ e.g. *Minutes*. CCE (PUS) 1856-7; 1857-8; 4th, 5th, 6th LGB Reports.

²¹⁸ J.S.Hurt, 'Drill, Discipline and the elementary school ethos', in Phillip McCann (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialisation in the Nineteenth Century* (1977), p. 170.

²¹⁹ *The Times*, June 17 1871.

²²⁰ Edwin Chadwick to Lord Brougham, Sep. 28 1859, *Brougham Papers*, 10,8113.

Physical training was seen as a means to increase productivity. This view was certainly held by Chadwick after his experiences at the Board of Health:

Drill and training would probably double the effective human power of any establishment ... That which is taught to youth is never forgotten in after life.²²¹

Thirdly, the discipline associated with military music and drill helped pauper boys secure employment. Symons praised drill and musical instruction:

"as a direct means of industrial training whereby the boys will obtain an early livelihood".²²²

Most Metropolitan District Schools included Drill and Music in their curriculum by 1860. Several large schools formed their own bands and managed to obtain places for their boys in military regiment.²²³

Even smaller workhouse schools were often keen to establish a musical reputation. In North East Cumberland many workhouses had their own band and choir.²²⁴ In Somerset, band and drill masters were appointed at Bath, Shepton Mallet and Axbridge. However the rules for the Axbridge Workhouse Boys' Band suggest that membership was seen more as a 'reward for good conduct' rather than an an integral part of the curriculum.²²⁵

The good musical standards achieved in some District Schools continued into the twentieth century. Praise was given to the Central London District School Band at Hanwell in Balne's memoir in the early 1900s.²²⁶ This experience is mirrored in an account of the successful band at Swinton School in Manchester in the same period.²²⁷

221 J.S.Hurt, 'Drill, Discipline ...', *op. cit.*, p. 170.

222 Symons, *General Report*, 1859, *Minutes*. CCE, PRO ED 17/25, p. 558.

223 E.g. Swinton, Kirkdale, Central Metropolitan District School.

224 Purdy, *thesis, op cit.*, p.152.

225 Baker, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 241.

226 E. Balne, 'Autobiography of an ex-workhouse and Poor Law Schoolboy', *op cit.*, p.8.

227 A.E.Guest, *An Historical Sketch and Personal Reminiscences* (Swinton and Pendlebury Public Libraries (1961), p. 4.

Developments in Drill and Music established a precedent that was later adopted in many elementary schools, almost to the exclusion of any other form of physical exercise.²²⁸ Drilling as a controlled exercise was seen as a means to achieve improved physical standards. By the end of the century there was an increasing emphasis on preserving the Empire through the cultivation of a healthy, growing population.²²⁹

The extent to which developments in the Poor Law school curriculum in the larger schools spread to smaller workhouse schools is difficult to quantify. There are few references to curriculum content in Union minutes and correspondence. The Departmental Committee which investigated the education of pauper children in the Metropolis in 1896 emphasised that Article 114 of the General Consolidated Order of 1847, which merely advocated the teaching of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, remained in force, "and its terms have not been modified".²³⁰

The curriculum in Poor Law Schools at the end of the century remained restricted. Although lessons in subjects other than reading, writing and arithmetic were given in some schools, they were not compulsory.²³¹ By the 1890s the breadth of curricula subjects in elementary schools far exceeded Poor Law Schools and had a deleterious effect on the quality of pauper education.²³²

5. The Quality of Education

In his first report on the Battersea Training School in 1841 Kay Shuttleworth criticised poor standards of teaching in Poor Law schools.²³³ In 1867, Poor Law Schools

²²⁸ P.C.McIntosh, "Games and Gymnastics for Two Nations in One", P.C.McIntosh *et al*, *Landmarks in the History of Education* (1981), p. 194.

²²⁹ Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood", *History Workshop*, 5, Spring 1978, pp. 9-65.

²³⁰ Departmental Committee ... Metropolis, Minutes of Evidence, Vol. II, PP 1896 XLIII, p. 39.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Kay Shuttleworth, 'First Report on Battersea Training School', in Kay Shuttleworth, *Four Periods of Public Education*, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

Inspector Tufnell described at length the poor quality teaching in the 1830s which had resulted in children learning by rote and without understanding. He cited examples of children totally ignorant of the Bible because of a lack of knowledge on the part of their teachers; of children 'reading' upside down at inspections because they had previously learned the passages by heart. Tufnell had recommended the dismissal of such teachers for gross inefficiency.²³⁴

One of the problems was that there was no compulsion upon unions to appoint a teacher at all. Such a decision was dependent upon the wishes of the Board of Guardians.²³⁵ This was amply demonstrated in the union of Atcham in Shropshire where, despite the urging of the central authority, the Guardians refused to appoint a schoolmistress.²³⁶ Even when teachers were appointed, no qualifications were required and this remained in force even after the General Consolidated Order of 1847.²³⁷

However, even where Guardians realised the importance of good teaching and were willing to pay higher salaries, it was difficult to find qualified teachers because of the lack of training facilities in many areas. This situation was of continuing concern to the Schools Inspectorate. In 1862 Browne stressed how the standard of a school rose or fell in accordance with 'the teacher's qualifications'.²³⁸

The quality of teachers was not only heavily criticised by the Inspectors but by other interested individuals. However, blanket criticisms from such social investigators as Louisa Twining and Mary Carpenter have since been questioned. Although these writers possessed a knowledge of general workhouse life they did not have a detailed understanding of educational standards within the classrooms.²³⁹ Not all teaching was

²³⁴ Chance, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²³⁵ S. & B. Webb, *English Poor Law History. Part II. The Last 100 Years. Part I* (1929), p. 73.

²³⁶ See below, Chapter 5.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report 1862*, PRO ED 17/28, p. 360.

²³⁹ Obermann, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 176.

poor. There was undoubtedly a number of good teachers by contemporary standards, some of whom rose rapidly through the workhouse teachers' salary bands. Schools Inspector Tufnell, in his 1848 Report, listed thirteen 'good' teachers who had 'especially distinguished themselves by capacity and zeal'.²⁴⁰ Of the thirteen names, Henry Garland of Quatt School and Robert Rowlandson of Atcham Workhouse School, both in Shropshire, appeared as 'Efficient'. However also included was James Francis of whom Stanley acquired a totally different impression when he was at St Asaph's as a workhouse child.²⁴¹

Many of the difficulties that blighted the quality of teaching stemmed from frequent staff changes. This was particularly true in the early period following the 1834 Act, prior to the introduction of inspection and the granting of certificates. Low salary levels and poor living conditions meant that few teachers remained long in any one post. As late as the mid-1870s the records for Royston Union in Hertfordshire revealed that four schoolmistresses and three schoolmasters were employed between 1875 and 1876.²⁴² In both his 1848 and 1858 Reports, Symons noted that although there were signs of improvement, education in his district was still hindered by the constant changes of staff, mainly because of low status, poor living conditions and inadequate salaries.²⁴³ He was strongly in favour of adjustments in salary levels in order to encourage more permanent staffing levels.²⁴⁴

The teachers themselves were hindered by the paucity of equipment in the classrooms. In the 1830s and 1840s the situation was generally very poor. There was a general lack of sufficient and suitable teaching material which exacerbated the seemingly perennial problem of poor teaching. However, there were genuine improvements by the middle of the century

²⁴⁰ Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report 1848, Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1850 XLIII, p. 229.

²⁴¹ See above.

²⁴² Royston Union Correspondence, PRO MH 12/4650.

²⁴³ Symons, *General Report 1848, Minutes CCE* PRO ED 19/24.

²⁴⁴ Symons, *General Report 1858, Minutes CCE*, PRO ED 17/24, pp. 521-22.

with most Boards of Guardians agreeing to purchase more blackboards, writing desks, copy books and, later, maps. Improvements in basic equipment led in particular to progress in reading, especially after Guardians were allowed to buy books at a cheaper rate from the CCE who gave reductions of between 32% and 55%. Unions therefore had more incentive to replace poor quality materials.²⁴⁵ Guardians varied considerably in the amounts they were prepared to spend, especially between the smaller and larger schools. Criticisms from Schools Inspectors over the choice of books were often resented by Boards of Guardians.²⁴⁶ A typical Book Order placed by St Albans Union in 1853 showed how extra subjects were beginning to appear on the curriculum:

One dozen - 'Plain and Short History of England for Children' - by the Bishop of Peterborough

Two dozen - 'First Book of Lessons for the Use of Schools' - Dublin

Two dozen - 'Second Book ... '

One dozen - 'The Young Child's Geography' - No IX of a new series of school books by the Scottish Wool Work Association

One dozen - 'Lessons in Arithmetic for Junior - by James Trotter of the Scottish and Naval Military Academy

One dozen slates - 'to have samples and to be contracted for'.²⁴⁷

Although the selection of books available for purchase had increased by the middle of the century, the Board of Guardians at St Albans was by no means unusual in preferring to buy Irish or Scottish textbooks. Irish textbooks in particular cornered the market in the elementary field and in the early decades of the century were highly valued as the most suitable material for elementary education. A special agreement between the CCE and the Irish Commissioners of Education in 1848 ensured that books were supplied at low prices and in bulk for use in all elementary schools, including workhouse schools.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ *Second Annual Report* PLB, P.P. 1850 XXVII, Appendix No 1; No 2, pp. 25-41.

²⁴⁶ At Atcham, Sir Baldwin Leighton objected to Symons' interference in the choice of books.

²⁴⁷ St Albans Union Correspondence, June 2 1853, PRO MH 12/4445.

²⁴⁸ 'Fifteenth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the Year 1848', H.C. 1849 xxiii, p. 6, cited in Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (1970), p. 230.

By the 1840s it was becoming clear to both the Inspectors and the central authority that some areas were far better served than others. It was in the Western and Northern areas that the poorest education was apparently offered. In the West of England Symons commented that few Guardians or teachers looked beyond 'the mere bones of instruction'.²⁴⁹ Symons' criticisms of the unions in the West and Wales continued through the 1850s. In his 1854 Report he classed the 83 schools in his area as:

First Class	7
Second Class	17
Third Class	39
Inefficient	20 ²⁵⁰

Nearly three-quarters of these schools fell into the last two categories.

The situation was probably worst in the North. Many of the old workhouse buildings that continued to be used were unsuitable for the classification envisaged under the 1834 Act. One result of this was that the children were often not separated from 'undesirable' adults. By the end of the 1840s Browne complained that workhouse classification was unsatisfactory in two thirds of the unions in his area, only improving to a quarter by 1853.²⁵¹ In the course of listing schools that were suitable to combine as District Schools, Browne listed ten very poor schools, five of which employed pauper teachers.²⁵²

Assistant Commissioner Hawley constantly criticised the Penrith Workhouse in Cumberland where, even though there were between 70 and 80 children, no teacher was appointed and the children were 'minded' by two pauper inmates.²⁵³ In the North Riding of Yorkshire Poor Law Inspector Hawley found in 1847 that pauper children sent to elementary schools were not achieving well:

²⁴⁹ Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report* 1852, *Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1852 XXXIX, p. 62.
²⁵⁰ Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report* 1854, *Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1854 LI, p. 156.
²⁵¹ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report* 1853, *op. cit.*
²⁵² Turton Chorley, Preston, Keighley, Skipton, Huddersfield, Halifax, Dewsbury, Wakefield, Carlton; the first five of these used pauper teachers, Browne, *General Report* 1848, *Minutes CCE*, 1840-1850, PRO MH 19/15.
²⁵³ Purdy, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 128.

- 29.4% were unable to read, write or cypher
- 30% could only read
- 40% only were learning to spell
- 11.6% only were able to both read and write ²⁵⁴

However recent work on the North Riding of Yorkshire has concluded that the minimal workhouse education offered was even worse. Pauper children were fortunate that there was only one workhouse school still in existence in the area by 1848.²⁵⁵ Workhouse education in Hull was slightly better, particularly in the standard of its industrial training, but there were frequent teacher changes.²⁵⁶ Browne was very critical of the poor results achieved by the girls whom he described as 'deficient in animation and intelligence'.²⁵⁷

Schools Inspector Browne's 1858 Report on Lancashire schools revealed a general mediocrity although there was an occasional good school. Pauper education was well established in Lancashire by the 1850s. Of 25 Lancashire Unions, only six sent their children to local elementary schools.²⁵⁸ By 1862 Browne was impressed by the standards achieved in some workhouse schools, preferring them to the large establishments at Swinton in Manchester and Kirkdale in Liverpool, although he acknowledged that there were few really good schools anywhere in his district.²⁵⁹

Other areas of the country fared better than the North and West. The Reports of Schools Inspectors Bowyer in the Eastern and Midland District, Ruddock in the South, and Tufnell in the Metropolis, revealed that in general standards were higher and more uniform.

In 1864 Bowyer showed general satisfaction with the progress in the Midlands since he had started inspecting in 1847. 'Current instruction' was 'reasonably efficient'. Guardians

²⁵⁴ Hastings, *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 237.

²⁵⁵ At Thirsk, *ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Groke, *thesis, op. cit.*, p.60.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 58.

²⁵⁸ T. O'Brien, *thesis, op. cit.*

²⁵⁹ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report 1862, Minutes CCE, PRO ED 17/28.*

were 'more appreciative' of education.²⁶⁰ In the quality of general subject teaching Bowyer concluded that instruction in Religious Knowledge was the most successful. Additionally most children could write from memory, read reasonably well, and had a more varied knowledge of Geography than previously. However, he criticised the standard of spelling, blaming the poor results on erratic school attendance. In the teaching of Arithmetic children were given insufficient practice in the early rules. Like School Inspector Symons and James Organ, Bowyer felt that Geography and History were often badly taught and that a broader understanding of these subjects was required, together with more up-to-date textbooks.²⁶¹

In the South of England, Ruddock noted a steady, if slow, improvement up to 1860. However he remained convinced that pauper education could not materially improve whilst children were kept in the close vicinities of workhouses.²⁶² Unlike Browne, he still favoured District and large Separate Schools, but was not uncritical of standards at the two District Schools in his region - Farnham and Hartley Witney, and Reading and Wokingham. Both Ruddock and the Poor Law Inspector for the district, Pigott, were dissatisfied with these schools throughout the 1850s.²⁶³

The South Eastern District was dominated by the Metropolis but it is misleading to assess the region's educational standards on the conditions prevailing in the capital alone. In comparison with rural and other town areas the Metropolitan schools, especially the District Schools, were undoubtedly superior. This is not to denigrate educational achievements elsewhere in the South East which were generally better than in the North and West. Tufnell admitted in 1861 to the Newcastle Commission that despite his objections to workhouse schools and preference for District Schools, he had to report that the intellectual achievement in workhouse schools in the South East was generally

²⁶⁰ Schools Inspector Bowyer, *General Report* 1862, *Minutes*. CCE, PRO MH 32/108.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Schools Inspector Ruddock, *General Report* 1848-9, *Minutes* CCE, P.P. 1850 XLIII, p. 90.

²⁶³ Obermann, *thesis, op. cit.*, pp. 187-8.

satisfactory.²⁶⁴ This statement from such a passionate advocate of District Schools as Tufnell gave it additional credence.

Much of the information concerning the standard of pauper education must derive from the acceptance of statistical findings given by the Poor Law and Schools Inspectors and the CCE. Statistical disputes over industrial education did not, for instance, begin to occur until later in the century. W. E. Chance criticised the 1896 Departmental Enquiry into Education in Metropolitan Poor Law Schools for ignoring evidence concerning the level of successful depauperisation achieved by London Poor Law Schools.²⁶⁵ In general there is little evidence of how percentages or statistical conclusions were reached.

In the findings presented by Kay Shuttleworth in 1838 of the number of children in Norfolk and Suffolk able to read and write, he produced no information as to what standards were used.²⁶⁶ Ruddock listed the educational achievements of children in the Somerset unions in 1847 and did provide slightly more detail on the criteria used than given by Kay Shuttleworth. In Reading, children placed in the first stage were those who knew the alphabet and were able to spell one syllable words; second stage, two syllable words and reading from elementary books; third stage, reading Scriptures with 'reasonable fluency'.²⁶⁷

This information cannot be seen to represent an accurate picture. The percentage of children, for instance, taught in a particular subject was not a true indication of the number of workhouses offering the various subjects. Statistics were also often taken during the winter months when there were more 'casual' children in schools. These children

²⁶⁴ Schools Inspector Tufnell, evidence to the Newcastle Commission, P.P. 1861 XXI, Part IV, *op. cit.*, Question 3147.

²⁶⁵ W.E.Chance, *op. cit.*, Appendix A, p.363.

²⁶⁶ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

²⁶⁷ Cited in Baker, *thesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

increased attendance numbers but decreased standards as they only received short periods of education and were generally less well informed.

Such findings only give a general guide. However statistical sources can provide some valid indicators. Accordingly, Ruddock's opinions and assessments can have a certain credibility because of his experience and knowledge. He was an official examiner for Queen's Scholarship and training college certificates. Thus, for instance, his description of Bath and Taunton schools as 'highly satisfactory' can be taken as a reliable comment, but only according to Ruddock's standards as known.²⁶⁸

Gradually, throughout the second half of the century, administrators, both central and local, were becoming more critical and knowledgeable on the subject of pauper education and expected higher standards. As the century progressed more thought was given to broadening the basic curriculum and to the inclusion of extra-curricular activities. It was not until the last two decades of that century that real improvements occurred, with the increased provision of books and recreational equipment. By that time the emotional development of children was also being considered following Jane Senior's critical report in 1873 on the progress of girls in large Metropolitan schools.²⁶⁹ These developments were more evolutionary than planned. At the end of the century the General Order of 1847 was still in force, stipulating only a very basic curriculum. The picture of pauper education that emerges is one of limited, piecemeal progress, encompassing a variety of local responses to central administration. This fragmented progress was certainly witnessed by the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate who from 1847 were responsible for inspecting, monitoring and reporting on developments in the schools. Poor Law Schools Inspector

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

²⁶⁹ LGB Inspector Jane Senior, *General Report* 1873, P.P.1874 XXV, *op cit.* See below, Chapter 8.

Jelinger Symons endeavoured both to raise standards and to create some uniformity in pauper education in the West of England and Wales between 1848 and 1860.

CHAPTER FOUR

JELINGER COOKSON SYMONS: HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTOR FOR POOR LAW SCHOOLS IN THE WEST AND WALES, 1848 - 1860

1 The Creation of a Poor Law Schools Inspectorate

The principle of inspection consolidated and rationalised social developments in the third decade of the nineteenth century. The first government inspectors were appointed at a time of unprecedented change in the functions and responsibilities of central government and were a crucial factor in the development of the Victorian administrative state. Government intervention and social reform between 1833 and 1856 affected factories, mines, asylums, railways, prisons, reformatories and public health as well as education and the Poor Law. Factory work, chimney sweeping and mining have been cited as industries where legislation was ineffective until the introduction of inspection.¹ Despite the strong *laissez-faire* philosophy of governments in the 1830s, there was also a growing pragmatic acceptance that the state should, at times, be able to intervene. Once state intervention began to develop between 1830 and 1860 through the establishment of regulations, inspection followed as a natural safeguard, aimed at ensuring that any new codes of practice would be adhered to.

The growth and importance of the education inspectorate was demonstrated in Nancy Ball's classic study in 1973.² It was within the elementary inspectorate, established in 1839, that

¹ Oliver Macdonagh, *A Pattern of Government Growth 1800 - 1860* (1961), pp.337 - 8.
² Nancy Ball, *Her Majesty's Inspectorate* (1973).

the concept of professional 'expert' became most evident.³ Soon afterwards the need for a separate inspectorate to monitor the specific education administered under the Poor Law became apparent. The role and influence of the first Inspectors for Poor Law Schools was a critical factor in the implementation of pauper education at a local level.

The inspection of Poor Law Schools was a responsibility of the central authority for more than sixty years. During that time, however, control alternated between Poor Law and Education authorities.⁴ Initially, between 1834 and 1847, responsibility rested with the PLC who delegated the task to their Assistant Commissioners. However school inspection was only one of the duties of the Assistant Commissioners whose main concern was to establish the new Poor Law unions. Their correspondence throughout the period contained few references to education.⁵ After the demise of the PLC in 1847 responsibility for pauper education was passed to the CCE. This was the most innovative period in the inspection of Poor Law Schools.

By 1846 it was fast becoming evident that the varied duties of the Assistant Commissioners left little time for the promotion or inspection of pauper education. Kay Shuttleworth acknowledged that District Schools were not being established with the ease he had originally envisaged.⁶ In order to improve the standard of workhouse education he proposed that a Parliamentary Grant should be made available, with amounts determined by regular inspections.⁷ Grants, together with inspection, would ensure both quantity and quality.⁸ Kay Shuttleworth recommended that the inspection of Poor Law Schools should

³ Richard Johnson, 'Educating the Educators, Experts and the State', in A.P.Donajkowski, *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1977).

⁴ See below, Appendix IV.

⁵ E.g. Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Day, Correspondence 1838, *op.cit.*; Assistant Poor Law Commissioners Mott, Neave, Parker Correspondence 1834-46, PRO MH 33/4.

⁶ Paper on the Administration of the Grant of £30,000 for the salaries of Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses of Workhouses. Minutes CCE 1846, vol. 1. Reprinted *Minutes CCE*, P.U.S. 1847-8-9, p. 47.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

not be given to the elementary schools inspectors who were already overstretched.⁹ Furthermore, the advisory nature of the elementary inspectorate was seen to be inappropriate in Poor Law Schools where a more inspectorial function was required.¹⁰ A separate inspectorate specifically intended for Poor Law Schools was essential.

Under the terms of the Concordat of 1840, the Elementary Schools Inspectors could not interfere with either the instruction or the management of elementary schools.¹¹ Owing to the sensitive and volatile nature of the relationship between Church and State, the presence of the inspectors was by invitation. Poor Law schools, on the other hand, would be compelled to admit inspectors if they wished to obtain monetary aid from the Parliamentary Grant.¹² The Inspectorate for Poor Law Schools were to be actively involved in school organisation - in both mental and industrial training - a policy which was almost bound to bring it into contact with the Poor Law authorities, both central and local.¹³ The inspectors were to examine the teachers closely to ensure that the management of schools by the Guardians was efficient.¹⁴ Certificates would be issued by the Inspectors according to the level of competence of the teacher.

Initially four salary bands were introduced - Permission, Probation, Competency and Efficiency.¹⁵ Certificates would act as a financial inducement; a higher certificate resulted in a larger salary. In this way it was intended that inspectors would gain control over the content and quality of classroom work. Whereas Elementary Schools Inspectors were specifically reminded that they were to advise rather than control, Poor Law Schools Inspectors were to inspect and examine.¹⁶

9

Ibid.

10

Instructions to Poor Law Schools Inspectors, Feb. 4 1848, PP 1847-8 L.

11

Instructions to Elementary Schools Inspectors, Jan. 4 1840, Minutes CCE, PP 1840 XL.

12

Instructions to Poor Law Schools Inspectors, *op cit.*

13

Ibid.

14

Ibid.

15

Paper on the administration of the Grant Workhouses, *op. cit.*

16

Instructions to Poor Law Schools Inspectors, *op. cit.*

Although the curriculum was narrower in workhouse schools, the inspectorial nature of the Poor Law Schools Inspector's post was onerous.¹⁷ It was initially envisaged that four inspectors would be required for England and Wales. On February 4th 1847 the first two were appointed - Edwin Carleton Tufnell and Joshua Festing Ruddock. They were joined seven months later, on September 28th, by Henry George Bowyer and Thomas Browne Browne. It was soon recognised that four inspectors were insufficient for the huge area and large number of schools to be inspected and Jelinger Cookson Symons was appointed as the fifth Inspector for Poor Law Schools on February 11th 1848.

These five inspectors represented what has been termed the 'first generation' inspectorate.¹⁸ Each inspector was allocated a district of England and Wales, initially as follows: Tufnell, Metropolis; Ruddock, South; Bowyer, East and Midlands; Browne, North; Symons, West and Wales. All remained in office until retirement or death and were wholeheartedly committed to the promotion of pauper education. They were succeeded by equally capable, efficient and hardworking inspectors but the pioneering, and at times crusading, spirit of the first Inspectors for Poor Law Schools was unique.¹⁹

Despite their different enthusiasms within the field of education, the inspectors appointed in 1847 and 1848 were each convinced that the best way to eradicate pauperism was by means of effective and appropriate schooling. Their early training and experience was largely based within the legal system and led to a conscientious attention being paid to order and detail. The similarity of outlook of the early education inspectorate has been described succinctly:

They attended the same schools, matriculated at the same universities, and joined the same clubs. They thus reflected the same orthodoxies. Their families, often of

¹⁷ The pauper curriculum was composed of reading, writing, arithmetic and religious instruction. In elementary schools this was widened to include physical education, geography, history, etymology and grammar, Instructions for Inspectors, Poor Law, Elementary, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ This term is employed by Frank Cooke, 'The Organisation and Work of the Inspectorate of Poor Law Schools 1846-1904', M.Ed. *thesis*, Manchester (1980) p. 65. For changes in district allocations, 1847-1904, see Appendix IV.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69. See Appendix V for full list of the Inspectorate for Poor Law Schools.

the professional class and of evangelical faith, taught them industry, purpose, discipline and a sense of moral duty; and at their chapels and churches they learned a sturdy Christianity.²⁰

The proselytising approach of the inspectors was thus contained within acceptable moral boundaries; their faith in the reforming nature of education was tempered by a belief in the need to maintain a class-based society in which pauper children should have access to sufficient, but not excessive, areas of knowledge.

The first nineteenth century inspectors had the qualities of many social reformers - serious, religious, believing in self help and individualism with a paternalistic but genuine concern for the underprivileged.²¹ This description goes some way to describe the character of Poor Law Schools Inspector Symons.

2 Jelinger Cookson Symons

Symons was born at West Ilsley, Berkshire, on August 27th 1809, the son of the Reverend Jelinger Symons.²² He was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, gaining a B.A. in 1832. In 1835 Symons stood unsuccessfully for Parliament at Stroud in Gloucestershire. He came a poor third and did not attempt to stand for Parliament again.²³ In 1843 Symons was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple and later went on the Oxford circuit, attending the Gloucester Quarter Sessions.²⁴ Law was to occupy only a subsidiary part of his career, however, although he remained editor of *The Law Magazine* until its

²⁰ D.Roberts, *op cit.*,p.168.

²¹ John Roach, *Social Reform in England 1780-1880* (1978) p.99.

²² The Reverend Symons was British Chaplain at Boulogne for some years before becoming vicar of Monkland in Herefordshire in 1808. For information on the Reverend Symons, see entry for his son, Jelinger Cookson Symons, D.N.B Vol LV,1898.

²³ F.W.S. Craig (ed.), *British Parliamentary Election Results 1832-1835* (Dartmouth 1989), p. 292.

²⁴ DNB, *op.cit.*

combination with *The Law Review* in 1856.²⁵ In 1845 Symons married Angelina Kendall of Leamington in Warwickshire, the daughter of Edward Kendall, formerly High Sheriff of Brecknockshire. The family home was established in Great Malvern in Worcestershire.

On February 11th 1848 Symons was appointed as an Inspector of Poor Law Schools, his appointment bringing the total inspectorate to five. He was allocated to the West of England and Wales and remained in the post until his death in 1860.²⁶ Politically Symons was a liberal, as was the majority of the nineteenth century inspectorate.²⁷ In his educational philosophy he was strongly influenced by Pestalozzi, whose practical, meaningful approach to education was far removed from the rote learning and mechanical instruction that dominated current practice. Like Pestalozzi, Symons believed in the development of all a child's faculties - intellectual, moral and physical.

Primary education must partake of (this) vital principle imparted to it first by Pestalozzi. There is no error greater than that which deems education to be fulfilled by instruction; instruction is but the means to education, it is not education itself.²⁸

Symons agreed with the interpretation of Pestalozzi's philosophy put forward in 1840 by William Hickson, educationalist and editor of *The Westminster Review*.

The basis of his (Pestalozzi's) plan of instruction was not so much teaching, as first setting about to create in the mind of the child the disposition to learn, and then instead of at once satisfying its curiosity, putting it in the way of finding out for itself what it wanted to know.²⁹

Symons had a strong belief in the need for a firm moral and religious basis to education, his views presumably influenced by his upbringing as the son of an Anglican vicar. However, he tended to follow a Lockian tradition, emphasising the need for the understanding of different points of view and for religious toleration. This philosophy also

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*

27 Roberts, *op. cit.*

28 Jelinger C. Symons, *Outlines of Political Economy* (1840), pp. 41-42.

29 *Ibid.*, quoting William Hickson.

placed great importance on order and self-discipline and the instillation of habits of virtue, kindness and obedience. Order and self-discipline within a religious and moral framework were to be the guiding principles behind Symons' approach to his work as a Schools Inspector in the 1850s.

Symons' legal knowledge and experience led to a genuine concern over the criminal activities of the poorer classes and how these might be curtailed. His conviction that crime was a pressing issue led to correspondence with Edwin Chadwick in 1844.³⁰ Symons' enthusiasm to effect measures to improve conditions was starkly contrasted by Chadwick's evident disillusionment with the responses of government to this and other social evils. Both men agreed that severely overcrowded living conditions led to demoralisation and then to crime.

However Chadwick saw little point in Symons continuing to press the matter in government circles, for despite:

horrors that are disgraceful to civilised country ... there is a great aversion to any such enquiries on the parts of many of the members of both Houses and of influential people out of them.³¹

Characteristically, Symons was not discouraged and later wrote a treatise on how to prevent crime through the development of effective industrial education for criminal children.³² From the commencement of his appointment as an inspector, Symons was particularly concerned to break the "corrupting influence of a workhouse system in which crime and pauperism revolved".³³ Symons regarded the transition from pauperism to crime as "natural and frequent" and argued that girls were at greater risk than boys. He

³⁰ Edwin Chadwick to Jelinger Symons, July 18 1844 Chadwick MSS 2181/3, Copy Book III, Letter 56.

³¹ Edwin Chadwick to Jelinger Symons, *ibid*.

³² Jelinger C. Symons, *Tactics for the Times, as Regards the Condition and Treatment of the Dangerous Classes* (1849).

³³ Jelinger C. Symons, *General Report* 1848, PRO MH 19/14. Part of Symons' later duties as a Schools Inspector was occasionally to inspect industrial schools and reformatories.

cited statistics from the Governor of Cheltenham Gaol which revealed that 37.5% of female prisoners had previously been in a workhouse.³⁴ All Symons' writings revealed a wide and continuing interest in a diverse range of subjects other than education - from scientific analyses to a topographical study of a Welsh town.³⁵ *The Times* obituary for Symons in 1860 stated:

The various pamphlets, lectures, speeches, etc. and more elaborate treatises on educational and social subjects which he published fill upwards of six pages in the new catalogue of the British Museum.³⁶

Symons considered himself an expert in certain aspects of science and was in favour of applying scientific methods to social problems. This was particularly evident in the schemes and designs he propounded aimed at improving the efficiency of land use by the workhouse schools.³⁷ His literary versatility, together with his ability at the bar, brought him early recognition and in 1835, aged 26, he was made a member of the Royal Commission investigating the conditions for unemployed handloom weavers.³⁸ This was followed by his inclusion in two other Commissions, the Mining Commission in 1843, and perhaps the most important - certainly the one most pertinent for his future career as a Schools Inspector - the Commission investigating the State of Education in Wales in 1847.³⁹

Throughout this time Symons was an ardent and vocal campaigner for a distinctive education for pauper children but his assertive approach tended to frustrate and hinder his relationships with both central and local Poor Law authorities.⁴⁰ Symons agreed with Kay Shuttleworth and Tufnell that a specific and separate education was necessary if Poor Law

³⁴ E.g. *Special Report on Reformatories in Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and Wales*, Feb.1857, PP 1857, vol. XXXIII, Sess.2.

³⁵ *Milford, Past, Present and Future* (1857).

³⁶ *The Times*, Apr.12 1860.

³⁷ Frank Cooke, *thesis*, *op.cit.* p. 90.

³⁸ *Report of the Commissioners for Inquiry into the Condition of the Unemployed Handloom Weavers in the United Kingdom*, with Appendix. PP 1841 X.

³⁹ *Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, PP 1847, XXVII.

⁴⁰ See this chapter, Section 4.4.

children were to be rescued from pauperism. For most of his time as a Schools Inspector, he supported the District School system, seeing it as a total environment within which pauper children could be moulded and transformed into useful citizens.⁴¹ In particular he was a passionate advocate of the beneficial effects to be gained from intensive agricultural training and he remained an apologist for this system of education throughout his inspectorial career.

2.1 Educational Philosophy

Symons' description of the methods he used to enquire into the state of education in Wales in 1847 gave a clear indication of his educational criteria prior to his appointment as a Schools Inspector. To begin with he emphasised that throughout his investigations he had been constantly aware of his original instructions:

to consider what measures ought to be taken for the improvement of the existing means of Education in Wales.⁴²

At this time much of Wales was backward and underdeveloped, considerably hampered by rough hilly terrain and dominated by a rural economy. This situation was compounded by a rapid growth in population in the first half of the nineteenth century which resulted in a breakdown of social structures.⁴³

⁴¹ In his final report in 1859 Symons was to voice some doubts over the suitability of large district schools for the education of girls. J.C.Symons, *General Report 1859, Minutes, CCE, 1859-60*, PRO ED 17/25, p. 560.

⁴² Jelinger Symons, 'Report on Brecknock, Cardigan, Radnor, Monmouth' *Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, Part II, PP 1847 XXVII.

⁴³ The population explosion was due more to an increase in the number of live births rather than any drop in the death rate. Although many workers came from the Midlands to the iron industries of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, there were few influxes of labour from elsewhere. David Williams, *The Rebecca Riots* (Cardiff, 1986), p.90. Conway Davies, 'The Effect of Industrial Development in the Rhondda and Taff Valleys upon children between 1842 and 1870, M.Ed. thesis, Cardiff (1986), p. 18.

The outmoded system of local administration was unable to cope with the effects of an enlarged population.⁴⁴ Symons' report pays tribute to the hard work undertaken by his assistants during what was a hard winter in Wales, aggravated by bad roads in inaccessible mountain regions. Symons' area included the counties of Brecknock, Cardigan, Radnor and Monmouth. Whereas the assistants visited a large number of schools, giving short reports on each establishment, Symons, with his greater knowledge and sense of purpose, examined a few schools thoroughly.

For I conceived my province to be less that of an inspector of schools than an enquirer into education. I have deemed the mental condition of the children the primary object of attention, and that it would be better ascertained by measuring results than by minute observation of the means used to produce them: nevertheless I have not failed to note the organisation, discipline, method of instruction, capacity of the teacher, apparatus and physical circumstances of each school I have seen.⁴⁵

There are clear indications here of the structured conscientious approach Symons adopted to his work. He watched classes being taught and later examined individual children to ascertain whether they had achieved any genuine understanding behind their rote learning. His conclusions were pessimistic:

... the rote system is a constant cloak of ignorance - a gloss which not only veils the truth, but prevents improvement by concealing the need for it.⁴⁶

Symons' main concern throughout his Welsh investigation, however, was the predominance of the Welsh language which he regarded as a 'vast drawback' to any attempt to develop educational opportunities:

[a] manifold barrier to the moral progress and commercial prosperity of the people. It is not easy to overestimate its evil effects ... [a] ... conscious barrier to all moral improvements and popular progress in Wales.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ David Williams, *op. cit.*, p. viii.

⁴⁵ J.C.Symons, 'Report on ... Monmouth' in *Report ... Education in Wales, op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.6.

Symons saw the perpetuation of the Welsh language as a major reason for the poor state of education in Wales. Children needed to be taught in English if they were to have access to useful common knowledge. Symons was never reticent in voicing his opinions and his strongly critical attitude towards the Welsh language provoked early controversy. Symons was a devout Anglican and his outspoken comments in non-conformist Wales were not well received. An editorial in the leading non-conformist newspaper, *The Leeds Mercury*, in 1848 criticised Symons' attitude and also the original decision to appoint three Commissioners, all of whom were unable to speak the language of the country.

... we need not say how exceedingly liable they must have been to mistake in judging of a people whose tongue is foreign.⁴⁸

It is possible that Symons underestimated the pre-eminence of Nonconformity in the life of the Welsh people. However, it is more likely that he was only too aware of its influence and saw the growth of Nonconformity, and moves away from the Anglican Church, as a factor in the general lack of morality condemned by all three Commissioners.⁴⁹ The influence of religion was greater in Wales at this time than it was in England or any other Protestant country.⁵⁰

From his report on Wales, and subsequently during his time as a Schools Inspector, it is clear that Symons was willing to delegate essential work to his assistants. In Wales his use of, and dependence on, assistants distanced him even further from the experiences of children whose native tongue was not English. Although it is evident that the large area he was investigating would have proved too extensive for any one man to have reported on efficiently, Symons' approach tended to bring him into conflict with other interested parties. The compiled results of his own and his assistants' work were sometimes queried. Symons stated in his report that there had been a recent decline in the number of children being educated. He further asserted that the silence of the Welsh press when his

⁴⁸ *The Leeds Mercury* June 22 1848.

⁴⁹ David Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁵⁰ Leslie Wynne Evans, *Education in Industrial Wales, 1700-1900* (Cardiff, 1971), p. iii.

conclusions were made known attested to the validity of his statement.⁵¹ Local newspapers may not have taken issue with Symons, but *The Leeds Mercury* angered by Symons' pro-Anglican views was only too prepared to dispute his findings, arguing that Symons had misread his own statistics:

... the Reverend⁵² Gentleman shows that when Mr. Tremeneere was sent into Monmouthshire after the Chartist outbreak of 1839, he reported only 1,986 day scholars in principle (*sic*) mining districts ... whereas Mr. Symons found no less (*sic*) than 3,787 scholars, or an increase within seven years of nearly 100%.⁵³

The newspaper quoted from the Reverend Thomas Williams, Secretary of the Board of Education in Wales since 1839, who took issue with Symons' conclusions:

I am conversant with the statistics of this subject and I do not hesitate to assert that the increase in education from that period (1839) until now has been at once regular and rapid; while the Commissioners will, I am sure, be unable to point out a single parish in the county ... in which the means of education can be proved to be on the decrease.⁵⁴

The issue remained unresolved. However, despite remaining personally committed to the Anglican Church, Symons displayed a certain liberal tolerance towards different branches of Christianity. His foremost concern was with social issues and he was able to place his personal religion to one side.⁵⁵ Symons argued that education should supercede sectarian differences. In the same year as his report on Wales he wrote *A Plea for Schools* in which he acknowledged that Dissenters did not wish to pay for religious teaching by Anglicans any more than Anglicans wished to pay for Non-Conformity. However, any refusal to do so would result in the education of poor children being adversely affected. The children should not be prevented from learning "all that is useful" because of religious bigotry.⁵⁶

⁵¹ *The Leeds Mercury*, *op. cit.*

⁵² The reference was to Symons who was not a clergyman. Presumably *The Leeds Mercury* confused him with his father, who was.

⁵³ *The Leeds Mercury*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁴ The Reverend Thomas Williams, quoted in *The Leeds Mercury*, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ John Roach, *op cit.*, p.99.

⁵⁶ Jelinger C. Symons, *A Plea for Schools* (1847), p. 68.

Although Symons was very critical of the education he witnessed in Wales he did not launch into the verbose treatises he was later to favour. On this occasion his comments were couched in less flamboyant language and showed succinctly the depth of his commitment to education. His perceptive remarks with regard to the 'Dearth of Infant Schools' revealed a progressive attitude that would have relevance in the twentieth century argument for the expansion of nursery education:

The value of early training is perhaps scarcely over-estimated when it is deemed equivalent to that of education in the succeeding years. At any rate infant discipline gives effect and facility to maturer instruction: and its absence in Wales is certainly among the main elements of the ignorance prevailing in the country.⁵⁷

Symons' conviction that education was the main route by which the labouring classes could move away from poverty and pauperism was evident in almost all his writings. His detailed personal analysis of the state of the nation's economy, written in 1840, placed strong emphasis on a meaningful education.⁵⁸ He stressed his abhorrence of the 'mechanical parrotism' that was so dominant in the schools and of his belief that a child should be:

the agent of his own instruction.⁵⁹

To this end he recommended following the regime used in several of the continental schools he had visited:

In the oral lessons led by the master without set forms of words, the child is compelled, not merely to answer set questions, but to supply the keystones to sentences of which the instructor supplies the framework only.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Jelinger Symons, *Rough Types of English Life* (1860).

⁵⁸ Jelinger Symons, *Outlines of Popular Economy*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* This phrase was to be echoed over 120 years later in *Children and their Primary Schools*, A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education, 1966, (Plowden Report).

⁶⁰ Jelinger Symons, *Outlines of Popular Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

However it was in the development of industrial training for pauper children that Symons' interest grew. In nearly all his writings Symons made some reference to agricultural training, even when it did not initially appear to have any relevance. This is particularly evident in *Rough Types of English Life*, published just after his death in 1860.⁶¹ The book comprises a collection of character studies drawn from Symons' legal experiences. The studies are colloquial, conversational, lighthearted pieces, quite unlike his other writings. Nevertheless, in the centre of the volume is a chapter entitled, 'How to Make Common Schools More Useful' - a repeat of a paper originally given to the Social Science Association in Liverpool. It is out of place in this collection of anecdotal accounts and leaves the impression that his preoccupation with education had become by then obsessional. In this chapter Symons reiterated his plea for a more purposeful education for the children of labourers. He emphasised in this, his final publication, a longstanding belief in the value of an industrial, and more particularly, an agricultural training for poor children:

Nothing ... comes near to an industrial school for practical usefulness. At Lord Lyttleton's School at Hayley a good portion of the boys learn spade husbandry, rearing respectable crops, and work well at carpentering.⁶²

Symons' passion for District Schools and agricultural training was to dominate all his reports as a Schools Inspector. In retrospect he has been termed "England's most enthusiastic proponent of farm schools".⁶³ He was a social missionary on a 'secular crusade', proslysiting on the virtues of agricultural training wherever he went.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Jelinger Symons, *Rough Types of English Life*, *op. cit.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 121. *Rough Types of English Life* was dedicated to Lord Lyttleton for whom Symons had a great respect. Lyttleton was Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire where Symons resided from 1845. Lyttleton maintained a lifelong interest in education, not only for the middle and upper classes - he was a member of the Taunton Schools Inquiry Commission 1864-8 - but also for the children of the poor. (D.N.B.). See also Peter Stansky, 'Lyttleton and Thring: A Study in Nineteenth Century Education', in Peter Stansky (ed.), *The Victorian Revolution. Government and Society in Victoria's Britain* (New York, 1973).

⁶³ David Roberts, *Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State*, *op. cit.*, p.195.

⁶⁴ John Roach, *op. cit.*, p.41.

In common with his colleagues Symons saw agricultural labour as chiefly applicable to boys. However, alone among the Inspectors, Symons also recognised that girls could also benefit from tasks that were linked to farming. Training for girls in a District School could encompass the acquisition of dairy skills. Symons was not, however, very successful in persuading Boards of Guardians to adopt this idea. He was later critical of opportunities that were missed to train girls to be efficient dairy maids, especially in Shropshire and Worcestershire where there was a scarcity of appropriately trained female labour.⁶⁵ Although in some cases girls were utilised to help in dairies, they were not trained to work independently. One of Symons' few criticisms of the South East Shropshire District School at Quatt was that girls worked at different separate tasks in the dairy but never learned to make cheese.⁶⁶ If girls were trained effectively the cycle of pauperism could be broken and fewer pauper girls would become criminal adults.⁶⁷

Symons' concern to establish District Schools, with efficient agricultural training for both girls and boys, was to dominate his work as an Inspector. It brought him into conflict with local Boards of Guardians and the central PLB. Symons was not the only Schools Inspector to have disagreements with Boards of Guardians. Both Browne and Ruddock were involved in long-running disputes with unions over the implementation of a suitable curriculum.⁶⁸ However, Symons' disagreements with both local and central administration were more acrimonious and more public. In particular, disputes in which Symons was involved exacerbated the deteriorating relationship between the CCE and the PLB in the 1850s.

⁶⁵ Jelinger C. Symons, *General Report* 1850, PP 1852 XXXIX, p. 289.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ E.g. Ruddock clashed with Boards of Guardians over the organisation of the school day, Baker *thesis, op. cit.*, p. 119. Browne had similar disputes over school organisation and over his desire to have a strong Anglican basis to pauper education, Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report* 1858, Minutes CCE, PRO ED 17/24.

2.2 Attempts to establish District Schools

When Jelinger Symons was appointed to the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate in 1848, he was given responsibility for the West of England and Wales.⁶⁹ In his first report he stressed his commitment to the establishment of District Schools. Symons was very critical of the state of workhouse education in the region. He commented on the inadequacy of workhouse buildings, the lack of training in useful trades and the corrupting influence of adult paupers - all of which he saw as impeding the possibility of progress towards an efficient education.⁷⁰ This report contrasted with one submitted by Lingen as part of the inquiry into the state of education in Wales, on the Welsh counties of Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire and Pembroke, . Out of thirteen unions in the three counties, ten had workhouse schools; Lingen classified three as 'good', four as 'fair' and only two as 'poor'.⁷¹ Schools Inspector H. Longueville Jones, who inspected elementary schools in the same area in 1851, also reported favourably. Education in Glamorganshire in particular was excellent, with schools in the smallest towns and villages especially 'doing well'.⁷²

Symons, with his belief in the need for effective industrial training for the children of the poorer classes, was however dissatisfied. He believed the education being offered in workhouse schools in Wales and the West of England in 1848 was totally inadequate. He was particularly concerned with the amount of teachers' and children's time that was spent on menial tasks that were often actively encouraged by the Board of Guardians.⁷³ The amalgamation of small workhouse schools into large District Schools was the only efficient means to ensure the correct form of training. Symons was only in favour of household tasks if they formed part of a structured programme of moral and physical reclamation and

⁶⁹ Symons' counties included Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Gloucestershire, Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, Anglesey, Flint, Denbigh, Caernarvonshire, Merionethshire, Radnor, Cardigan, Brecknock, Pembroke and Monmouthshire.

⁷⁰ Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report*, Mar.31 1848.

⁷¹ Ralph Lingen, Report on Welsh Schools in Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire and Pembroke, in *Report ... Education in Wales*, *op. cit.*

⁷² Rev. H. Longueville Jones, *General Report* 1851, in *Inspectors' Reports 1851-2, Minutes CCE PRO* Ed 17/16.

⁷³ Symons, *General Report* 1848, *op. cit.*

not just an aid to workhouse management. Girls should not be asked to nurse younger children without learning the appropriate nursing skills.⁷⁴ District Schools gave opportunities for self-sufficiency through land cultivation, the learning of a variety of trade skills, and most critically the improvement and development of the children - morally, mentally and physically - by means of strenuous agricultural labour, thus:

breaking the circle continually expanding under the present system - in which crime and paupers do revolve.⁷⁵

Symons' main emphasis was always on the training of boys and by 1859 he was expressing some concern over whether District Schools were suitable places for girls. He voiced a growing fear that too many girls placed together in institutions were likely to become demoralised.⁷⁶ This indication of concern by Symons in 1859 preceded Jane Senior's critical report on girls in large Poor Law Schools by fifteen years.⁷⁷

For most of his time as an Inspector, Symons struggled to get District Schools established so that the training he advocated, in particular agricultural training for boys, could be implemented. Despite early rejections, he was not discouraged by the responses he received and openly included seven replies in the appendix to his 1848 Report. Six unions - Bromsgrove, Pershore, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Winchcomb and Northleach were all opposed to District Schools for a variety of reasons. These included a lack of governmental advice, general satisfaction with their current situation, the inadvisability of giving advantages to pauper children and a fear of high costs. Stroud Union was the only one of the seven prepared to consider the possibility of amalgamation by sending a deputation to visit a District School and report back.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Symons, *General Report*, 1854, P.P. 1854-5 XLII, pp 145-6.

⁷⁵ Symons, *General Report*, 1848, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ Symons, *General Report*, 1859, Minutes CCE 1859-60, PRO ED 17/25, p. 560.

⁷⁷ LGB Inspector Jane Senior, *General Report*, 1873, Third Annual Report LGB, P.P.1873-74 XXV, Appendix 22, pp. 311-394, see below, Chapter 8.

⁷⁸ Jelinger C. Symons, *General Report* 1848, *op. cit.*

Eight months later, in December 1848, Symons published a short address to the Chairmen of the respective unions on the advisability of district schooling for the Ludlow and Worcester areas. He reminded Guardians of the requirements of Article 114 of the 1847 General Order of the PLC setting out the requirements for the education of indoor pauper children.⁷⁹ Guardians could not abdicate their responsibility just because they felt that:

the means do not exist in the present workhouses of carrying out industrial training, according to the spirit and obvious meaning of the law respecting it.⁸⁰

District schooling need not be any more costly than what was currently being provided :

in the first place by due economy in your arrangements; and in the second, by availing yourselves of the children's labour, profitably applied, which you are now disusing to their injury and your loss. After mature consideration of the matter, and after seeking council (*sic*) from experienced men on the subject, I am led to the conclusion that in these agricultural districts, the cultivation of light loam land by spade husbandry, with liquid manure, will at once be the most profitable for you, and beneficial to the children.⁸¹

Symons calculated the financial outlay that would be required to form a school district to incorporate the unions of Ludlow, Leominster, Cleobury, Church Stretton and Clun.⁸² Much time and effort was spent to persuade the Guardians to accept his argument. It was to no avail; no District School was ever established in the locality.

A fascinating insight into what may have been discussed at Ludlow can be found in the correspondence that passed between the PLB and the CCE. It included a short printed play, written by an anonymous Ludlow Guardian entitled *Some Talk on the Formulation of Industrial Training Schools for Pauper Children in connection with and dependent on*

⁷⁹ Article 114, General Order July 24 1847, Poor Law Commission Circulars 1844-1847, PRO MH 10/11. See above, Chapter 1.

⁸⁰ Jelinger C. Symons, *Statement on District Pauper Schools of Industry addressed to the Chairmen of Ludlow and Worcester Poor Law Unions* (Ludlow, 1848), in *Correspondence, CCE*, 1849, Pt. I, Vol. II PRO MH 19/14, p. 4.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

Poor Law Unions.⁸³ The play centres on the possibility of forming a District School at Ludlow. Fictional characters in the play refer to Symons by name as the Schools Inspector keen to promote the idea. 'Farmer Jones' is not interested in industrial training and says of Symons, 'he needn't come back again'. 'Farmer Thompson' would like to be better informed but has genuine doubts over the practicality of the scheme. The 'Doctor', on the other hand, backs Symons' plans. The group visit the 'Farm School' at Quatt but still voice reservations, fuelled by an apparent difference of opinion between the Schools and the Poor Law Inspector. 'Farmer Thompson' comments:

I was surprised to detect a strong shade of difference on this point betwixt Mr. Symons and the Poor Law Inspector, Mr. Doyle.

He added that Inspector Doyle was not fully conversant with how the PLB viewed District Schools and as a result could not give an informed view:

I did not think him in reality opposed to the principle of industrial training to some extent, though the hearty cheers which accompanied his speech showed that nine out of ten Guardians regarded him as the successful opponent of Mr. Symons' recommendation.⁸⁴

'Farmer Jones' expressed concern that Mr. Symons would force the Guardians to establish a District School. The 'Squire', however, commented:

I am sure Mr. Symons will be much better pleased to lead rather than to drive us. He will find it easier too. But then no doubt he is bound to see that we carry out the law.⁸⁵

The allusions to disagreements between Symons and Doyle soon became a reality. Both men were determined and at times self-opinionated. Doyle also had a tendency to be outspoken and irascible. There was an inevitable element of competition between two

⁸³ By a Guardian, *Some Talk on the Formulation of Industrial Training Schools for Pauper Children in connection with and dependent on Poor Law Unions* (Ludlow, 1849), PRO MH 19/14 Pt. I, Sec. 11.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* The 'Squire' is referring to Article 114, *op. cit.*

inspectors who worked in overlapping fields, but were answerable to two separate authorities.

The responsibility for the breakdown of co-operation between the two Inspectors in the West and Wales was not entirely Symons' - Doyle's intransigent attitude led him to object and resent almost any inspection of school facilities by Symons. Correspondence between the two Inspectors and their respective authorities in 1854, over poor ventilation at the South East Shropshire District School, revealed Doyle's determination to exclude Symons' involvement wherever possible.⁸⁶ Symons was often overzealous in his attempts to create amalgamations; one example was with the unions of Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury where a majority of Guardians was resolutely opposed to the idea.⁸⁷ Symons seems to have remained undaunted by the negative reactions of many Guardians.

Criticisms formulated by Inspector Doyle were not so easily discounted. Disagreements between Doyle and Symons led to a file being established at the PLB entitled "Interference of Schools Inspectors".⁸⁸ Doyle complained to the PLB that Symons often met with Guardians to discuss the formation of school districts without consulting him, Doyle, as the appropriate Poor Law Inspector. He cited an occasion when Symons visited Market Drayton without Doyle's knowledge. Doyle argued that Symons was overstepping his duties as a Schools Inspector by discussing areas outside education. It was essential that Symons should work through him, Doyle, as the 'recognised organ' of the PLB.⁸⁹

Doyle continued to give specific examples of times when he felt Symons had deliberately not consulted him. Wiythout consulting Doyle Symons had :

⁸⁶ South East Shropshire School Correspondence, May-June 1854 PRO MH 27/78. See below, Chapter 5.

⁸⁷ Symons to CCE, Oct. 14 1848, Minute initialled J.T.G. PRO MH 19/14 Pt. 2.

⁸⁸ *Correspondence PLB*, Mar. 1849, PRO MH 19/14.

⁸⁹ Doyle to George Nicholls at PLB, Feb. 24 1849, PRO MH 32/17.

strongly recommended the Guardians of Wellington Union to unite with the Guardians of the neighbouring unions ... [in] a District School ... at Waters Upton.

Doyle insisted that there were valid reasons why these unions should not combine. The Schools Inspector knew he should have first submitted his ideas to the CCE who would then pass them to the PLB. On no account should Symons have transmitted his own views directly to a Board of Guardians.⁹⁰ Doyle had summarised the situation correctly. Symons was not permitted to give his own opinions when in attendance as an official education inspector. Any suggestions had first to be sent to the CCE who could then forward them to the Poor Law Board and hence to the local Poor Law Inspector, if it was thought appropriate.⁹¹

Symons' response was detailed and defensive. He saw his reputation, both personal and professional, to be under attack. In a lengthy statement to the CCE in March 1849, Symons refuted Doyle's allegations and added a few accusations of his own.⁹² He produced several documents in his defence which were intended to show how Doyle always had the opportunity to know about any meetings Symons conducted with local Guardians. Symons stated that if he had overstepped his duties at any time, it was by error rather than by design. He mentioned in particular the concern he had felt when Poor Law Inspector Farnall had been moved to another area of the country at a point when he and Farnall were discussing the possibilities of a District School in the Ludlow region. Symons reminded the President of the CCE that he had then immediately referred the matter back to his department:

.....feeling that much more was thrown on me than I had anticipated, especially by the removal of Mr. Farnall. I explained the circumstances to you, Sir, and obtained your concurrence to my consulting Mr. Nicholls of the Poor Law Board on the course I might best pursue. Mr. Nicholls ... saw no objection to my explaining my own views of the advantage of District Schools to the Meeting at Ludlow, so long

⁹⁰

Ibid.

⁹¹

Letter containing Instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools for Pauper Children in England and Wales, *Minutes CCE*, Feb. 5 1848. PRO Ed 17/10.

⁹²

Symons to CCE, Mar.11 1849. PRO MH 19/14.

as I prefaced what I said by stating that I disclaimed any official authority for my Statements, but gave them as my own views. I followed this advice.⁹³

The CCE responded by forwarding Symons' reply, together with his supporting documents, to the PLB. They referred to the dispute as a 'mere misunderstanding', a 'temporary embarrassment', and said they had contacted Symons, reminding him of his duties but would reserve judgement until they had seen Doyle's explanation.⁹⁴ Kay Shuttleworth, then still Secretary of the CCE, informed Symons of the action that had been taken and continued:

... their Lordships are most anxious to convey to you such an interpretation of your instructions as shall, without foregoing the present question, be calculated to obviate the recurrence of similar collisions between the officers of the Committee of Council on Education and the officers of the Poor Law Board to the great prejudice of those public interests which it is the earnest desire of each department to promote by their mutual co-operation.⁹⁵

Kay Shuttleworth reminded Symons of his main responsibilities which were concerned with organisation, discipline, instruction, moral and industrial training. However :

in all matters in which suggestions from H. M. Inspectors would affect the buildings, the classification of the workhouse, or in any way tend to modify the rules, and regulations of the Poor Law Board, H.M.Inspectors ought to submit their suggestions in the first place to the Committee of Council on Education.⁹⁶

This meant that the Schools Inspector should always send any opinions directly to the CCE who would then formally contact the PLB and request a meeting between the Schools and Poor Law Inspectors. Kay Shuttleworth emphasised that Symons was not empowered to act independently and that his responsibility was finished once he had reported to the CCE. There was an 'imperative need [for] hearty co-operation' between the CCE and the PLB. Symons had to accept some responsibility in the matter.⁹⁷

93 *Ibid.*

94 CCE to PLB, Mar. 29 1849, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/14.

95 Kay Shuttleworth to Symons, Mar.29 1849, *Miscellanea, Letter Books CCE 1847-1858*, PRO ED 9/12, p. 1.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

97 *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

Nowhere in this letter does Kay Shuttleworth reprimand Symons directly for his behaviour. Although Kay Shuttleworth revealed an evident concern about the maintenance of good relationships between the two departments, the situation was to deteriorate considerably by the time the Inspectorate for Poor Law Schools was placed under Poor Law Board jurisdiction in 1863.⁹⁸

It is not clear whether the PLB reprimanded Doyle for his part in the affair. Doyle remained unhappy with Symons' replies to his criticisms and in a long detailed letter to George Lumley at the PLB in April 1849 reiterated his complaints.⁹⁹ Symons himself appeared undeterred and later became embroiled in a further altercation with the Poor Law Board, this time with regard to pauper statistics. On November 29th 1849 Symons sent a circular to all the unions in his district requesting:

... a statement of the total number of Inmates, Male and Female, now in your Workhouse, and the number of each sex who have, at any previous time, been inmates of any workhouse.¹⁰⁰

As it was only seven months since Symons had received Kay Shuttleworth's lucid reminder of the areas within his responsibility, this circular appears to have been particularly ill-judged. It was immediately criticised by George Nicholls in an angry letter to Ralph Lingen newly appointed Secretary of the CCE:

The Committee of Council on Education will at once see that [Symons] ... is pursuing a course which is highly irregular, and opposed to the express instructions of the Committee of Council on Education, and is, moreover, at this period of the year very inconvenient, as tending to impose on Workhouse Masters an additional duty, at a time when they are fully employed in preparing numerous Returns and Statements required by this Board. All necessary returns for exhibiting the state of pauperism in each district of the country will shortly be laid before Parliament by this Board and to anticipate those Returns by any partial Statements would only lead to erroneous conclusions.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ See below, Chapter 5.

⁹⁹ Doyle to Lumley, Apr. 3 1849, *Doyle Correspondence* 1848-52, PRO MH 32/17.

¹⁰⁰ Symons, Circular to Unions, Nov. 29 1849, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/15.

¹⁰¹ George Nicholls to Ralph Lingen, Jan. 7 1850, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/15.

Lingen wrote to Symons stating that on this occasion the CCE concurred with the PLB - Symons possessed no authority to ask for the Returns. The rebuke was surprisingly mild in the circumstances and merely represented a restatement of the regulations:

the Return for which you have called cannot in conformity with your instructions be collected directly by yourself, but only through the medium of that Department which is charged with the administration of the Poor Law.¹⁰²

Symons was undaunted. Although his circular remained unanswered, he clearly managed to get the statistics he required as they were included in his 1849 Report. His conclusions were immediately disputed, giving weight to George Nicholls' contention that there was a danger in using partial statistics. From the figures he had acquired, Symons argued that the number of pauper children in his district had increased dramatically, by 25.3%, since the previous year, whereas the numbers for other classes of paupers had decreased. As long as pauper children were resident in workhouses this trend would continue. Only district schooling could improve the situation.¹⁰³

Symons' findings came under immediate attack from the Poor Law Inspectors. Doyle, possibly as a result of their earlier altercation, was so incensed by Symons' Report that he sent a twenty-seven page letter of criticism to George Nicholls stating that he had rarely met with:

so much inaccuracy compressed into two pages of print and some of M.(sic) Symons' mistakes are of such a nature as to make it very difficult to understand how he could have fallen into them.¹⁰⁴

Doyle took sixteen pages to challenge the statistics in detail and concluded that there was actually a decrease of children in the period 1848-9 and not a 25% increase.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Lingen to Symons, Jan. 9 1850, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/15.

¹⁰³ *Minutes CCE*, P.U.S. (1847-8-9), pp. 157-9.

¹⁰⁴ Doyle to Nicholls, Sep. 21 1850, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/14, p.7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Poor Law Inspectors Graves and Hurst were also very suspicious of Symons' figures. Graves assumed that Symons must have compared the tabulated reports for 1847-8-9 and 1848-9-50, but that in so doing had made a 'major inaccuracy' and also some minor ones. He accused Symons of 'haste and oversight'. However, unlike Doyle whose attack was at times vitriolic, Graves made an attempt to remain civil throughout his criticisms:

I trust that I have not lost sight of the courtesy and respect due to an eminent man, distinguished for the high qualities of zeal and courage. The importance of his views and the value of his efforts in the cause of education; supported as they are by eloquence and industrious research, I am most ready to acknowledge and I cannot forget how much, in the formation of my opinions, I am indebted to my acquaintance with him and to the study of his works.¹⁰⁶

Inspector Hurst concurred with the criticisms presented by Doyle and Graves and, after several pages in which he disputed the calculations, added:

How a gentleman of his talents and information can have made so many mis-statements is difficult to comprehend especially when they arise either from inconsistency with his own 'Tabulated Reports' or from incorrect references to the Statistics of Pauperism as given in the last Poor Law Report. It is hoped that the discovery of these inaccuracies may not prove prejudicial to the cause of pauper education at all events as Mr. Symons is esteemed an authority on the subject in many parts of my District, it is much to be lamented his observations should manifest so much want of caution.¹⁰⁷

The PLB also added weight to the criticisms of their Inspectors, expressing 'deep regret' that Symons' Report should have been published before any contact had been made with their department. They accused Symons of bringing 'odium' and 'embarrassment' on the efforts of the PLB to care for destitute children.¹⁰⁸ In response, the CCE, although admitting that Symons may have made statistical errors and interfered outside the province

¹⁰⁶ Graves to PLB, Oct. 19 1850, *Correspondence CCE*, PRO MH 19/14 pp. 734-5.

¹⁰⁷ Inspector Hurst to PLB, Oct. 19 1850, PRO MH 19/14, p. 743.

¹⁰⁸ PLB to Lingden, Oct. 29 1850, PRO MH 19/14.

of education, nevertheless reminded the PLB that some disputes were bound to occur occasionally. They emphasised how difficult it was for Schools Inspectors to report on a workhouse school and not comment on the workhouse itself. Lingen also stated that he resented the tone of Inspector Doyle's response:

'which if generally used would undermine relationships between the Committee of Council on Education and the Poor Law Board.'

The CCE clearly defended and supported their employees in difficult situations. It may have been significant, in view of the gradually deteriorating relationship between the CCE and the PLB, that Lingen took six weeks to reply to criticisms of Symons' behaviour.¹⁰⁹ Symons may well have felt partially vindicated by the CCE's defence of his position. His own response to the situation provided insight into his strength of character and ability to defend himself in what others clearly saw as an untenable position. Initially he apologised: he accepted that his report contained basic statistical errors from which he had drawn erroneous conclusions. He argued that he had been ill and had delegated the task of assessing the statistics to a clerk. He accused the three Poor Law Inspectors of ignoring some of the other accurate statistical conclusions in their concern to concentrate on mistakes. The Tables included in the Second Annual Report of the PLB in 1850, when compared with 1848, definitely revealed an increase in the number of pauper children. He then proceeded to restate his views on the evils of workhouses and the need to provide District Schools:

Thus, Sir, has the Legislature recently provided not those means for the relief of destitute children on which I have 'tended to bring odium' but those which in their stead I have earnestly sought to advance: And thus has the Poor Law Board for many years itself denounced the system of Workhouse Education which is now charged against me as an offence to have discredited!¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Lingen to PLB, Dec. 11 1850, PRO MH 19/14.
¹¹⁰ Symons to CCE, Nov. 14 1850, *ibid*.

Symons skilfully managed to appear almost blameless. His determination and singlemindedness must be seen as positive characteristics. How far he was able to exercise these qualities for the benefit of pauper children is questionable.

2.3 Role and Influence

Symons advocated intensive agricultural training for pauper children because he believed passionately that field work for boys not only strengthened the body but invigorated the soul. He argued that the type of education that was generally provided for 'labourers and servants' was pretentious and superficial, and left 'common things untaught'.¹¹¹

Although he acknowledged that it could be difficult in some instances to provide the necessary facilities for the type of education he was advocating, Symons was convinced these problems were not insurmountable. By 1857 he was stating optimistically that most workhouse schools were providing some form of industrial or agricultural training.¹¹²

How far this statement represented an accurate picture of what was happening in the workhouses in his own district can to some extent be discerned from Symons' own writings. In *School Economy*, published in 1850, Symons set out clearly the specific industrial training he was seeking:

- namely, the cultivation of the ground on the most approved system of field gardening, with a junction of some one or two handicraft employments. 'Field-gardening' ... means the adaptation of the spade, fork, rake, hoe, and dibbler to the cultivation of fields and those minuter and more careful attentions to manuring, planting, weeding, bird scaring, etc., which are always devoted to gardens.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Jelinger Symons, *On Industrial Training as an Adjunct to School Teaching* (1857), p. 302.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 304.

¹¹³ Jelinger Symons, *School Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

This process was particularly suitable for young boys who were able to manage the 'incessant bending' and whose fingers were more agile than those of elder paupers. Ideally boys should range in age from 9 to 15 years. Ground was to be acquired as near to the workhouse as possible, as having to walk any distance was always a time-wasting disadvantage and made the conveyance of liquid manure - the use of which Symons strongly advocated - much more difficult.

Symons constantly cited Quatt School in Shropshire as the ideal establishment on which other schools should be modelled. Much to Symons' chagrin and despite strenuous efforts to the contrary, this was the only District School that was formed in his area. One hundred and thirty children with the assistance of only a labourer and one female servant, managed to cultivate ten acres of land producing an annual profit of between £125 and £140.¹¹⁴ Symons gave almost unqualified support to the efforts of the schoolmaster, Henry Garland, mentioning him in each annual report.¹¹⁵

One of the reasons Symons was so enthusiastic about the school at Quatt was because the project had originated from a modest beginning at Bridgnorth Union School in 1836. Symons was certain that what had been achieved at one ordinary workhouse school could be achieved elsewhere.

By 1851 Symons believed he was having an influence and that industrial and agricultural training had significantly increased in the schools in his district. His interpretation of his own 1851 Report is however misleading. Out of 56 schools in Shropshire, Worcestershire and North and South Wales, only 15 had introduced industrial training to any significant degree. Yet Symons concluded his Report by stating:

¹¹⁴ Jelinger Symons, *On Industrial Training as an Adjunct to School Teaching*, *op. cit.*, p. 304.
¹¹⁵ For the relationship between Symons and Garland, see below Chapter 5.

... on the whole they (the schools) represent many pleasing instances of improvement. It is at least a source of satisfaction to me to know how largely I have succeeded in introducing industrial labour where none existed before.¹¹⁶

Symons' enthusiastic remarks must be viewed with caution. His annual reports revealed a tendency to exaggeration, especially his optimistic comments on the benefits of agricultural training. In 1852 he asserted that about a third of the unions in his area were training pauper boys in agricultural pursuits.¹¹⁷ However, by 1854 training was static, remaining 'much as it was'. No more schools had initiated spade husbandry, although those schools that were giving agricultural training were pleased with the results.¹¹⁸ It is possible to detect some changes by 1857. In 1851, out of the 14 Poor Law Schools in Shropshire, only four were providing agricultural training. By 1857, out of the 13 schools remaining, nine were operating some system based on spade husbandry. In Worcestershire, however, the situation remained the same in 1857 as it had been in 1851 with only three schools out of 12 providing training.¹¹⁹ By 1859 Symons was lamenting the fact that industrial training was not 'more extensively adopted'.¹²⁰

It would be incorrect to state that the promotion of agricultural training and District Schools were the only means by which Symons sought to influence the progress of pauper children. He himself clearly thought he achieved success in other areas. One issue he felt very keenly about was the quality of workhouse teaching. Symons expressed strong feelings about the type of teacher that was needed if pauper education was to be efficient:

He must be, coat off, and at it along with them. No fine gentleman schoolmaster is to be tolerated in any school for the education of working boys. If a man is above putting his hand to the spade, he may be fit for a dancing master, or a man milliner, or many lady-like occupations, but assuredly he is not the stuff out of which a schoolmaster, in these times, is to be made, if education means the training of a future generation of hard working men and women. There must be no puppyism about the teachers of such a race.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Symons, *General Report* 1851, PP 1852-3, Vol. LXXIX, p. 318.

¹¹⁷ Symons, *General Report* 1852, PP 1852-3, Vol. LXXIX, p. 176.

¹¹⁸ Symons, *General Report* 1854, PP 1854, Vol. LI.

¹¹⁹ Symons, *General Report* 1851, *op. cit.*

¹²⁰ Symons, *General Report* 1857, PP 1857-8, Vol. XLV.

¹²¹ Jelinger Symons, *School Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

In an impassioned account in 1851 Symons stated that he constantly tried to improve the standard of teachers in his district 'as a point of cardinal duty', but that it was increasingly difficult. He strongly criticised the capitation system that had been introduced in 1850:

... the system of payments graduated according to merit was working well in stimulating improvement, when the capitation fee was introduced ... which rendered the schoolmaster's reward a good deal dependent on a standard often irrespective of the labour done or the capacity evinced. The reductions of salary made in pursuance of this principle have operated very unhappily. In some cases the school has increased and yet the salary has actually been diminished.¹²²

This statement came only a year after Symons had written in his 1850 Report that despite 'grave and irremediable defects' in the system he had tried to effect an improvement by instructing teachers 'in their art'. He thought his efforts in this area had not been unsuccessful.

The Boards of Guardians have, with few exceptions, seconded my wishes and adopted my recommendations and the general improvement in the schools ... has been of a more marked character.¹²³

By 1855 Symons argued that despite the continuing difficulty of obtaining good teachers the general standard of academic work was improving beyond his expectations¹²⁴. He included a table in his Report comparing the standard of teachers' certificates awarded in his district in 1850 and 1855.

Although the figures did not show a dramatic increase and fewer certificates were issued in 1855 than in 1850, it appears that steady progress was made. In 1856, in his anxiety to

¹²² Symons, *General Report* 1851, *op. cit.*, see below, Chapter 2.

¹²³ Symons, *General Report* 1850, PP 1852, Vol. XXXIX, p. 271.

¹²⁴ Symons, *General Report* 1855, PP 1856, Vol. XLVII, p. 767.

	<u>1850</u>	<u>1855</u>
Efficiency	7	12
Competency	19	29
Probation	46	33
Permission	12	8
Total	102	93
Certificate Refused	18	11

Table 1. Symons' Table of Teachers' Certificates awarded
in the West of England and Wales, 1850 and 1855.¹²⁵

improve the situation still further, Symons sent a Circular to all unions in his area with advice on how the different subjects should be taught.

READING - Bad reading may easily be corrected by making the child repeat after you, aloud, what he has read badly, and without looking at the book himself ...

WRITING - This should be taught earlier than it usually is, and along with reading. Watch the children while they write, and as soon as they can write large hand with sufficient freedom and accuracy, abandon it for running hand, which is the only practically useful hand in after life ...

ARITHMETIC - As workhouse children are always liable to be taken out suddenly, strive to teach what is most useful first. Postpone teaching simple multiplication and simple division until they can work both simple and compound addition and subtraction sums....¹²⁶

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Symons, 'Circular to Teachers of Parochial Union Schools' 1856, in Symons, *General Report* 1856, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

A year later Symons expressed some satisfaction with standards reached in certain subjects and claimed these were a result of his own efforts to improve teaching practices:

ARITHMETIC - I have less trouble than I had to get this tolerably taught.

GEOGRAPHY - We are curbing flights into distant lands and getting much more knowledge of the industrial and physical features of our own.

NEEDLEWORK - is fairly done. I have, I think, effectively abolished all fancy work; what is done is useful, homely and strong.¹²⁷

He mentioned individual workhouse schools where notice had been taken of his advice. Despite some disagreements in the early 1850s with the Atcham Board of Guardians,¹²⁸ Symons was keen to state that by 1857:

'every addition and improvement I have suggested has at length been effected'.

Of Ludlow Workhouse School, Symons wrote:

such small defects as I have from time to time pointed out are corrected by the zeal and good sense of the schoolmistress.¹²⁹

However his general comments on the attitudes adopted by many Boards of Guardians in 1854 were a more honest appraisal of the problems still facing the Schools Inspectors in the mid-1850s.

I am far from under-rating the kind of cordial aid some of the teachers have received from some of the Guardians; and, indeed, with a few instances, from entire Boards, but no-one acquainted with the truth will for a moment question the fact that a large minority of the Guardians in my district desire less rather than more instruction in the children committed to their charge. Under such circumstances drawbacks on the influence of the Inspector and the efforts of the teacher are inevitable.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Symons, *General Report* 1857, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹²⁸ See below, Chapter 6.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 201.

¹³⁰ Symons, *General Report* 1854, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

Apart from the antagonistic attitude of Poor Law Inspector Doyle towards Symons, it is difficult to ascertain how he was regarded by other colleagues. There is some evidence from the remarks of Poor Law Inspectors John Graves and Edward Hurst during the statistics controversy that Symons was regarded with a certain respect - especially for his contribution to education.

Although, as demonstrated in the Ludlow play, Symons was respected and listened to by at least some Boards of Guardians, he was by no means as influential as he would have liked. His obstinate temperament undoubtedly worked to his disadvantage and his forceful and dominant personality led to conflict rather than compromise. All his attempts to persuade Guardians to form school districts in his area were unsuccessful. The passionate zeal with which he advocated District Schools and agricultural training amounted to an obsession and dominated all his thinking on pauper education. Despite this, he still found time and energy to continue writing on many different subjects. However, there are indications, especially during the statistical dispute in 1850, that Symons involved himself in too many activities, to the detriment of his professional duties as an Inspector. He died suddenly, aged 50, on April 7th 1860, having been a Schools Inspector in the West Country and Wales for 12 years, the shortest time served by any of Her Majesty's Inspectors for Poor Law Schools. During this period he showed an unswerving commitment to the cause of pauper education. Symons' region of inspection included the county of Shropshire which by the time of his death in 1860 boasted one of the few District Schools to be formed outside the Metropolitan area. Although Symons was not responsible for its creation he promoted the success of the South East Shropshire District School in attempts to persuade other unions to form combinations. None was formed but the development of pauper education in the county reflected Symons' commitment to pauper education.

CHAPTER FIVE
PAUPER EDUCATION IN THE THREE SHROPSHIRE UNIONS
OF ATCHAM, BRIDGNORTH AND ELLESMERE UNDER THE
NEW POOR LAW

1. Introduction

This study concentrates on the development of pauper education in the New Poor Law unions of Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere in the West Midlands county of Shropshire. No previous study of pauper education in Shropshire has been undertaken.¹ There was nothing exceptional about the county in the nineteenth century, yet it created two exemplars of pauper education .

The three unions were chosen because of the character and influence of the first Chairman of each Board of Guardians, and the unions' geographical location within Poor Law Schools Inspector Symons' district, the West of England and Wales.

This study of Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere provides some analysis of the influence of the local individual in nineteenth century Poor Law organisation and management in which the administrative structure of the New Poor Law - central supervision, inspection and local implementation is evident.

One of the unions, Atcham, became nationally renowned as a model union. Atcham's pre-eminence in poor law administration was attributed to the work of Sir Baldwin Leighton, who as Chairman of the Atcham Board of Guardians effectively influenced and controlled local Poor Law management for thirty-five years.² His administration, including the management of the Workhouse School, was considered second to none.

¹ Vincent Walsh's thesis on the Poor Laws in Shropshire includes a general section on education but there is no detailed analysis of individual unions, Vincent J. Walsh, 'The Administration of the Poor Laws in Shropshire', (Pennsylvania Ph D 1970).

² Hereafter known as Leighton.

Atcham was not the only shining example in Shropshire of the effective management of poor law economy, workhouse administration and the direct benefit of education and training in the prevention of future pauperism. During this period the Poor Law Authority in London could also point to the Bridgnorth Union where the Board of Guardians had established a workhouse school at Quatt which became highly regarded, not only locally but nationally. While this was unusual, the transformation of Quatt into a rural District School in 1851 was exceptional. Most of the credit was given to another prominent local politician, the first Chairman of the Bridgnorth Union, William Wolryche Whitmore.³

The Board of Guardians of the third union, Ellesmere, had as its Chairman the M.P. Robert Slaney who became known at Westminster for his commitment to improve the lives of the urban labouring poor. Slaney was Chairman of the Ellesmere Board of Guardians for six years from 1836 - 1842. For much of this time he was prominent in Parliament, and in 1837 chaired the House of Commons Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes.⁴

All three men possessed wealth, power and status. Leighton was a Baronet;⁵ Whitmore and Slaney, landed gentry - part of a group holding the 'foremost place in each county' across England and Wales.⁶ All three were M.P.s at some point during their chairmanship and as members of the House of Commons they belonged to what has been termed a 'landowners' club'.⁷

³ Hereafter known as Whitmore.

⁴ *The Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes in England and Wales*, P.P. 1837-8 VII.

⁵ Leighton was the only peer in the county to become a Guardian in 1836, Vincent J. Walsh, *thesis, op cit.*, pp.328 ff. For a recent study of the British aristocracy, see David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (1990). In 1881 there were 856 Baronets, *ibid.*, p.11.

⁶ Preface to *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1886 edn), cited in Cannadine *ibid.*, p.12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.14. Whitmore was M.P. for Bridgnorth from 1826-32; Wolverhampton from 1832-1835. Slaney was M.P. for Shrewsbury four times between 1826 and 1862. Leighton was M.P. for South Shropshire from 1859 - 1865.

Each man was also a J.P and under the regulations of the 1834 Act held their place on their respective Board of Guardians in an *ex-officio* capacity. However their interests were by no means purely parochial. Through an involvement in national affairs each brought a different perspective to local Poor Law union administration. It was unusual to find any M.P.s taking on the role of Chairmen, let alone three in one county.⁸ It was even more unusual that each should have a personal commitment to the development of education for poor children.

The measure of their influence was a critical factor in the development of pauper education in the three unions. For Leighton and Whitmore it became of paramount importance. Slaney's concern was broader and the development of national popular education became one of his overriding interests. Of the three men, Slaney was the one who became least involved locally with pauper education. These different emphases were reflected in developments within the three unions.

2. Shropshire in the early nineteenth century

The county of Shropshire lies in the West Midlands, on the border of England and Wales. Divided by the River Severn, Shropshire is the largest inland county in Britain.⁹ To the south and west is an upland region, centring on Church Stretton and joining the Welsh border hills in the west. To the north and east a plateau extends into the counties of Staffordshire and Cheshire.¹⁰ It was this northern part of the county which provided Shropshire's wealth, being both a 'miner's and a farmer's county'.¹¹ In the early

⁸ Out of over 600 Poor Law Chairmen in 1837 only eight were M.P.s, *List of Unions, with the Names of the Chairmen...*, Fourth Report PLC, P.P. 1837-38 XXVIII. The level of involvement of the landed gentry in Poor law affairs varied considerably, Anne Digby, 'The Rural Poor Law', Derek Fraser, *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (1976), p.152-153.

⁹ The county extends over 1,346 square miles.

¹⁰ VCH Shropshire, Vol IV, pp. 5-17.

¹¹ Arthur Mee, *Shropshire* (1968), p.2.

nineteenth century the extensive coal and iron industry at Madeley and Wellington was second only to Staffordshire in its productivity.¹² Although Shropshire had been the cradle of the Industrial Revolution it remained predominantly rural with agricultural labour as the main employment.¹³

In addition to the county town of Shrewsbury, the main town centres were Oswestry, Wem, Newport, Market Drayton, Wellington, Much Wenlock, Church Stretton, Bridgnorth, Bishop's Castle and Ludlow. The major concentrations of population included the county town of Shrewsbury and the industrial area of Madeley and Wellington.¹⁴ In the first third of the nineteenth century the population in Shropshire rose slowly but steadily from 167,639 in 1801 to 222,938 in 1831, an increase of 33% compared with the national increase of 16% in the same period.¹⁵ Shropshire's population density remained low compared with most other English counties. Out of forty two counties Shropshire was thirty-third in population density in 1841, with only 28 persons for each 100 acres.

Table 2 Population 1801-1851¹⁶

<u>Shropshire</u>	<u>% increase</u>	<u>England and Wales</u>	<u>% increase</u>
1801 - 167,639	9	8,892,536	14
1811 - 194,298	8	10,164,256	18
1821 - 206,153	7	12,000,236	16
1831 - 222,938	5	13,896,797	15
1841 - 242,000	1	15,914,148	13
1851 - 245,000	4	17,927,609	12

¹² Victoria County History Shropshire, Vol. I p.1. The coal and iron industry also gave rise to supplementary industries such as pottery, porcelain, brick and tile making, etc.

¹³ W.B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society, 1830-1870* (1987).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Comparative statement of the Population in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831 and 1841 showing the Increase or Decrease in each County, Census of Great Britain 1841, P.P. 1841-1843.

¹⁶ 1881 Census of England and Wales P.P. 1883 LXXX.

According to the 1851 Census 42% of adult males in Shropshire were engaged in agriculture.¹⁷ Labourers relied in the main on employment from large landowners; the average holding in the county was between 1,000 and 10,000 acres.¹⁸ There were few small landowners and of these, 40% were impoverished, unable to make necessary improvements or provide vital employment.¹⁹ The existence of extensive coal and iron works in the Coalbrookdale region of Madeley and Wellington provided local industrial work in an area that was gradually becoming urbanised.²⁰ The percentage of adult males in Shropshire engaged in manufacturing industries was just under 5%, well below the 1851 national average of 10%.²¹ However, at Coalbrookdale 22% of adult men were engaged in coal and iron, and 16% in metal industries which raised the level of employment for the county as a whole.²²

In 1831 the amount spent on poor relief in Shropshire was a fairly low figure of £87,111.²³ Poor rates were low in comparison with some other parts of the country.²⁴ In the Parliamentary debate on the Poor Law Bill in 1834 Robert Slaney, with some pride, reminded the House that the rate in Shropshire was only 7/- per head compared to 13/- in Wiltshire.²⁵ After the introduction of the New Poor law the cost of poor relief dropped even further and in 1842 was around £48,000 per annum, half the national county average of over £91,000.²⁶

¹⁷ W.B.Stephens,*Education,Literacy and Society 1830 - 1870* (1987), p.317.

¹⁸ F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (1963) p.32; pp.114-7

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Barrie Trinder,*The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, (1973).

²¹ W.B. Stephens,*op cit.*

²² *Ibid.*, p.210.

²³ *Abstract of Returns 1831; Poor rates expenditure 1832*, SRO 665/5518. See Table 3.

²⁴ Day to Lefevre Oct. 5 1836, PRO MH 32/14.

²⁵ Parliamentary Debates,Third Series,Vol XXIX, July 1 1834, cols 1044-1045.

²⁶ Fourth Annual Report PLC P.P.1837-8 XXVIII, p.42; Return of sum expended...on Poor Relief...1841 and 1842 P.P. 1843 XLV.

Table 3 Amounts spent on Poor Relief
in Shropshire, 1831-1850.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
1831	£87,111
1838	£46,112
1841	£49,471
1842	£48,356
1843	£40,825
1849	£36,499
1850	£34,312 ²⁶

Under the Old Poor Law administration in Shropshire several parishes combined to form Incorporations - Atcham, Ellesmere, Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch; the highest number in any county of England and Wales ²⁷ Huge Houses of Industry were built but there was little effective or profitable occupation for the inmates.²⁸ The methods used for the administration of poor relief in Shropshire were not as varied as elsewhere and there was little reliance on 'iniquitous' allowance systems.²⁹ In 1832 Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Arthur Lewis observed:

many practices more or less of a mischievous tendency ..have not heretofore gained any footing.³⁰

²⁶ Return of Unions...in Square Miles, P.P.1838 XXXVIII, *op cit.*

²⁷ Vincent J. Walsh, 'Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire, 1820-1870', *Midland History*, Autumn 1974 Vol. II No 4, p.225.

²⁸ Report of Arthur Lewis, Appendix to the First Report from the Commissioners on the Poor Laws, P.P.1834 XXVIII No18 p.665.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Lewis was referring to such practices as the 'Labour' or 'Roundsmen' systems of which he stated that Shropshire, together with the neighbouring counties of Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, was entirely free, Report from Arthur Lewis Appendix to the *First Report from the Commissioners on the Poor Laws*. P.P.1834 XXVIII No18 p.663.

This was later corroborated by Assistant Poor Law Commissioner William Day who acknowledged that Shropshire had fewer problems than some other counties.³¹

Pauper education under the Old Poor Law was similar to most other areas - sporadic and minimal. The number of children in Shropshire poorhouses and workhouses was low and remained so throughout the nineteenth century. In 1850 the average number of children in Shropshire workhouses was 46, the fifth lowest figure out of the 41 counties in England.³² Prior to 1834 Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Arthur Lewis observed that many parishes either provided 'no instruction at all' or used pauper inmates.³³ The use of paupers as teachers was common and frequently the only instruction available, as at Atcham and Bridgnorth where no effort was made 'by the overseers to bring the children up in a proper manner'.³⁴ The main concern of the parochial authorities was to maintain children as cheaply as possible 'without any regard to the character of the person in whose charge they were placed'.³⁵ At Bridgnorth Whitmore described the children as the 'most destitute and least instructed' in the county; the only opportunities for schooling came from other paupers.³⁶ The total lack of classification under the Old Poor Law meant that children were brought up in 'ignorance vice and sloth' and the system was perpetuating a 'race of paupers'.³⁷

At Ellesmere the Governor of the House of Industry stated that one of the 'greatest evils' was the total lack of classification which enabled children to mix freely with adults. The

³¹ E.g. Sussex. William Day had been Vice Chairman of Uckfield Union in Sussex prior to becoming an Assistant Poor Law Inspector, Uckfield Union Correspondence 1835-8 PRO MH 12 13157,13158. According to the Second Annual Report of the PLC, in December 1836, Sussex had made a saving of 44% in the first year after the unions were established, P.P.1836 XXIX.

³² Return of the Number of Children in Workhouses, P.P. 1852-3 LXXXIV. See map, Appendix I (i,ii).

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Report on the Progress of the Atcham Union..1838 by the late Sir Baldwin Leighton,Bart; compiled by the present Chairman, J.Bowen-Jones*, SRO 39/12 Bundle 166. Hereafter known as *Leighton Report 1838* , p.10.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ William Wolryche Whitmore, Report on the Progress of the Bridgnorth Union, June 1837, Bridgnorth Correspondence 1834-38, PRO MH 9850, hereafter known as *Whitmore Report 1837*.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

'infectious' nature of pauperism meant that such lack of classification resulted in the perpetuation of a 'race of paupers'.³⁸ The lack of schooling in other parts of the county was similarly noted by Poor Law Assistant Commissioner William Day.³⁹ In particular he was critical of the iniquitous system of pauper apprenticeship by which premiums were paid to unwilling employers to employ pauper children.⁴⁰

In 1836 Day arrived in Shrewsbury, settled his four sons in Shrewsbury Public School and prepared to implement the New Poor Law. Introducing the Victorian Poor Law system in counties such as Shropshire, well removed from the centre of Poor Law administration in London, was in many instances a difficult and controversial operation. Some northern parishes with a tradition of radical protest, joined the Anti Poor Law movement and demonstrated against southern interference in their affairs.⁴¹ Shropshire has traditionally been seen as a quiet county, unaffected by the level of disturbance that plagued other areas in the first half of the nineteenth century, and an Anti Poor Law movement was never established.⁴² An exception to the lack of disturbance were the industrial riots in Shropshire in 1842. Originally thought to have Chartist origins, the riots were essentially protests against wage reductions.⁴³ However contemporary witnesses graphically recorded their fears that threats to the social order in districts close to Shropshire would have ramifications within the county. Robert Slaney registered his concern during the suppression of a Chartist uprising in Wales in 1839:

38

Ibid.

39

William Day, *Returns Relative to Union Schools in Shropshire..1838*, PRO MH 32/15 .

40

William Day, *Report on the State of Pauperism as exemplified in the Atcham Union..1840*, Sixth Annual Report PLC, Appendix B, P.P. XVII.

41

See Michael Rose, 'The Anti-Poor Law Movement in the North of England', *Northern History* (1966 Vol 1); N.Edsall, *The Anti Poor Law League* (1971); John Knott, *Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law* (1986). Even after the collapse of the Anti Poor Law movement 26 out of 49 unions in Lancashire and Yorkshire in 1860 continued to oppose the New Poor La, Poor Law Inspector Mainwaring to PLB, Dec. 17 1860, PRO MH 32/54.

42

Vincent Walsh, *The Administration of the Poor Laws in Shropshire 1820-1855*, Pennsylvania PhD (1970), p.xxxii; See also J.M.Golby, 'Public Order and Private Unrest: A Study of the 1842 Riots in Shropshire', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, Vol XI 1968 No 2. There was some urban discontent with growing industrialisation, Barrie Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, (1973).

43

Golby, *ibid.*

The Chartists have broken into riot at Llanidloes and the South Salopian cavalry with T.C.Eyton and Mr O Gore are gone to help to quell them.⁴⁴

Disturbances did not, however, affect the introduction of the New Poor Law and between 1836 and 1838 Day established thirteen poor law unions.⁴⁵ Several of the market towns were natural centres for their respective districts and these, including the unions of Ellesmere and Bridgnorth, were created without too many difficulties. Two unions, Madeley and Wellington, were established in the industrial region of Coalbrookdale. Seven unions were centred on the market towns of Church Stretton, Cleobury Mortimer, Clun, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Shiffnal and Wem.

However, three of the Incorporations, Shrewsbury, Oswestry, and Whitchurch resisted the New Poor Law and refused to dissolve.⁴⁶ The refusal of the Shrewsbury Incorporation to become part of the nearby Atcham Union made the formation of the new union difficult. Day had little choice but to create a large rural union at Atcham that totally surrounded the county town.⁴⁷

Once the three Unions of Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere were established their newly formed Board of Guardians attempted to eradicate Old Poor Law practices and to implement the New Poor Law. The development of pauper education was part of this process.

⁴⁴ *Slaney Journal*, *op cit*, May 1839.

⁴⁵ The thirteen unions established by Day were Atcham, Bridgnorth, Church Stretton, Cleobury Mortimer, Clun, Ellesmere, Ludlow, Madeley, Market Drayton, Newport, Shiffnal, Wellington, Wem. Day was not to know it would take until 1871 before Shrewsbury capitulated. Shrewsbury Incorporation was formed in 1784; Oswestry and Ellesmere 1791 Whitchurch and Atcham 1792. *Victoria County History* (VCH) Shropshire, Vol 3, p.169. See below, Appendix VIII, Map of Poor Law Unions in Shropshire.

⁴⁶ The Directors of Oswestry Incorporation refused to admit Day to any of their meetings, R.A.Lewis, 'William Day and the Poor Law Commissioners', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 1964, Vol IX, p.173

⁴⁷ Shrewsbury remained an Incorporation until 1871 when it was amalgamated with Atcham.

3 Baldwin Leighton and the Atcham Union 1836-1871

3.1 Baldwin Leighton

Baldwin Leighton (1805-1871) was Chairman of the Atcham Board of Guardians from 1836 - 1871. Leighton's activities in local government were by no means confined to the Poor Law and he was involved in many other activities.⁴⁹

To his contemporaries, Baldwin Leighton was essentially a man of high principle who would not easily be dissuaded from a given task. It was said that he worked more easily with subordinates than equals.⁵⁰ In a hagiographical memoir of her father, Frances Childe described Leighton as 'possessed of stern moral courage' which enabled him to 'hold fast' to a course which he 'deemed to be right.'⁵¹ These traits in Leighton's personality were dominant in his role as Chairman of the Atcham Board of Guardians.⁵² In a speech to other Poor Law Chairmen in the West Midlands in 1870 Leighton himself set out clearly the qualities a model chairman needed to retain the respect and control of his Board:

I will presume that on his election the chairman possesses the confidence of his board; ...In order to retain it he ought to make it manifest that his knowledge of all details is superior to that of the other guardians...He must remember that it is his part to lead and direct his board...to administer the law...to consider how far the practice of granting relief..is founded on correct principles, and what alterations, if any it may be desirable to carry out.⁵³

Thirty-two years earlier in 1838, after assuming the chairmanship of Atcham, Leighton had produced his first report on the state of the union in which he catalogued the

⁴⁹ Among many other activities Leighton was instrumental in the establishment of a county lunatic asylum and a county police force. He was Chairman of the Montgomery and later the Shropshire Quarter Sessions, Baldwin Leighton, *Short Account of the Life of Baldwin Leighton*, (n.d.), SRO 783 bundle194.

⁵⁰ G.C.Baugh, 'County Government 1834-1889', VCH *op cit.*, p.140.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.3.

⁵² Frances C.Childe, *Extracts from Letters and Speeches Etc., of Sir Baldwin Leighton Bt., M.P. for South Shropshire* (1875), p.5.

⁵³ Speech by Sir Baldwin Leighton to the Conference of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Boards of Guardians for the West Midlands Counties held at Malvern, May 4 1870.

'alterations' that were necessary.⁵⁴ He listed the principle abuses that required urgent attention - indiscriminate outrelief, the lack of family maintenance for elderly relatives, illegitimate children, compulsory apprenticeship and the neglected state of the local poorhouses.⁵⁵ The average annual expenditure on poor relief in Atcham in the three years before the formation of the new union was £9,768, the highest amount spent by any Shropshire district. Yet in 1831 Atcham's population of 17,751 was only the third highest in the county.⁵⁶

All these 'abuses' resulted in a quantifiable financial loss to the ratepayer. From 1836 Leighton determined to drastically reduce the poor rate and eliminate all the practices he so despised. His 1838 report presented a graphic and revealing account of how Old Poor Law practices were viewed by a staunch proponent of the new law.

Historians have stressed the successful nature of pauper management at Atcham by relying on central authority reports or, in the case of Leighton himself, on family portraits. The Webbs' reference to Atcham in *Poor Law Policy* was a quotation from the Third Annual Report of the PLB with its 'laudation of the union'.⁵⁷ Vincent Walsh placed reliance on the portrayals of Leighton given by his son and daughter.⁵⁸ It is mainly from these family biographies, or from Leighton's own *Diary* and Reports on the union in 1838 and 1856,

⁵⁴ Leighton's 1838 Report was subsequently praised by William Day in a report to the Commissioners in 1840, William Day 1840 Report, *op cit.*, pp.473-485. It was later reprinted twice, together with a further account of Atcham's progress by 1856, Frances Childe (ed.) *Extracts from Letters & Speeches Etc of Sir Baldwin Leighton, Bt., MP for South Shropshire*. (Shrewsbury, 1875);

J. Bowen-Jones (compiled) *Report of the Progress of the Atcham Union from its formation to the year 1890, incorporating Reports made in the years 1838 and 1856 by the late Sir Baldwin Leighton, Bart.* (Shrewsbury 1890); (hereafter cited as *Leighton Report 1838*; *Leighton Report 1856* respectively).

⁵⁵ *Leighton Report 1838 op.cit.*

⁵⁶ *Return of Unions...size in Square Miles....P.P. 1838 XXXVIII; Return of Average Annual Expenditure...in the three years prior to Union formation...Apr. 23 1844, P.P.1844 XL., See Table 3 Population and Average Annual Expenditure on Poor Relief in Shropshire 1831-1833.*

⁵⁷ S. & B. Webb, *Poor Law Policy*, 1910 (1963 edition), p.109, n.3.

⁵⁸ Vincent Walsh, 'The Administration of the Poor Laws in Shropshire', Phd (Penn.1970); 'Old and new Poor Laws in Shropshire, 1820-1870', *op cit.*; 'The Diary of a Country Gentleman Sir Baldwin Leighton, Bt.', *Shropshire Archeological Transactions*, 1971-72, Pt. II, Vol. LIX, Local Studies Library, Shrewsbury, C 61.

Table 4
Population and Average Annual
Expenditure on Poor Relief in Shropshire
Unions 1831 - 1833

<u>Union</u>	<u>Pop.(1831)</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Atcham	17,751	£9,768
Bridgnorth	14,316	£5,900
Church Stretton	5,703	£2,296
Clun	9,870	£4,155
Ellesmere	16,320	£6,559
Ludlow	17,476	£6,972
Madeley	22,164	£6,852
Market Drayton	13,029	£5,598
Newport	15,371	£4,932
Shiffnal	10,577	£4,380
Wellington	17,945	£6,207
Wem	11,353	£4,018 ⁵⁹

that the view of Baldwin Leighton as a model New Poor Law administrator has been drawn.⁶⁰

This view of Leighton is not entirely justified. Insufficient attention has been paid to the independent and at times autocratic line that Leighton adopted towards the central authorities which affected the development of pauper education in the union. As early as 1838 William Day revealed some qualms over the zealous way in which Leighton carried out his duties as Chairman:

I should say the out relief was perfect did I not think in some instances it is carried out too strictly.⁶¹

⁵⁹

Ibid.

⁶⁰

Baldwyn Leighton, *op cit.*, Frances Childe, *op cit.*, Baldwin Leighton Diaries, SRO 2978/1, *Leighton Reports, 1838, 1856, op cit.*

⁶¹

Day, Report on Shropshire Unions, 1838, *ibid.*

Although Day praised the attention to detail achieved by the Atcham Board he was uneasy over Leightons' 'uncompromising adherence to principles'.⁶² Further criticism was levelled at Atcham from Shrewsbury Incorporation whose directors constantly opposed the strict interpretation of the New Poor Law at Atcham.⁶³

Leighton was also subjected to personal criticism. In August 1849 he was accused of 'ordering an old woman into the workhouse to die of the Cholera' and also of other 'abuses carried out in the name of the New Poor Law'.⁶⁴ It is unclear who made the allegations but Leighton firmly refuted them.⁶⁵

Leighton rebutted criticism with the assurance of a man with supreme selfconfidence. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his management of pauper education.

3.2 Pauper Education at Atcham 1836-1871

When the union established the workhouse school in November 1836, most of the children were in a 'state of ignorance'. Of 42 children over the age of six, 34 were 'totally uneducated' and, although eight 'could spell', not one of the children could read.⁶⁶ Only seven children went to church or chapel on a regular basis and 23 had never attended a religious establishment in their lives, a situation Leighton regarded as intolerable. There was further concern over the moral contamination of the young that resulted from persistent contact with adult paupers.⁶⁷

⁶² Day, Report on...Atcham Union, 1840, *op cit.*

⁶³ Shrewsbury Correspondence 1834-1846, 1867-1869, PRO MH 10053, 10057.

⁶⁴ The Diary of Sir Baldwin Leighton, SRO 2978/1, Aug. 30 1849.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Leighton Report 1838*, p.10.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Leighton's views were echoed by the Chaplain to the Atcham Union, The Reverend James who spent years visiting the workhouse under the Old Poor Law, *The Report of the Chaplain of the Atcham Union*, Mar. 25 1838, *Leighton Report 1838*

By 1850, however, the school was being praised by Poor Law Inspector Andrew Doyle as:

'better managed than that connected with any other workhouse in this district. Neither in the architectural arrangements of the workhouse, nor from any other cause than the efforts of an energetic and enlightened Chairman and board of guardians, and of a very zealous staff of officers does this union enjoy peculiar facilities for affording to its poor children a thoroughly good and education. What is done in Atcham may be done elsewhere'.⁶⁸

This was the view which was promoted nationally and later adopted as the accepted picture of the school administration at Atcham. Others recounted it without question. Sir William Chance, ex Guardian and Poor Law historian, devoted a chapter to Atcham in *Our Treatment of the Poor* as the ideal New Poor Law union.⁶⁹ Thomas Mackay in *A History of The English Poor Law* also regarded the union as a model which others could follow.⁷⁰ Both writers referred to the workhouse school as an integral part of Atcham's unique record of achievement in actively reducing pauperism within the union.⁷¹ Not only was Atcham's success the outcome of an unremitting and consistent application of Leighton's policy over sixty years of drastically restricting outrelief, but the standard of education and training within the workhouse school resulted in its children having no difficulty in securing future employment. Chance noted enthusiastically:

I would only say that I cannot imagine any better system of educating pauper children than in such a workhouse school as the Atcham Guardians are so fortunate to possess.⁷²

Yet in 1852 Doyle complained that not only was Atcham School *not* a good model for others to emulate, its administration did not even conform to the basic regulations of the PLB.

⁶⁸ Andrew Doyle, *Reports Relating to the Education and Training of Pauper Children*, 1850, P.P. 1851 XLIX p. 12.

⁶⁹ William Chance, *Our Treatment of the Poor* (1899), see below Chapter 7.

⁷⁰ Thomas Mackay, *A History of The English Poor Law* Vol. III (1899), pp. 303-4, see below, Chapter 7.

⁷¹ Chance, *ibid.*, p.29, Mackay, *ibid.*, p.427.

⁷² Chance, *op cit.*, p.40.

there is no female teacher engaged in this school. It is contrary to the rules laid down for mixed schools by the Poor Law Board...It appears that the Guardians are of the opinion that the services of a second teacher are not required.⁷³

Further investigation reveals that school conditions were criticised quite severely, by both Schools and Poor Law Inspectors and that the union was by no means as exemplary in its management of education as has been portrayed.

Leighton's attitude to pauper education cannot be separated from his general approach to Poor Law administration. A 'good education' was to comprise not only reading and writing but also moral and religious instruction as 'one of the means most likely to check pauperism in the rising generation'.⁷⁴ Although Leighton praised reading and writing he valued other aspects of education more.

I do not consider these of such primary importance as inculcating some of the first principles of religion, a strict regard to truth, an abhorrence of swearing, with habits of order, industry and cleanliness.⁷⁵

Leighton approved the regulations for education set down in the First Report of the PLC which advocated a balance between mental and industrial training.⁷⁶ The value the Atcham Guardians placed on education was evident in the first advertisement for a schoolmaster in 1837. The successful candidate would be expected to :

teach on the national System, to superintend the boys making the clothes in the House and to be under the orders of the Governor.⁷⁷

⁷³ Andrew Doyle, 'Extract from Report', n.d. 1852, Atcham Union Correspondence 1851-1855, *op cit.*

⁷⁴ Leighton to PLC, June 6 1837, Atcham Correspondence, PRO MH 9822.

⁷⁵ Leighton Report, 1838, *op cit.*

⁷⁶ First Annual Report PLC, P.P. 1835 XXXV, Appendix A No9 Sec. XVIII; Leighton Report 1838, *op cit.*

⁷⁷ Guardians' Minutes Atcham Union 1836-1840, July 31 1837, SRO 2637/1 Bdle 463.

From the start the Atcham Guardians were anxious to obtain 'the services of a competent' teacher. Atcham was one of the few unions to enquire if the Poor Law Commissioners knew of any society which 'educates or procures situations for schoolmasters'.⁷⁸ The salary offered was generous; in addition to board and lodging, £40 per annum was offered for the superintendence of up to 50 children; £45 if numbers increased.

However it would not be possible to 'justify a large salary for a Schoolmaster' if the number of children remained low.⁷⁹ It was not until 1850 that Boards of Guardians could obtain reimbursement from the Parliamentary Grant.⁸⁰ Leighton's determination to expand the school population can be seen in his ruthless response to labourer Valentine Pigg who, although dying of cancer, was refused relief unless he first sent his children to the workhouse and hence to school.⁸¹

One solution was to admit, at a fee, children from neighbouring unions.⁸² Letters setting out the proposal were sent to Ellesmere, Wern, Clun and the Welsh union of Llanfyllen.⁸³ The Ellesmere Board of Guardians under Slaney produced a counterproposal suggesting that Atcham's children could be sent to Ellesmere.⁸⁴ This was not approved by Leighton who wanted to retain close control over the Atcham children.⁸⁵ In the event only Llanfyllen agreed to send children - 'over three years and orphans' - to Atcham.⁸⁶ The arrangement

⁷⁸ Atcham Board of Guardians to PLC, June 6 1837, *Atcham Union Correspondence* 1836-8, PRO MH 12 9822.

⁷⁹ Atcham to PLC, June 6 1837, *Atcham Union Correspondence* 1836 to 1838, PRO MH 9822.

⁸⁰ From 1850 Guardians still paid teachers' salaries but these would be refunded, in part or in whole, according to the certificates issued by the Poor Law Schools Inspectors, see above, Chapter 2.

⁸¹ Leighton was later accused of overdue haste in the admission of the Pigg children. *Day Correspondence*, Dec. 18 1837, PRO MH 32/15; Leighton to PLC Jan. 23 1838, *ibid*; *Report of Inquiry into the Treatment of Valentine Pigg*, Apr. 16 1838 *Guardians' Minutes Atcham Union* 1836-40, SRO 2637/1, Bdle 463. Not all children were brought so rapidly into the Workhouse School; Leighton was quick to arrange a place in Liverpool Asylum for a deaf and dumb child for whom the Guardians were willing to incur and 'reasonable and justifiable expense...' *Atcham Union Letter Book* Letter 128, July 24 1837, SRO 131/126 Bdle 145.

⁸² Atcham to PLC, June 6 1837, *Atcham Correspondence* 1836-1838, PRO MH 12 9822.

⁸³ Letter to Clun, Ellesmere, Llanfyllen, Letter No 106 Aug. 1 1837; Letter to Wern Aug. 8 1837, *Atcham Letter Book*, SRO.

⁸⁴ Ellesmere to Atcham, Sep. 12 1837, Letter 154, *Atcham Letter Book* 1837 - 1839, *op cit*

⁸⁵ Atcham to Ellesmere, n.d. Sep. 1837, *Atcham Letter Book*

⁸⁶ Letter 43, Sep. 5 1838, *Atcham Letter Book*, *op cit*.

did not last long and Llanfyllen soon resumed education of its own children.⁸⁷ Atcham accordingly revised the proposed salary of £40 and the first schoolmaster, William Harries, eventually received £30 which, in 1837, was still generous.⁸⁸

Gradually, as Atcham became renowned as a union of great efficiency and financial rectitude, its school became seen as a model of good Poor Law education. It also served as a good example for elementary education. In 1850 Poor Law Inspector Doyle extolled the virtues of a school

in which the children receive an education beyond all comparison better than is within reach of the children of labourers in any part of the county.⁸⁹

However, from the start of inspection in 1848, reports by Schools Inspector Symons were frequently contradictory and did not reflect the exemplary image of the school that was given later. In 1848 Symons was very critical of the limited industrial training. By 1853 he included Atcham in a short list of 'First Class' schools yet described instruction as 'much deteriorated'.⁹⁰ In 1855 Atcham school was noted as 'especially' good.⁹¹ By 1857 Symons observed that 'instruction in this large mixed school scarcely maintains its former highly satisfactory character'.⁹²

Symons was accused of inconsistency but Atcham's name for efficiency obscured some negative attitudes and decisions.⁹³ In the late 1840s and early 1850s Leighton and the Atcham Board of Guardians deliberately chose to adopt an independent line. They were

⁸⁷ Andrew Doyle, *Reports Relating to the Education and Training of Pauper Children* 1850, P.P. 1851 XLIX. Leighton had insisted on the children being vaccinated before they arrived, Atcham Letter Book, *ibid.*

⁸⁸ £30 was also paid at Bridgnorth. At Ellesmere the salary in 1837 was only £15, see below, Chapter 6.

⁸⁹ Andrew Doyle, *Reports made to the Poor Law Board...on the Education and Training of Pauper Children...1850*, P.P. 1851 XLIX, p.4.

⁹⁰ Symons 'General Report' 1853, P.P. 1854 LI p.156;161.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1855, P.P. 1856 XLVII

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1857, P.P. 1857-8 XLV.

⁹³ See below.

determined not to appoint a schoolmistress, adapt their industrial training, enlarge their classroom facilities, provide the books recommended by the Schools Inspector or keep the requisite daily registers. This was more to do with local versus central control rather than any devaluation of education as it is clear that Leighton considered schooling to be of great importance in the process of depauperisation.

The main issue which dominated education correspondence between the union and the PLB in the 1850s was the refusal to appoint a schoolmistress. Initially it appeared that Atcham would appoint both a schoolmaster and a schoolmistress.⁹⁴ Shortly after the union was formed, however, Atcham informed the PLC that two schoolmistresses in succession had been 'released' as 'unsatisfactory'.⁹⁵ At this stage Leighton was not opposed in principle to the appointment of a schoolmistress and the Guardians were even prepared to relinquish their 'Board Room' in order to accommodate a girls' classroom.⁹⁶ However, in his report on the state of the union in 1838 Leighton was cautious, advising that there was only a *possibility* he would make an appointment.⁹⁷ Four more came and went between September 1838 and April 1839.

None was considered suitable.⁹⁸

'five schoolmistresses in succession came on trial' during 1838
but all were found to be 'incompetent'.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ William Day, *Returns Relative to Union Schools in Shropshire 1838*, PRO MH 32 15.

⁹⁵ Atcham to the PLC, Sep 24 1837, Atcham Union Correspondence 1834-1839, PRO MH 12 9822; also Letter 406 to PLC, n.d., Atcham Letter Book, *op cit.* William Harries was also appointed as the first temporary schoolmaster but was later confirmed in office and remained for five years, Atcham Union Correspondence, *ibid.*, Atcham to PLC, Sep. 29 1837, Atcham Union Correspondence, *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Guardians Minutes Atcham Union, 1836-1840, Aug. 13 1838, SRO, *op cit.*

⁹⁷ Leighton Report 1838, *op cit.*

⁹⁸ Ann Fawcett, Sep. 1838; Christina Clay, Nov. 1838; Martha Jones, Dec. 1838; Elizabeth Jones, April 1839; Guardians' Minutes Atcham Union 1836-1840, *op cit.*

⁹⁹ Leighton to the PLC, Oct 23 1851, Atcham Union Correspondence 1851-1855, PRO MH 12 9825.

After April 1839 Leighton refused to consider any more candidates and was determined to retain a mixed school.¹⁰⁰ He was adamant that the present arrangement for the girls, in which the Matron occasionally helped with domestic training, was adequate. He was not prepared to allow any possible friction between a schoolmistress and the Matron to interfere with the smooth management of the workhouse.

The duties of (any) Mistress so appointed so far interfere with the Matron that it is morally impossible for them to work harmoniously, the want of which destroys the efficiency of both'¹⁰¹

In common with the policy of the central Poor Law authority Leighton regarded schoolteachers as subordinate officers in the workhouse hierarchy. There was a clear stipulation in 1837 that the schoolteacher would work under the instructions of the Governor.¹⁰² This placed the teacher in an unenviable position. The relationship between Workhouse Governors and teachers, as Leighton asserted, was frequently problematic and there were frequent references in Inspectors' reports to disputes.¹⁰³

During the 1840s the number of children at the Atcham school rose steadily until in 1850 there were 75, taught together in two small rooms by one schoolmaster.¹⁰⁴ This situation gave Symons cause for concern. The master could not possibly 'teach all the Boys and all

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* Harries remained at Atcham until his marriage in 1841. It was never suggested that Harries' wife should become the schoolmistress. When he was subsequently appointed Workhouse Master at Shrewsbury Harries revealed that he and his wife had left Atcham to find a 'better position', Atcham to PLC, Mar. 7 1842, Atcham Union Correspondence 1839-1842 *op cit.*, Assistant Overseer Shrewsbury to PLC Jan. 10 1845, *Shrewsbury Incorporation Correspondence*, 1834-1846, PRO MH 12 10053.

¹⁰¹ Atcham to PLC, received Oct. 23 1851, Atcham Correspondence 1851-1855, PRO MH 9825

¹⁰² Atcham Guardians' Minutes, July 31 1837, *op cit.*

¹⁰³ Schools Inspector Browne observed in 1858 that 'the governor must be the superior officer in the workhouse, yet the schoolmaster is often the better educated man', Browne *General Report* 1858, PRO MH 17/24. There were frequent references throughout the century to the poor relationships that often existed between schoolmasters and Workhouse Governors, eg, Assistant Commissioner Richard Hall, *Report on the Education of Pauper Children in the Counties of Berks and Oxon*, 4th Report PLC, P.P. 1837-8, Appenx B No4, p.162; Evidence of Louisa Twining, P.P.1861 XXI Pt.1 (*Newcastle Commission*), p.432.

¹⁰⁴ *Atcham Union Half-Yearly Statement for the Six Months Ended March 1850*, SRO 4360/P/1

the Girls properly and give industrial training'.¹⁰⁵ Atcham was the largest mixed school under one teacher Symons had ever come across and he urged the PLB to take :

...further measures for the appointment of a Schoolmistress and for the enlargement and proper fitting up of the Schoolrooms in this important union.¹⁰⁶

Yet twelve months earlier Symons had reported confidently that an additional schoolroom would be provided owing to the 'enlightened feeling which prevails at the Board'.¹⁰⁷ His criticisms were supported by the CCE. Such a large number of children was more:

than any single teacher can hope to instruct efficiently without pupil-teachers.¹⁰⁸

Leighton was undeterred and accused Symons' of inconsistency.¹⁰⁹ In November 1850 Symons had specifically mentioned that the:

Industrial training of the Girls is especially good attributable to the attention and skill of the matron

Yet in the following May he had insisted that it was impossible for any single teacher to do justice to so many children and that :

until a good Schoolmistress be appointed the bulk of the Girls will continue to be very imperfectly taught.¹¹⁰

In September 1851 Robert Rowlandson, Schoolmaster turned Workhouse Master, contacted the PLB on behalf of the union.¹¹¹ He was defensive. The Guardians were about

¹⁰⁵ Symons to CCE, cited in CCE to PLB Sep. 2 1851, *Atcham Union Correspondence*, 1851-1855 PRO MH 12 9825. The two rooms measured approximately 34"by 17" *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Symons *General Report* 1851, *op cit.* CCE to PLB *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Symons 'General Report' 1850, P.P. 1852 XXXIX.

¹⁰⁸ CCE to PLB Jan. 28 1852, *Atcham Correspondence* 1851-1855,

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Cited, Walter Welland to Symons, Sep. 6 1851, *Atcham Union Correspondence* 1851-1855 *op cit.*

¹¹¹ Robert Rowlandson to PLB, n.d., received Sep. 12 1851, *ibid.* Rowlandson was Schoolmaster at Atcham from 1842 to 1851, see below, Chapter 6 Table 9 Teachers at Atcham. This was the

to appoint a pupil teacher, 'a more desirable arrangement in their opinion than the appointment of a schoolmistress'. He dismissed as 'altogether superfluous' the CCE suggestion that all the interested parties should resume discussions.¹¹² Rowlandson was clearly biased and naturally supported his employers, the Board of Guardians.

However, neither the CCE nor the PLB was in favour of placing pupil-teachers in mixed schools and none was appointed.¹¹³ They suggested rearranging the classroom accommodation and employing an assistant teacher so that the children could be divided into suitable age groups. The extent of the CCE's concern was evident from the detailed practical suggestions that were given, but their advice was not adopted.¹¹⁴

Poor Law Inspector Doyle then urged the PLB to renew pressure on the Atcham Board to review their policy.¹¹⁵ After a delay of a month Atcham replied - the schoolroom space was 'ample'; the books suggested by Symons were 'unsuitable' and as to the appointment of a schoolmistress the Atcham Guardians 'entirely differ in opinion from Mr.Symons'.¹¹⁶ Leighton reminded the PLB that there were many 'good public charity schools' with more than seventy five children to one teacher.¹¹⁷ It was immaterial whether the children under instruction were boys or girls, therefore there was no need for separate schooling.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, there was an insufficient number of girls to justify an 'almost separate establishment'.¹¹⁹ At this time there were twenty nine girls, certainly enough to justify a separate room .

second time an Atcham teacher had become a Workhouse Master. See above, William Harries who became Master of the Shrewsbury House of Industry.

112 Rowlandson to PLB,n.d. ,received PLB Sep. 12 1851, *ibid*.

113 There was general agreement on this issue. See PLB to Kay Shuttleworth, Oct.1848, PLB Circulars, PRO MH 10/12 1848.

114 E.g 'Place two groups of parallel desks and benches each nine feet wide and three deep against one of its longer walls with an alley of twenty-one inches wide between them.' CCE to PLB, Nov. 15 1851, Atcham Correspondence, PRO MH 12 9825.

115 Doyle to PLB, Sep. 14 1851, Atcham Coprespondence 1851-1855,*op cit*.

116 Atcham to PLB, n.d.,received PLB Oct. 23 1851, Atcham Correspondence 1851-1855, *op cit*.

117 *Ibid*.

118 *Ibid*.

119 *Ibid*.

By January 1852 the CCE thought it 'inadvisable to prolong the correspondence' yet still insisted that the Matron could not possibly 'supply the requisite assistance in the school alongside her other duties.'¹²⁰

Finally, Doyle suggested Atcham should appoint a woman to assist with the girls' industrial training and 'be present in the Schoolroom during the hours of mixed instruction, placing the school 'in more strict conformity' with PLB regulations.¹²¹ Again the union did not comply and correspondence ceased. The central authorities and their inspectors were beginning to lose patience with the obduracy of the Atcham union but there was little they could do to force the issue. By 1857 Leighton eventually agreed to the appointment of a 'work-mistress', but not a schoolmistress and thus maintained local autonomy in the face of strong central pressure.¹²² Although the PLB had the authority to withhold a portion of the Parliamentary Grant for policy infringements such as not keeping the requisite registers, there was no sanction that could be applied if a Board of Guardians chose not to appoint a schoolteacher.¹²³

Atcham Union did neglect to keep a daily attendance register and was indeed threatened with the loss of the grant. In both 1851 and 1852 the CCE warned that it was a serious omission as registers provided essential data on both children and teachers.¹²⁴ Primary responsibility for ensuring that the regulation was met rested with the PLB.¹²⁵ The CCE were anxious lest blame be attached to the Symons as registers were 'indispensable to the successful accomplishment of the Inspector's duties' ¹²⁶ The financial pressure to withhold the grant was probably successful as there was no further correspondence on the subject.

¹²⁰ CCE to PLB, Jan. 28 1852, Atcham Correspondence 1851-1855, *op cit.*

¹²¹ Andrew Doyle, Extract from Report, n.d., 1852, Atcham Union Correspondence 1851-1855 *op cit.*

¹²² Symons, *General Report* 1857, P.P.1857- 8 XLV, p.200.

¹²³ PLB Official Circular, No 21, Jan. 1849, p.5.

¹²⁴ CCE to PLB, Nov. 15 1851, Atcham Correspondence 1851-1855, PRO MH 12 9825.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

A further dispute occurred over the choice of school books.¹²⁷ To alleviate what was fast becoming another *impasse*, the CCE agreed they would not allow Symons to interfere with the union's choice, religious or secular, provided the books chosen were of good quality, 'stamped with public approbation'.¹²⁸ Leighton replied defensively that Atcham had only been criticised because they ordered different books from those recommended by the inspector.¹²⁹ Again, no further correspondence ensued and it may be assumed that the union complied with the recommendations.

From his first inspection in 1848 Symons was also very critical of the standard of industrial training provided at Atcham; in the circumstances the £40 salary paid to the schoolmaster was too high:

Industrial training"...cannot be satisfied by instruction in knitting and straw plaiting. These occupations provide stockings and hats for the Paupers and give little trouble to the Officers of a workhouse.....Mere casual employment in a garden is perhaps but little more conducive to the same object.¹³⁰

The union initially rejected these criticisms and revealed no awareness of the broader form of industrial training that had been recommended ten years earlier in *The Training of Pauper Children*..

The Board (of Guardians)...considers it very desirable that the children be instructed in such work as Knitting, Netting, Strawplaiting which the Guardians believe will be found useful to them in after life.¹³¹

¹²⁷ CCE to PLB, 'Atcham PUS', Nov. 11 1851, Atcham Correspondence 1851-1855, PRO MH 9825.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Atcham to PLC, Oct. 23 1851, *op cit.*

¹³⁰ Symons to Kay Shuttleworth, July 26 1848, *Atcham Union Correspondence 1843-1850* PRO MH 12 9824. In 1848 the salary for the schoolmaster at Atcham was £40, see below Chapter 6.

¹³¹ Atcham to PLC, Minutes of the Atcham Board of Guardians (Copy), received PLC Aug. 1 1848, Atcham Correspondence 1843-1850, PRO MH 12 9824.

Symons was particularly concerned about the unhealthy physical condition of the Atcham children compared with those at Quatt School in Bridgnorth, where more suitable agricultural training was provided.¹³² Symons looked to Atcham to 'set a better example'.¹³³ There was good potential for the development of effective training, especially for boys. A 'system of spade husbandry' might be 'very profitably pursued'.¹³⁴

In this instance Symons persuasive powers were successful. A year later industrial training for boys at Atcham began to develop along the recommended lines.¹³⁵ The children began to grow vegetables and keep farm accounts. Progress was such that the union began to be renowned for its industrial education and Atcham's Farm Accounts were regularly included in Symons' Reports.¹³⁶ By the 1860s reports on the school were generally favourable.¹³⁷ There was no similar development or progress in training for girls. Girls' domestic training, which involved cleaning, mending and looking after younger children, remained under the supervision of the Matron and changed very little over the years.

After he became an M.P. in 1859 Leighton's reputed knowledge and experience of pauper education at Atcham led to him becoming a member of the *Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children* in 1861. Although the *Committee* did not specifically address the subject of indoor pauper children much emphasis was placed on the condition of the outdoor pauper child.¹³⁸ Leighton's questioning of witnesses to the *Committee* demonstrated his wider knowledge of Poor Law education, particularly of the large schools in the Metropolis.¹³⁹ In accordance with the practice at Atcham his examination of Poor Law Schools Inspector Tufnell revealed Leighton's preference for good workhouse

¹³² Symons to Kay Shuttleworth, July 26 1848, Atcham Correspondence, *op cit.*, see below, Bridgnorth Union.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Symons, *General Report* 1853, P.P. 1854 LI, p.159; *General Report* 1855, P.P. 1856 XLVII, p.150.

¹³⁶ E.g. Symons, *General Report* 1853, P.P. 1854 LI; *General Report* 1855, P.P. 1856 XLVII, *General Report* 1859, P.P. 1860 LIV.

¹³⁷ E.g. Schools Inspector T.B. Browne, *General Report* 1862, P.P. 1863 XLVII.

¹³⁸ *Report from The Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children*, P.P. 1861 VII, p.397.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, e.g. p.28.

schools over District Schools and his desire to see more power delegated to Poor Law Guardians.¹⁴⁰

Leighton had achieved his aim of a well managed union, economically viable, with the lowest Poor Law costs in the country. As a self appointed ambassador he became even more widely known through his involvement with the Poor Law Conferences that developed under his tutelage in the West Midlands and spread to other parts of the country.¹⁴¹ In the 1870 Poor Law Conference Leighton directed his fellow Guardians to make education a foremost priority when visiting workhouses:

it is to the children in the workhouse school that the chairman's attention ought to be principally directed in his visits. It is by the proper education of these strays of humanity that we may in some measure hope to lessen pauperism, and by giving them the means of rising in the social scale and becoming useful members of society, thus enable them in old age to do without parish pay.

Thus the model Chairman gave the definitive solution to the problems facing the Poor Law administrator. The appropriate investment in workhouse education would be repaid handsomely in the future in terms of social stability and economy in public funds.

Bowen-Jones, who took over the Chairmanship of the union in 1885, reflected it was the continuity of policy at Atcham that was so 'advantageous both from an economic and social point of view'.¹⁴² As the first Chairman, Baldwin Leighton had laid the foundation for the sound administration of the union that had continued ever since.¹⁴³

The only aspect of Atcham's Poor Law management over which Leighton was to find he had no control was the amalgamation of the town of Shrewsbury with Atcham. This became a reality in 1871 despite strong resistance from Leighton to whom the proposal was

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 71-73.

¹⁴¹ See below, Chapter 8.

¹⁴² Bowen-Jones, *ibid*.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*.

anathema.¹⁴⁴ Shrewsbury's poor law management was regarded as vastly inferior. If the amalgamation went ahead Atcham would have to pay for Shrewsbury's 'sickness'.¹⁴⁵ Leighton did not want his well managed union to be associated with the profligacy of Shrewsbury. In his desperation to avert the amalgamation Leighton accused Shrewsbury of using political pressure on the PLB:

I feel, however, that should the PLB insist on this measure, there will be a feeling on the part of the Atcham Union that political workings have had an influence with the PLB and an element of discord will then be cast among us that is likely to lead to useless and needless dissension among the Guardians'¹⁴⁶

In this instance, however, Leighton was unable to influence events and the amalgamation went ahead. ¹⁴⁷

No schoolmistress was given a permanent appointment at Atcham during Leighton's Chairmanship. In 1870, he was still preaching the soundness of mixed teaching.¹⁴⁸ The extent of Leighton's influence over the Atcham Board of Guardians is shown by the fact that not until twelve months after Leighton's death was the appointment of a schoolmistress finally made.¹⁴⁹

3.3 Atcham and depauperisation

While the advantages of a strict administration of poor relief are generally acknowledged by all who take an intelligent and active part in Poor Law administration, even these do not always...practise what they preach ...The Atcham Union....occupies a unique position in Poor Law history as the one Union where the principles referred to have been consistently

¹⁴⁴ Memorial of the Atcham Board of Guardians to Poor Law Board of Guardians July 1870, SRO 2637/7 Bdle 469.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Leighton to Goshen, President of the PLB, Feb. 18 1870, *Shrewsbury Correspondence* PRO MH 10058.

¹⁴⁷ See also below, Chapter 8.

¹⁴⁸ Leighton to the Chairman of Alresford Union, Aug. 2 1870, cited in Frances Childe, *op cit.*

¹⁴⁹ Minutes of the Atcham Board of Guardians, May 20 1872, Atcham Union Minutes 1869-73, SRO 2637/7 Bdle 469.

applied since the date of its formation.¹⁵⁰

From the inauguration of the Atcham Union in 1836 an unequivocal stance was adopted by the Board of Guardians towards paupers claiming outrelief. Numbers were drastically reduced by the refusal of most outdoor payments. This policy directly affected the number of children taken into the workhouse school. In his reports on the union in 1838 and 1856, Leighton explained that in order to discourage illegitimacy, payments were withdrawn from mothers with bastard children. The workhouse was offered for the children but only if their mothers came in with them.¹⁵¹ Between November 1836 and March 1838 the number of illegitimate children on outrelief fell from 271 to 32.¹⁵² Nearly twenty years later in 1856 the number was similarly low, at 37.¹⁵³

Atcham's continuing success was the result of this strict and unyielding outrelief policy.¹⁵⁴ The *General Rules for the Atcham Union*, set down by Baldwin Leighton in 1838 and maintained throughout his chairmanship, held the answer.¹⁵⁵ The Rules were detailed and comprehensive. Although later modified, they remained in force for over fifty years.¹⁵⁶ Regular reports, such as Doyle's on pauperism in Shropshire in 1871, emphasised that it was the Atcham Guardians' insistence on firm rules that made its policy so effective:

'...on the formation of the union the Guardians adopted a certain Code of Rules with respect to the granting of relief which are strictly adhered to so that the Officers of the Union soon became fully acquainted with their duties and the poor with the circumstances under which they will receive relief whether in or out of the workhouse. The effect

¹⁵⁰ William Chance, *Our Treatment of the Poor* (1899), p.2.

¹⁵¹ Leighton Reports 1838,1856, *op cit.* See above, Chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁵² Leighton Report 1838, *op cit.*, p.7.

¹⁵³ Leighton Report, 1856, *op cit.*, p.16.

¹⁵⁴ William Chance, *The Treatment of the Poor op cit.*, Thomas Mackay, *A History of The English Poor Law* Vol. III (1900), pp.523-4.

¹⁵⁵ *General Rules for the Atcham Union*, Jan. 1838, Atcham Correspondence 1836-1838, PRO MH 12 9822. See Appendix VII. See also above, Chapter 4.

¹⁵⁶ J.Bowen Jones, *Report on the Progress of the Atcham Union* (1890), SRO 39/12 Bdle 166.

of laying down and adhering to Rules has...caused the reduction in the number and cost of the paupers.¹⁵⁷

William Chance and Thomas Mackay stressed that adherence to *The Rules*, especially *Rule XII* which forbade any outrelief to be given to non-resident paupers after 1838, was a key factor in the union's success.¹⁵⁸ In 1834, non-resident paupers numbered about half the number of claimants.¹⁵⁹ Following ratification of *The Rules* it was determined that relief should only be given 'within the union' and eighty six non-resident paupers were struck off.¹⁶⁰

In the years between 1838 and 1890 there was effectively no change in the rules governing outrelief. The intention was the same in 1890 as it had been in 1838, to discourage outrelief claimants and so reduce costs. In 1838, *Rule IV* covering bastard children read:

RESOLVED - that no Outdoor Relief be granted for Bastard Children (except orphans) born since the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, and if Admission to the Workhouse be demanded, the Mother shall be admitted as well as the Child.¹⁶¹

Up to 1890 and beyond, this same rule remained in force. No outrelief was allowed for bastard children and there was a similar compulsion on the mother to come into the workhouse with her child if she required relief.¹⁶²

This consistency was maintained despite the addition of the Shrewsbury parishes in 1871 which more than doubled the population of the union.¹⁶³ Prior to amalgamation, the population of Atcham was 18,313; afterwards it rose to 45,566.¹⁶⁴ This increase of

¹⁵⁷ Poor Law Inspector Andrew Doyle, *Report on Pauperism in Shropshire* Oct.5 1871, Doyle Correspondence 1871-1877, PRO MH 32/20, p.23.

¹⁵⁸ Thomas Mackay, *A History of the English Poor Law*, *op cit.*, pp.303-304.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Mackay, *ibid.*, Chance, *The Treatment of the Poor*, *op cit.*, pp.21-22.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas Mackay, *ibid.*, p.304.

¹⁶¹ Rule IV, General Rules of the Atcham Union Jan. 1838, *op cit.*, see below, Appendix VII.

¹⁶² J.Bowen Jones, Report on the Progress of the Atcham Union, 1890, *op cit.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

27,253, or 149%, could well have destroyed the efficient administration Atcham had established over the years. That it did not do so was a credit to the structures that had been created. There was, however, some exaggeration by Baldwin Leighton in 1870 over the extent of Shrewsbury's pauperism.¹⁶⁵ Paupers only represented between 1.5 and 2.5 per cent of the town's population. Thomas Mackay's conclusion that Shrewsbury was 'heavily pauperised' must therefore be viewed with caution.¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless, immediately after amalgamation the percentage of paupers in the Atcham Union rose from 1.6% in March 1871 to 2.3% in July, when Shrewsbury came under Atcham's control.¹⁶⁷ By December, only five months later, the number of outrelief paupers had been reduced from 262 to 152, a reduction of 42%.¹⁶⁸ Ten years later the figure had been further reduced to 1% and continued to decrease over the next ten years.

Percentage of Paupers to Population Atcham Union 1871-1891 ¹⁶⁹

<u>Date</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>% of paupers to population</u>
March 1871	18,313	1.6%
July 1871	45,566	2.3%
March 1881	48,635	1.0%
March 1891	48,322	0.8%

After his father's death in 1871 Baldwin Leighton, who was himself to become Chairman of the Atcham Board of Guardians from 1877 to 1885, spoke to Guardians at a Reading Poor Law Conference concerning his late father's achievements. He later recorded that he had been listened to 'in disbelief':

¹⁶⁵ *Memorial of the Atcham Board of Guardians to the Poor Law Board*, Minute of Extraordinary Meeting, July 25 1870, SRO 2637/7 Bdle 469.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas Mackay, *op cit.*, p.523.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Compiled from figures given by J.Bowen-Jones, *op cit.*

I was publicly told that the facts were impossible; that there must be some mistake in the figures; that to have only 139 outdoor paupers in a population of 19,000., or less than 1%, was absurd and incredible¹⁷⁰

Baldwin Leighton's achievements led to him becoming one of an inflexible faction of Poor Law 'zealots', who dominated the Poor Law Conference movement during the 1870s and 1880s, and were convinced that the only way to reduce pauperism was to adhere rigidly to the principles of 1834 and totally abolish outrelief.¹⁷¹ At Atcham this goal was almost achieved.¹⁷²

In the 1893-4 Royal Commission on Labour, Assistant Commissioner Cecil Chapman submitted a detailed report on the agricultural labourer in Atcham. The union's prosperity was inextricably linked to the efficient Poor Law administration established under Baldwin Leighton, which had 'almost succeeded in abolishing outrelief altogether'.¹⁷³ Chapman compared Atcham with other selected unions in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Devon, Cornwall and Hertfordshire. None of these unions had been administered as efficiently as Atcham, where strict Poor Law management had encouraged agricultural labourers to acquire and retain independence.¹⁷⁴

Six years later William Chance reiterated what had previously been acknowledged by others, that the success of Atcham at depauperising had been achieved:

by the carrying out of a consistent policy of restricted outdoor relief over

¹⁷⁰ Sir Baldwin Leighton, *Depauperisation - Being a Letter addressed to Lord Lyttleton, Pamphlets* (1875), p.8. Baldwin Leighton's figures differ only slightly from those given by Bowen-Jones in 1890.

¹⁷¹ Christine Bellamy, *Administering Central-Local Relations 1871-1919* (1988), p.148.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, pp.148, 241. Other 'zealots' included Leicestershire M.P. and Guardian, Albert Pell; G.W. Hastings from the West Midlands; T.B.Baker from Gloucester; William Anstice and Layton Lowndes from Madeley Union in Shropshire. Hastings, Baker, Anstice, Lowndes and Baldwin Leighton all represented unions in the West Midlands.

¹⁷³ Assistant Commissioner Cecil Chapman, Report Upon the Poor Law Union of Atcham, *Royal Commission on Labour*, P.P. 1893-4 XXXV, p.124.

¹⁷⁴ Assistant Commissioner Cecil Chapman, Reports Upon Certain Districts in the Counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Devon, Cornwall, Hertfordshire, *Royal Commission on Labour, op cit*, p.128, para 40.

a period of about 60 years, while keeping the establishments for the relief of the indoor poor up to a high standard of excellency.¹⁷⁵

An integral part of this 'high standard' was seen to be the union's provision of pauper education.¹⁷⁶ Chance emphasised that the success of the workhouse school was crucial to the union's successful process of depauperisation.¹⁷⁷

Education was a key factor in the level of depauperisation achieved at Atcham. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, more children were brought into the workhouse under Atcham's strict relief policies. Secondly, education was given a higher priority and closer attention at Atcham than at many other workhouses. As illegitimate children were only to be relieved in the workhouse this gave them the opportunity, not available to children outside, to receive training at the workhouse school.¹⁷⁸

The inclusion of the school within a strictly administered workhouse distinguished pauper education at Atcham from most other unions. In keeping with Leighton's intention to adhere to strict classifications, children were kept entirely separate from the adults, except at meal times when they were closely supervised.¹⁷⁹ Strict attention was paid to their daily instruction, with a strong emphasis placed on moral training.¹⁸⁰ Girls were given the responsibility of looking after younger children under the supervision of the Matron and both age groups were 'seen to benefit'.¹⁸¹

From 1850 agricultural training for the boys was carefully arranged so that they could take responsibility for much of the cultivation.¹⁸² By 1856 Leighton was able to provide

¹⁷⁵ William Chance, *Our Treatment of the Poor*, *op cit.*, p.21.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.29.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Rules XIV, XV, *General Rules for the Atcham Union*, Jan. 1838, Atcham Correspondence 1836-1838, PRO MH 12 9822. See below Appendix VII.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Everest, Clerk, *Answers of Masters of Workhouses Etc to These Questions (ie relating to children in workhouses)*, No.2. Atcham, Salop, Symons *General Report* P.P.1854-5 XVII Appendix B, p.150.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.153.

¹⁸² Symons *General Report* 1850 P.P.1852 XXXIX p. 279.

figures which pointed to the success of workhouse education in the union. No explanation was provided as to how the comparisons were made or what standards were used.

Baldwin Leighton's Education figures:1837,1856¹⁸³

	<u>1837</u>	<u>1856</u>
Children who could write	0	27
Children who could read	0	39
Children who could spell	8	6
Uneducated	34	0

Leighton concluded :

the education now given in the Workhouse is such, that, with very few exceptions, the children when grown up are able to maintain themselves without becoming a burden on the Parish Rates.¹⁸⁴

A Return from Atcham in 1854, two years before Leighton's report, revealed that in the 18 years since the establishment of the workhouse school, of 1000 children who had left the workhouse only two boys and eight girls had returned.¹⁸⁵ The higher percentage of girls returning reflected the national trend later shown in Poor Law Inspector Henley's Return in 1861.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ *Leighton Report 1856, op cit., p.17.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Returns by Masters of Unions respecting their Pauper Children, Symons General Report, 1854, P.P. 1854-55 XLII.*

¹⁸⁶ *Return...Workhouse...District Schools P.P. 1861 LV.*

In 1871 Doyle recommended that the system adopted at Atcham should be made applicable to all other unions so that far more children could benefit.

The cases are very few indeed in which it would not be infinitely better for the children (to follow the Atcham system).¹⁸⁷

At no point did Doyle refer to the difficulties that had arisen between Leighton, the Atcham Board of Guardians and the central Poor Law and Education authorities in the 1840s and 1850s.¹⁸⁸ When Doyle published his report in 1871 there was still no schoolmistress at the Workhouse School. The autonomous approach that had been adopted by Leighton throughout his chairmanship was overlooked in the light of the school's subsequent progress.

Twenty years later, the current Atcham Chairman, Bowen- Jones, instituted an inquiry into education in the union to discover whether any significant depauperisation had been achieved. The investigation was held:

with a view of ascertaining what had been the effect of children being brought up and trained in the Workhouse School; so far as it affects pauperism.¹⁸⁹

Each adult inmate over the age of 21 was asked where he or she had been brought up and a record was made of everyone who 'was in the workhouse in their childhood'.¹⁹⁰

Of 157 males and 86 females only one man had been raised in the Atcham workhouse and that was before the formation of the union in 1836. Bowen-Jones asserted that the training given at the Workhouse School had changed little over the years. A successful formula had

¹⁸⁷ Poor Law Inspector Doyle, Report on Pauperism in Shropshire 1871 *op cit.*, p.26.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ J.Bowen-Jones, Report on the Progress of the Atcham Union, 1890, *op cit.*, p.24.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

thus been retained and repeated. Boys were trained in 'spade husbandry'; girls in 'cooking, washing and general household work'.¹⁹¹

Bowen Jones concluded that the result 'spoke for itself'. It was demonstrably evident that:

hereditary pauperism is not produced by children being educated in workhouse schools, when the children are kept apart from the influence of adult paupers and the instruction imparted is such as to fit them for the battle of life by providing suitable and efficient industry combined with elementary education.¹⁹²

William Chance concurred: children brought into the Atcham workhouse school received a far better start in life than those remaining outside and the level of depauperisation achieved through education was impressive.¹⁹³ With regard to children leaving to find occupations, 'no difficulty has ever been found in securing good situations for them'.¹⁹⁴ Once at work the children were able to assist their relations financially:

thereby freeing the family from that permanent pauperism which is found to cling to families who have for a long period received outdoor help.¹⁹⁵

In 1893 Assistant Commissioner Cecil Chapman, noted that children from the Atcham Workhouse School still benefited from good training. The school continued to hold an advantage over remote village schools where children had to walk long distances and 'often sit all day in wet clothing'.¹⁹⁶

The achievements of the Atcham Union at depauperisation during sixty years of efficient administration were acknowledged by contemporaries. Atcham was unique and its history

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ William Chance, *Our Treatment of the Poor*, *op cit.*, p.29.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.39-40.

¹⁹⁶ Assistant Commissioner Cecil Chapman, *Report upon the Poor Law Union of Atcham...Royal Commission on Labour* P.P. 1893-94 XXXV p.133.

demonstrates how, through a consistent policy of strict Poor Law management, the progress of an entire union was determined.

The virtues of the 'strict administration of the late Baldwin Leighton' were still being spoken of with high regard in evidence to the *Royal Commission on the Poor Laws*. in 1909.¹⁹⁷ Harriet Lloyd, co-opted Woman Guardian who had visited the workhouse school since 1883, described the continuing effect of the Atcham system as 'decreasing pauperism and discouraging immorality'. The policy of not taking illegitimate children into the workhouse without the mothers reduced the levels of illegitimacy:

That was Sir Baldwin Leighton's very strict system, that they were not to take illegitimate children at all unless they took the mother also. I think it had a good effect.¹⁹⁸

The Atcham Relieving Officer in 1907, James Heathcote, was partially satisfied with the administration of relief but critical of the policy of giving help to widows by admitting some of their children into the workhouse:

the maintenance of children in the workhouse has for some years been contrary to official and public opinion, the practice has not been pressed of late and cases have been left to my discretion.¹⁹⁹

The harshest criticism of Atcham's administration came from one of its own Guardians, J.P. James Morris. In particular, he castigated the workhouse test:

It is common knowledge that the indiscriminate enforcement of this test has entailed lingering destitution..The horror with which the town and country people regard the House is shared

¹⁹⁷ Evidence of Harriet Lloyd, Minutes of Evidence, *Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress*, P.P. 1910 XLVII, Appendix Vol. VI A, p.109.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Evidence of James Heathcote, *ibid.*, p.103.

not only by the destitute themselves, but by people of a more comfortable class.²⁰⁰

This view was held across the union.²⁰¹ James Morris further alleged that the out-relief given 'to all classes of persons' was 'grossly insufficient'. He expressed the view, gaining hold by 1909, that the principle of less eligibility should cease to apply:

I would not give to any person an amount which would not be sufficient to maintain them in health and strength, whether it was more or less than an independent labourer was getting. ..If there is a man in employment who is earning obviously what is insufficient for maintenance, I would not let that be any criterion to go by. I would first of all stick to adequate relief.²⁰²

Unfortunately for paupers in the Atcham Union this was not the policy that had been implemented over the previous half century.

4. The Bridgnorth Union 1836-1858

4.1 The Quatt Workhouse School 1836 - 1850

In 1848, in the early days of their administration, the PLB circulated 'some facts respecting the Farm-School of the Bridgenorth (*sic*) Union at Quatt, Salop.' to other Boards of Guardians in the rest of the country to extoll the depauperising merits of its industrial training:

This school is exclusively for the instruction of the pauper children of the union ... to give them such an industrial training as may remove habits of idleness and incapacity, which are productive of future pauperism, and to facilitate the means of a permanent and independent livelihood when they leave school.²⁰³

200 Evidence of James Morris, *ibid.* p.88.

201 *Ibid.*, p.90.

202 *Ibid.* p.96.

203 PLB, *Official Circular, No 18, Education*, Sep.1848, pp. 276-277.

The subsequent successful transformation of Quatt workhouse school into the thriving South East Shropshire District School was exceptional. Only two other rural District schools were ever established.²⁰⁴ Much of the credit for these developments should go to Whitmore as the first Chairman of the Bridgnorth Board of Guardians.

Whitmore, (1787-1858), Whig country landowner and Bridgnorth M.P. from 1826 and 1835, owned a country residence at Dudmaston Hall, in the village of Quatt, three miles south of Bridgnorth.²⁰⁵ This proximity of Whitmore to the school at Quatt was to be of critical importance. Whitmore was part of the powerful landed interest group in Shropshire who held overwhelming influence after 1834.²⁰⁶ Undiminished by the New Poor Law, they continued to dominate the new Boards of Guardians.²⁰⁷

Whitmore also began his Poor Law Chairmanship with a highly critical review of the Old Poor Law.²⁰⁸ The archetypal pauper was a shiftless, able bodied man - who produced a family that ratepayers had to support while he himself yielded to temptations such as the 'love of pleasure' and 'allurements of drink'.²⁰⁹ Whitmore particularly condemned

²⁰⁴ Farnham and Hartley Wintney in Hampshire; Reading and Wokingham in Berkshire.

²⁰⁵ Whitmore had inherited Dudmaston from his father, William Whitmore, in 1815. In 1991 Dudmaston Hall was still inhabited by descendants of Whitmore, the Labouchere family, but owned by the National Trust. From 1826-1832, Whitmore was M.P. for Bridgnorth; 1832-1835, M.P. for Wolverhampton. Some unpublished material on the Wolverhampton election of 1832 is held in the Dudmaston Papers at Dudmaston Hall; Dud 8/9; Dud 8/3. For an account of the Wolverhampton election, see W. Tildesley, *A History of Wolverhampton* (Wolverhampton 1960), pp. 168-173. In Parliament Whitmore established a reputation as a Free Trader speaking on the Corn Laws, Currency, India, trade with the East Indies, Tobacco duties and the Malt Trade. At Westminster he lodged with his brother-in-law, the mathematician Charles Babbage with whom he regularly corresponded. There is nothing on the Poor Laws in these letters. For a typical example of the surviving correspondence (on Whitmore's vehement dislike of the East India Company and its monopoly of the East India Trade) see Whitmore to Babbage, *Babbage Papers*, BL Add MSS 37,187 f.68.

²⁰⁶ Vincent Walsh, *thesis*, op cit., p.328. Walsh omits to mention Whitmore or the establishment of the successful District School at Bridgnorth in his article on the New Poor Law in Shropshire, 'Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire, 1820-1870', op cit.,

²⁰⁷ Anthony Brundage, 'The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law: a reappraisal of the revolution in government', *The English Historical Review*, Jan. 1972 No 342, pp. 27-48.

²⁰⁸ *Whitmore Report 1837*, op cit. Leighton's Report did not appear until 1838 and it is likely that Leighton was influenced by the format adopted by Whitmore.

²⁰⁹ *Whitmore Report*, p.4. Whitmore was not alone in this opinion; this view of the typical Victorian pauper was to dominate Poor Law thinking throughout the century. See Michael Rose, 'The Disappearing Pauper', in Eric M. Sigsworth, (ed.) *In Search of Victorian Values* (Manchester 1988).

outrelief payments made for illegitimate children, an abuse he had earlier highlighted in the Parliamentary Debates on the Poor Law Amendment Bill.²¹⁰

The feckless nature of the average pauper and belief in the hereditary nature of pauperism led Whitmore to support the classification clauses of New Poor Law. To achieve depauperisation, children had to be removed from the influence of pauper adults and placed in a separate establishment.²¹¹ In this he differed from Leighton who was determined to tackle the problem of pauperism, including pauper education, within one workhouse.

At the first meeting of the Bridgnorth Guardians in June 1836 Whitmore was appointed Chairman. Two other members of the Whitmore family who were also on the Board were Tories. These three, together with four other local figures, comprised the ex-officio Guardians.²¹² The Board of Guardians remained divided between the two political parties.²¹³ William Day later claimed that Whitmore, and also Leighton, was so committed to the local implementation of the 1834 Act that party political considerations were of secondary importance but the Bridgnorth. This should be viewed with some scepticism in the light of the disagreements on the Bridgnorth Board.²¹⁴

Classification was quickly agreed.²¹⁵ Three existing workhouses were utilized including the one at Quatt which was adapted to become a Separate School.²¹⁶ The rapid organisation

²¹⁰ Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, Vol. XXIV, June 16, June 18 1834. Whitmore was also critical of other abuses, especially excessive Poor Rates.

²¹¹ *Whitmore Report, op cit.*

²¹² Copy Minutes First Meeting of the Guardians of the Bridgnorth Union, June 16 1836, *Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1834-1838* PRO MH 12 9850.

²¹³ VCH Shropshire, Vol. III *op.cit.* p.332. The Whitmores were not the only Guardians whose allegiances were party political; John Smallman, a Liberal architect from Quatford Castle Parish was at one time Mayor of Bridgnorth, and Thomas Pardoe Purton came from a locally wealthy and active Tory family in Faintree, Minutes of the Bridgnorth Union, June 16 1836 *op.cit.*; VCH Shropshire, Vol.3 (1979), p.331.

²¹⁴ Day to Lefevre, Apr. 23 1838, *op.cit.*

²¹⁵ *Minutes*, 16 June 1836, Bridgnorth Guardians (copy in Bridgnorth Union Correspondence, 1834-1838, PRO MH 12 9850.)

²¹⁶ Bridgnorth Guardians to PLC, June 25 1836, Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1834-1838 PRO MH 12 9850.

achieved at Bridgnorth revealed an eagerness to implement the PLAA which was evident in the county well before the unions established. In 1835 Richard Gwyn, later chairman of the Bridgnorth Guardians, had expressed impatience over the slow implementation of the new Poor Law to reach remoter regions.²¹⁷ The Bridgnorth Board, in accordance with the recommendations of the 1834 Act, recognised education as a priority from their earliest meetings.

Despite his powerful position as the local landowner Whitmore had to work to retain the continuing support of a majority of farmer Guardians against a background of disputes.²¹⁸ There were continual attempts by farmer Guardians in the late 1840s and early 1850s to cut costs by reducing the salaries of various union officials, including Henry Garland the schoolmaster, the Clerk and all the medical officers.²¹⁹ In 1844 Whitmore, opposed to these economies, enlisted the support of Edwin Chadwick who reassured him that the PLC would not support such a policy.²²⁰ The influence of the PLC was successful in this instance, as was Symons, who intervened in 1849 to ensure Henry Garland received his full salary.²²¹

Whitmore's interest in education was apparent well before the establishment of the school at Quatt. From the early 1820s, as Vice President of the Management Committee of the

²¹⁷ Richard Hodges Gwyn to the PLC, Aug. 25 1835, PRO MH 12 9850. Gwyn was to be much revered as a Chairman and his death in 1864 occasioned a eulogy from the Bridgnorth Guardians over his 'zeal and ability', *Minutes of the Bridgnorth Guardians*, Sep. 3 1864, SRO 627/ Bdle 1. A similar letter was sent by Reverend Cotton in Ellesmere to the PLC, 24 September 1835, Ellesmere Correspondence, 1834-1842, PRO MH 12 9935.

²¹⁸ For a discussion of farmer Guardians, see below, Chapter 6.

²¹⁹ *Bridgnorth Union Correspondence* 1847-1850, MH 12 9853; 1851-1855, MH 9854. See also Garland to Symons Nov. 29 1849, *Miscellanea, Copies of Letters Selected from Letter Books* 1847-1858 PRO ED 9/12, see below Chapter 4; Gwyn to PLB June 4 1850, *Bridgnorth Correspondence op cit*; Sparkes to PLB Dec. 5 1851, *ibid.* There was also a bitter personal dispute between Whitmore and Arndell Sparkes, Whitmore's brother in law and Clerk to the Board of Guardians which was damaging to the critical relationship between a Union chairman and his Clerk and probably contributed to Whitmore's decision not to continue as Chairman after 1838, *Bridgnorth Union Correspondence* 1834-1838 PRO MH 12 9850.

²²⁰ Edwin Chadwick to Whitmore Dec. 23 1843, Copy Book I, Nov. 28 1843 to Jan. 16 1844, *Chadwick Papers* UCL Item 2181/1.

²²¹ Henry Garland to Symons, Nov. 23 1849, *Miscellanea Letter Books* CCE 1847-1858, PRO ED 9/12, No.201; Lingen to PLB, Nov 29 1849, *ibid.*, No 200. See above, Chapter 4.

Bridgnorth National School, he was closely involved with the education of poor children.²²² By 1834, Whitmore had acquired personal experience of managing a large school and the problems involved in maintaining viable attendance figures.²²³ Although the Bridgnorth National School was established for *poor* rather than pauper children there was a common principle - all children were to be given basic mental, moral and industrial training to ensure future independence. The National School included industrial training in its curriculum well before training for pauper children was established under the New Poor Law and underlines the point that industrial training was not a new idea devised solely for Poor Law children.²²⁴ The National School's reports bore a distinct similarity to remarks later made by Whitmore concerning the Quatt Workhouse School. In 1826 the children at the National School were taught 'regular habits and rules of discipline'; eleven years later Whitmore extolled the regime at Quatt School which 'combined instruction' with 'habits of industry'.²²⁵ Both the National and later the Workhouse School trained children for local employment. Girls educated at the National School were 'in service in Bridgnorth and the neighbourhood'.²²⁶ Similarly, Whitmore 'earnestly solicited' Bridgnorth ratepayers to provide situations for children about to leave the workhouse.²²⁷

By the time Quatt School was formed in 1836 Whitmore had formulated his philosophy on pauper schooling and his guiding hand was visible at various crucial stages. Above

²²² *Annual Reports, Bridgnorth National School*, 1821-1834; 1835, SRO, 3662 /Sc/3.

²²³ In 1821 the number of children at the Bridgnorth National School was 250 and in 1835, 220. *Ibid.*, 1821; Apr. 1 1835.

²²⁴ The industrial aspect of pauper schooling was continually highlighted by Kay Shuttleworth, e.g. *The Training of Pauper Children* (1838), Reports 1841, *op cit.*

²²⁵ *Ibid* ; *Whitmore Report 1837*, *op cit.*, pp.6-7.

²²⁶ Annual Report Bridgnorth National School, Mar. 21 1829, *op cit.* In order to encourage links between the community and the school and also to raise funds, needlework produced by the girls at the National School was advertised for sale, *ibid.* This was a common practice e.g. girls at Kennington Girls School in South London sold their needlework in the neighbourhood of the school, Pamela and Harold Silver, *The Education of the Poor. The History of a National School 1824-1974* (1974), p.49.

²²⁷ Quarterly Abstract Bridgnorth Union ending March 1841, *Quatt School Box File, Dudmaston Hall.*

all, in securing the long term benefits of depauperisation, Whitmore saw the separate industrial training of pauper children as an integral part of the New Poor Law :

The system at Quatt school is, industry combined with education. This I believe to be the best system of education for all the children of the poorer classes but essential for the pauper class. The object in the latter is not only to give a sound healthy education, but so to improve both the physical and mental powers, as shall break the thread of pauperism, and enable this hitherto degraded and unhappy class to establish themselves in after life as independent labourers.²²⁸

The first important development was the recruitment of Henry Garland, a 27 year old former baker with no teaching experience, as the Quatt schoolmaster in 1837.²²⁹ It was fortuitous that Whitmore, rather than William Day, was present at the teacher's appointment, for Garland was a Dissenter. As an Anglican, Day later indicated that he would have vetoed the selection of Garland for a residential post in a separate school as adequate supervision was difficult.²³⁰ Quatt was three miles from the main workhouse in Bridgnorth and Garland had the responsibility of conducting the Anglican Liturgy for Church of England children.²³¹ In the event, Garland's conduct proved exemplary. He gained the support over many years, not only of Whitmore and Day, but of Jelinger Symons, never an easy man to impress.²³² Garland remained at the school for 22 years, until he emigrated to New Zealand in 1859. His written accounts of Quatt were utilised by Symons and the PLB in London, and are an important historical source about the school and its industrial training.²³³

The Quatt school began in 1837 with approximately 36-40 children of both sexes. Some industrial training was introduced almost straightaway, with the boys cultivating the

228 W. W. Whitmore, *A Memoir Relating To The Industrial School At Quatt, Addressed To The Rate-Payers Of The South East Shropshire District School* (n. d. Nov. 1849) (hereafter cited as *Quatt Memoir*) p. 3.

229 Bridgnorth Union Correspondence March 1837, 1834-1838 PRO MH 9850.

230 'Extract of a letter from Mr. Day to Mr. W. Whitmore with reference to the appointment of a Dissenter to the office of Schoolmaster with Bridgnorth Union - March 16 1837', *ibid*.

231 *Ibid*.

232 See above, Chapter 4.

233 Henry Garland to PLB, Quatt 1848, Bridgnorth Correspondence, 1847-1850, *op cit*. In 1859, in response to a request from Symons, Garland wrote an account of his years at the school which was included in Symons' Annual Report. Henry Garland to Symons, Sep. 19 1859, Symons *General Report* 1859, *Minutes* CCE, 1859-1860, PRO ED 17/25.

orchard and growing potatoes. Domestic training for the girls also began in 1837, but Garland gave more attention to the innovative training provided for the boys.²³⁴ From 1837 each boy was given a 'plot of ground to cultivate for himself' and in return received a percentage of the profits.²³⁵ This incentive to grow crops was indicative of the route to future independence which Whitmore sought for the children by various kinds of industrial training in spade husbandry, dairy work, baking and domestic economy. It was precisely the form of industrial training that Kay Shuttleworth had urged in *The Training of Pauper Children*.²³⁶ The Quatt Farm-School, and its successor, the South East District School, were regularly praised by Symons who stressed self-motivation as an essential part of effective industrial training.²³⁷ In deprecating the stultifying deadhand of workhouse schooling prevalent in Shropshire in 1849, Symons singled-out the uplifting benefits of the curriculum at Quatt:

The Quatt-Farm School is still pre-eminent for the religious and industrial training. The child is inured to a system of industry. It is the rule and habit of his life, the essence of his education, and the main-spring of his progress. Moral training is also effectual there; for industry develops character, and likewise aids the correction of defects, and the improvement of good qualities, to an extent which it is hard for those to believe who have not tried it. I wish this fact were better known.²³⁸

By 1845 land being cultivated by the boys at Quatt had increased from a quarter of an acre to four acres.²³⁹ In 1852 Whitmore noted that the Bridgnorth Board had needed the Poor Law Commissioners' permission for this development.²⁴⁰ A unique feature was the encouragement of self-discipline, for there was little adult supervision.²⁴¹ Until Mary

²³⁴ 'Mr Garland's Statement', 1859, *ibid.*, p.4. For gender differences within pauper education, see above, Chapter 3.

²³⁵ *Ibid.* For more details of the industrial training at Quatt, see above, Chapter 3.

²³⁶ Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, *op cit.*

²³⁷ Jelinger Symons, *District Labour Schools* (1856), private copy in *Quatt School Box File. Whitmore Papers* (Dudmaston Hall).

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.4. .

²⁴⁰ The only reference to this requirement appears to be in Whitmore's evidence. *Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children* 1852, P.P.1852-3 XXIII, Q.2935.

²⁴¹ 'A List of Paupers in the Union School at Quatt, June 30 1837' includes the names of three adult women who had very young children and were presumably permitted to remain on the premises to care for them, Whitmore Report 1837 *op cit.*, Appendix No 3, p.17.

Pereira and Henry Boyer were appointed as Assistant Teachers, in 1848 and 1851 respectively, Henry Garland and his wife ran the school by themselves.²⁴²

The quality of the teaching was a critical element in the success of the school in preparing children for independent employment. In 1854 Garland provided Symons with first-hand testimony of the depauperising effects of the South East Shropshire District School by recording from memory the employment destinations of over sixty children:

..... there can be but one opinion as to the desirability of removing children very early from adult pauper influence, under which they would be *sure* to imbibe the bad habits and vices of their parents and others of the same class, with whom they are daily brought into contact...if so removed...under good teaching and training, they are as innocent, and will remain so, as any better class, and it is fair to assume that a large per-centage of them will turn out well in the after-life.

Garland revealed that of the thirty-six girls, twelve were married and thirteen had been placed in domestic service, three had become 'very respectable' dressmakers, one worked with her brother, another was employed in a Bridgnorth carpet factory and one had found successful employment as a schoolmistress in Gloucestershire. The gender division was clear. The thirty three boys had the advantage of a wider range of employment. Ten had become labourers or entered domestic service, but others were in the fur trade, mining, engineering, shoemaking, bricklaying and carpetweaving, as well as military service.²⁴³

Garland was one of the few teachers in the country to receive an Efficiency I certificate in 1849, the first year of the Parliamentary Grant.²⁴⁴ An example of the confidence placed in Garland by Whitmore was demonstrated by the annual examination Whitmore established in Religious Instruction, to which he invited 'Guardians and such Ratepayers and

²⁴² Mary Pereira was appointed Schoolmistress in November 1848. Originally from Ghent in Belgium she had previously taught at the Quatt Parish School, Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1847-1850, *op cit.* Henry Boyer, appointed on Oct. 14 1851 was previously Assistant Teacher at the Bluecoat School in Bridgnorth, *South East Shropshire School Correspondence* 1849-1853 PRO MH 27/77. See also below, Chapter 6.

²⁴³ Symons, *General Report* 1854, *op cit.*, pp. 161-162.

²⁴⁴ *Minutes CCE* 1847-8-9 P.P. 1849 XLII.

Inhabitants of the Union as may feel disposed to attend'.²⁴⁵ Whitmore had considerable faith in the ability of Garland and the children to be successful in a public situation. However his expectations with regard to mental training were minimal. He told the 1852 *Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children*:

'we teach reading, writing and arithmetic...geography and some little general knowledge; but our object is, not to go to any great extreme in education; we are satisfied with rudimentary education.'²⁴⁶

By 1848 Whitmore was sufficiently confident to begin discussions with neighbouring unions over the possibility of forming a District School. Whitmore recognised Garland's expertise as a practitioner and utilised it. He asked Garland to produce a statement on the progress the school had made since 1836.²⁴⁷ By now there were 51 children at the school; the boys cultivated the land and looked after cows, pigs and a pony, the girls were 'employed in the House and Dairy Work'.²⁴⁸ At the request of the PLB, Garland's report, which represented an important stage in the development of Quatt into the South East Shropshire District School, was printed and sent to neighbouring unions for their perusal and comment.²⁴⁹

4.2 The South East Shropshire District School, 1849-1858

By the late 1840s Whitmore's main objective was to persuade other unions to join with Bridgnorth to form a District School on the Quatt site. In November 1849 he made a direct appeal to the ratepayers of three unions, Cleobury Mortimer, Madeley and Seisdon in Gloucestershire. At his own expense he published a fourteen page *Memoir Relating to the*

²⁴⁵ Quatt School Annual Examination, June 19 1847, *Quatt School Box File, Whitmore Papers* (Dudmaston Hall). This was a printed form with the date section left blank. A similar form was probably used on other occasions.

²⁴⁶ Evidence of William Wolryche Whitmore, 1852 *Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children, op cit.*

²⁴⁷ Henry Garland to PLB, Quatt 1848, *Bridgnorth Union Correspondence, 1847-1850 op cit.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Industrial School at Quatt, which included an historical account of Quatt and a plan for its future development as the centre of a new District School.²⁵⁰ As the title suggested, industrial training would continue to be the central feature of the curriculum.

Whitmore proposed that the new school should be funded by each union in direct proportion to their annual poor relief expenditure, though he was forced to concede that it would be more expensive than the average workhouse school, owing to the need to employ paid adult assistants from outside.²⁵¹ As Whitmore later told the 1852 *Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children* total separation of the children from all pauper adults was essential if there was to be any real chance of effective depauperisation.²⁵² All adult help at the District School would be acquired from the local labouring population and would have to be paid for.²⁵³ The total cost of maintaining a child in the District School was likely to be £1 per year.²⁵⁴ Effective depauperisation through the District School system would result in long term savings:

WORKHOUSE SCHOOLS

Of the 50 children, I assume 30 will become paupers;
 spend either five years in the house in the course of
 their life,or otherwise cost £50 per head..... £1500

DISTRICT SCHOOL

Fifty cost extra £1 per head for 4 years.....£200
 Five return to the house,or otherwise cost
 £50 per head in after life..... £250
£450²⁵⁵

²⁵⁰ William Wolryche Whitmore, *A Memoir Relating to the Industrial School at Quatt* (1849) (Hereafter *Quatt Memoir*), *Whitmore Papers* (Dudmaston Hall).

²⁵¹ *Quatt Memoir*, *ibid*

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p.11; William Wolryche Whitmore.,evidence to the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children (1852) Q.2935.

²⁵³ *Quatt Memoir*,*op cit.*,

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.12.

Whitmore's figures were questionable, as he was not anxious to refer to the true cost of running the establishment which was far more the minimal amount paid for servants.²⁵⁶

In comparison with the reaction of many Boards of Guardians towards the formation of District Schools, the criticisms that were levelled at the proposals for the South East Shropshire School appeared slight. Elsewhere unions were unwilling to combine because of the initial costs, the loss of union control and the reluctance to spend money on education for children of the undeserving poor.²⁵⁷ None of these issues figured in the response of Cleobury Mortimer who sent a Guardian, W.L.Jones, to visit Quatt.²⁵⁸ Although mildly critical of Garland's method of accounting Jones recommended acceptance and his lucid report was a testimony to the persuasive endeavours of the district school lobby in Shropshire.

...if by any measure of this kind you can disassociate the pauper children at an early age from the Workhouse, you strike at the root of the evil, and destroy what I should call continuous and hereditary pauperism which is at present a great source of misery and crime...remember that you are as Guardians and stand in the relation of Parents to the Children who are from time to time committed to your care. You have now an opportunity of unity with other Unions for the welfare of our pauper children and I should strongly urge you to concur with this movement...²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ E.g. in 1852, £7.4s. 5d was spent on servants, £95 on teachers and other officers, 'South East Shropshire School District, *Statement of Account...for the Half Year ended Lady Day 1852*, *Bridgnorth Union Correspondence* 1851-1855, PRO MH 132 9854.

²⁵⁷ Francis Duke gives an analysis of the problems of establishing District Schools, Duke, *thesis*, *op cit*.

²⁵⁸ W.L.Jones to Cleobury Mortimer Union, Feb. 12 1849 (copy), *Bridgnorth Union Correspondence* 1847-1850, *op cit*.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*. The main protagonists of the District School lobby were William Day, Jelinger Symons and Whitmore.

There were varied reasons why the other Shropshire unions joined.²⁶⁰ Bridgnorth was the host union, its children were already *in situ*. Madeley was anxious to keep down costs and were persuaded by Doyle and Symons that costs would be reduced in the future.²⁶¹

The South East Shropshire School District was duly formed in 1849 by the combination of the unions of Bridgnorth, Cleobury Mortimer, Madeley and the nearby Gloucestershire Union of Seisdon.²⁶² It was not anticipated that the average number of the children at the school would exceed 140.²⁶³ In such a thinly populated rural area it was unrealistic to expect greater numbers.²⁶⁴ An informative account of similar Farm Schools on the continent noted that smaller schools were more viable than those advocated by Kay Shuttleworth and established in the Metropolis.²⁶⁵ A Board of Management was formed for the South East District School, with Whitmore unanimously elected Chairman.²⁶⁶ Despite its different status the school was often still referred to as 'Quatt School' in official documents.

Almost immediately the site was considered to be too small. Adaptation or larger accommodation was essential but there was an immediate disagreement over costs.

²⁶⁰ The reasons for Seisdon Union's amalgamation have not been researched. Other Shropshire unions were invited to combine but declined such as Wellington where the children had already been moved into a separate Workhouse School at Waters Upton, *Wellington Union Correspondence* 1834-1840, PRO MH 12 10059.

²⁶¹ Madeley to the PLC March 23 1850, South East Shropshire District School Correspondence 1849-1853, *op cit*. Whitmore had doubted whether Madeley would ever agree and complained to Doyle that representatives from Madeley did not attend the necessary meetings, Doyle to PLB May 1850, *ibid*. Of the other two rural District Schools, the opening of Farnham and Hartley and Wintney was also delayed by several months but at Reading and Wokingham the formation was more straightforward, Duke, *thesis*, pp.130-131.

²⁶² Cleobury Mortimer was approximately 15 miles from Quatt, Madeley 14 miles, Seisdon 10 miles. Evidence of William Wolryche Whitmore, Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children, 1852, *op cit*. From the late 1850s contracts were also entered into to admit children from other unions when it was evident there were sufficient places available, e.g. *Contracts for the Maintenance of Newport Poor Children in Quatt District School* 1858, 1863, 1867, SRO 3990/12-13.

²⁶³ Andrew Doyle, *Report to the Poor Law Board...on the Education and Training of Pauper Children*, 1850, P.P. 1851 XLIX, p.3.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁶⁵ Joseph Fletcher, 'Statistics of the Farm School System of the Continent, and of its application to the Preventive and Reformatory Education of Pauper and Criminal Children in England', *Quarterly Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, April, 1852.

²⁶⁶ Establishment of South East Shropshire School District Board of Management, (1849) *William Wolryche Whitmore Papers, Quatt School Box File*, Dudmaston Hall.

Whitmore complained that 'all the contributing unions shrink from the expenditure'.²⁶⁷ The first estimate for adaptations was unrealistic; a further £300 was needed. Ratepayers in each of the unions would not pay the additional sum.²⁶⁸ The Board of Management refused to include another union in the School District to spread the cost and an application by Whitmore for a grant from the CCE was rejected.²⁶⁹ Whitmore then attempted to use his previous status as an M.P. to resolve the difficulties.²⁷⁰ Between March and May 1850 he travelled frequently to London and gained private interviews with George Nicholls who, after the demise of the PLC, had become Permanent Secretary to the PLB.²⁷¹ He also wrote to Nicholls without the knowledge of the District School's Board of Management.²⁷² This personal intervention was however insufficient and eventually, in 1850, like Kay Shuttleworth and Tufnell at Battersea with their 'sacrifices of money and labour', Whitmore decided to help finance the District School from his own resources, a move that was later remembered by those anxious to press the case for District Schools.²⁷³

Whitmore arranged to lease a building and adjacent land on his Dudmaston Estate to become the site for the new school.²⁷⁴ The building was known locally as 'The Dower House'.²⁷⁵ It was a large elegant family home, built by one of Whitmore's ancestors in the seventeenth century, totally different from the typical nineteenth century workhouses in

²⁶⁷ Whitmore to Baines, Aug. 28 1849, SESDS Correspondence, PRO MH 27/77.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ SESDS Correspondence, April 23, May 2 1850, PRO MH 27/77.

²⁷⁰ E.g. Whitmore wrote directly to Chadwick for advice on pauper clothing, Whitmore to Edwin Chadwick, June 26 1836, *Chadwick Papers* Item 2110/1, UCL. Chadwick's reply was more formal - 'send the usual letter of information relative to pauper clothing', June 28 1836, *ibid.* Undeterred, Whitmore wrote to Chadwick a month later for 'advice about diet', July 13 1836, Item 2110/4, *ibid.*

²⁷¹ Whitmore to the PLB May 30 1850, *ibid.* Sir George Nicholls, DNB, Vol .XL (1894), p.440.

²⁷² Whitmore to PLB, *ibid.*

²⁷³ J. Fletcher, *The Farm School System of the Continent*, *op cit.* p.36.; *The Quarterly Review*, Vol.110, July, Aug. 1861, pp. 492-493.

²⁷⁴ William Wolryche Whitmore to The Managers of the South East Shropshire School *Lease of a Messuage or Dwelling House and land in the Parish of Quatt in the County of Salop for the term of 99 years*, (Dec 28 1850) *Quatt School Box File*, Dudmaston Hall.

²⁷⁵ Lady Labouchere, present owner of Dudmaston Hall, personal interview, June 2 1991, Dudmaston Hall. The Dower House still remains in a quiet cul de sac and in 1991 was in use as a private school, Lady Labouchere, *ibid.*

which most pauper children were housed.²⁷⁶ Like Kay Shuttleworth and Tufnell, Whitmore was determined not to allow 'his' school to fail. Later, in response to concern that was expressed by the medical officer over the 'insufficiency of the school buildings' Whitmore made a further significant contribution by leasing land for a hospital to be built adjoining the school and paying for the new facilities from his own funds.²⁷⁷

Whitmore's personal involvement continued over many years. In 1848 and 1855 he publicly acknowledged his faith in Henry Garland by standing surety for the teacher with a Bond as financial insurance against Garland absconding with school funds.²⁷⁸ This unusual move meant that Whitmore accepted financial liability for an employee and the wisdom of this was questioned by the Bridgnorth Guardians.²⁷⁹ However, the PLB saw no reason why Whitmore could not provide the necessary indemnity.²⁸⁰

Under Whitmore's guidance and Garland's management the school's reputation grew. In 1856 in an attempt to establish it as a model for others, Whitmore highlighted its achievements by presenting a synopsis of the early developments. This account was subsequently included in a pamphlet by Jelinger Symons in which Symons urged more formations along similar lines.²⁸¹ However no more rural District schools were formed.²⁸²

²⁷⁶ James Roper, *Notes on Quatt Parish and Neighbourhood 1907 to 1928*, Quatt School Box File, *ibid.* John Cornforth, 'Dudmaston, Shropshire', *Country Life* Mar. 22 1979.

²⁷⁷ Alfred Mathias, Medical Officer, to Symons Nov. 10 1855, SESDS Correspondence 1854-1859, *op cit.* Bridgnorth Union to the PLB Jan. 12 1857, *ibid.* The hospital was duly built on the west side of the school and leased to the Managers for 92 years, Whitmore to The Managers of the South East Shropshire School District, *Lease of Hospital belonging to Quatt School in the County of Salop for the term of 92 years*, Whitmore Papers, Quatt Box File, Dudmaston Hall *op cit.*

²⁷⁸ Statement as to Bonds, July 1848, Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1847-1850 *op cit.*, Statement as to Bonds May 16 1855, SESDS Correspondence 1854-1859 PRO MH 27/78.

²⁷⁹ Sparkes to the PLB July 15 1848, Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1847-1850 *op cit.* The objection by Sparkes may also have been a remnant of the bitter dispute between Whitmore and Sparkes in 1838, see above.

²⁸⁰ PLB to Bridgnorth July 15 1848 *ibid.*

²⁸¹ J.C.Symons, *District Labour Schools* (1856). Private copy held at Dudmaston Hall, Quatt School Box File.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p.1. Symons was singularly unsuccessful in his attempts to establish other District Schools in his area of the West of England and Wales, see above, Chapter 4.

Whitmore's commitment to the cause of pauper education and his role in the conversion of Quatt Workhouse School into a District School became widely known through his evidence to the 1852 *Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children*. Joseph Fletcher later noted the international significance of the creation of the Shropshire District School and compared it with similar Farm Schools on the continent.²⁸³ Whitmore emphasised to the 1852 Committee the efforts that were made at the District School to convert pauper children into independent labourers through effective industrial training and the complete removal of children from the contaminating influence of adult paupers.²⁸⁴ He quoted from the report of a National Society Inspector who praised the school and stated that he had 'rarely seen children of their age, and never of their circumstance acquit themselves better.'²⁸⁵

Despite these successful developments a variety of problems arose in the 1850s. Madeley Union, always a reluctant contributor, remained dissatisfied. A populous union, Madeley paid out more in relief than the other contributing unions which resulted in a higher charge for children sent to the school.²⁸⁶ A *Memorial* from Madeley to the PLB set out the grievances and a possible solution - to apportion costs 'according to the number of children from each union' sent to the school.²⁸⁷ A note in the Madeley correspondence for March 1853 stated that the *Memorial* had been sent 'on the instructions of Mr W. Whitmore'.²⁸⁸ This may have represented a calculated risk by Whitmore to retain Madeley as a contributing union but it seems unlikely that Whitmore would have given active support as

²⁸³ Evidence of William Wolryche Whitmore 1852 Select Committee, *op cit.* Joseph Fletcher, *Farm School System of the Continent*, *op cit.*, p.40.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Report of John J. Lomar, Organising master and Inspector of Schools for the District of Hereford, *ibid.*

²⁸⁶ In 1852 Madeley paid £122 14s.7d for the half year ending on Lady Day, Bridgnorth paid £134 5s. 2d whereas Cleobury Mortimer and Seisdon only paid £63 12s. 6d and £61 8s. 9d respectively, *South-East Shropshire School District Statement of Account...Half Year ended Lady Day 1852* Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1851-1855, *op cit.* Payments per child per week in 1853 were Madeley, 2/8d, Cleobury Mortimer 1/9d, Seisdon 1/1d, Bridgnorth 1/-, Madeley Correspondence, Jan 21 1853, PRO MH 9984.

²⁸⁷ Madeley to the PLB, *Quatt School: Memorial of the Board of Guardians of the Madeley Union to the Poor Law Board* Jan 21 1853, *ibid.* The number of children sent to the SESDS in January 1853 were Cleobury, 21; Madeley and Seisdon, 28; Bridgnorth 62, *ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Madeley Union Correspondence Mar. 30 1853, *ibid.*

such a change in funding would only have encouraged unions to send 'as few children as possible to the District School'.²⁸⁹ The situation remained unresolved and although the Madeley Guardians appreciated the 'great benefits' their children received at the District School, they continued to be disgruntled over the method of apportioning charges.²⁹⁰

A potentially more serious situation arose over criticisms of the school by Symons. At his first inspection, Symons, although complimentary about Garland's 'great zeal, ability and success' was dissatisfied with the school's ventilation and heating, the arrangement of furniture, the separate instruction given to boys and girls and the lack of adequate staffing.²⁹¹ This situation was not dissimilar to the one that arose at Atcham but the response of Whitmore and the Board of Management was very different.²⁹² At Bridgnorth there was a concern to rectify matters as quickly as possible. Whitmore had a 'long consultation' in private with Symons and agreed on certain recommendations, the most important being that two more teachers would be appointed so that the children could be taught in two mixed classes according to age.²⁹³ In recognition of their extra duties salary increases for both Henry and Mrs Garland were also agreed.²⁹⁴ More funds were needed but it was recognised that any increase in charges would be resisted. The PLB were urged to recognise the South East Shropshire District School as a 'special case' and to allocate extra allowances:

...it being thus important to the cause of improved Pauper Education that every possible pecuniary aid be given to an undertaking which has attracted so large a share of public attention and whose Managers and Officers have so laudably exerted themselves.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ Memo from Andrew Doyle, Apr. 5 1853, Memorial from Madeley Union, *op cit.*

²⁹⁰ This point was regularly made in annual *Statements of Progress* e.g. *Statement of Progress of the Madeley Union*, May 1853, July 1855, Madeley Union Correspondence, *ibid.* At the rural Farnham and Hartley Wintnety District School there were also complaints over costs, mainly to do with insufficient repayments from the Parliamentary Grant towards the teachers' salaries, which delayed its formation for several months, Duke, *thesis*, p.130.

²⁹¹ Symons to Lingen, Mar. 1852, *South East Shropshire District School Correspondence 1849-1853*, PRO MH 27/77.

²⁹² See above.

²⁹³ Symons to Lingen, Mar. 1852, *op cit.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Symons' complaints over the heating and ventilation remained unresolved. Criticisms were occasionally made of teaching standards but overall the school steadily improved its reputation and Symons reports became generally favourable.²⁹⁶ The education was far superior to that of most National and British Schools.²⁹⁷ The poor quality of elementary schools in Shropshire was attested to throughout the 1850s by the Anglican Inspector, Norris.²⁹⁸

When Garland was about to emigrate to New Zealand he enthused about the success of the school particularly the combination of industrial and intellectual pursuits:

the children soon lose the dull heavy look so common in the workhouse,
and by degrees their craft, and become buoyant and
intelligent, healthy in body and mind, and capable of competing in any
way with children brought up in a town, without their vice, which,
after all, is the thing, the great thing, to be sought.²⁹⁹

Symons was similarly fulsome in his praise for Garland, Whitmore and the school.³⁰⁰ The industrial system was 'unequalled' elsewhere and the South East Shropshire District School stood alone as a prime example for others.³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ In 1856 Lewis Roach, the Assistant Teacher who was later to succeed Garland as Superintendent of the school, was criticised by Symons for the standard of his teaching, Symons *General Report* 1856, P.P. 1857 XXXIII. E.g.s of good reports include 1857, P.P. 1857-8 XLV; 1859, P.P. 1860 LIV.

²⁹⁷ J.C.Symons, 'On Industrial Training as an Adjunct to School Teaching' (1857), *Essays Upon Educational Subjects*, n.d., p.304. This was only a few years after the Anglican Inspector Norris had heavily criticised the Bridgnorth National School, both for its buildings and its instruction. Of the Boys' School Norris wrote, 'Buildings dilapidated and unsuitable in every way....Furniture imperfect. No playground....Instruction standard still low.' Rev.P.Norris, '*General Report*' 1853, P.P. 1854 LII, p.554.

²⁹⁸ E.g. the industrial training for girls was poor, Rev. P.Norris, *General Report*, 1852, P.P.1852-3, Vol. 2, LXXX; 'education still defective', *ibid.*, 1853, P.P. 1854 LII; deficiencies in the curriculum, notably a 'lack of common things', *ibid.*, 1856, P.P. 1857 XXXIII; three quarters of the children were withdrawn by their parents 'before they reached the first class', *ibid.*, 1860, P.P. 1861 XLIX.

²⁹⁹ Henry Garland to Symons, Sep. 19 1859, Symons, *General Report* 1859, *op cit.*

³⁰⁰ Symons to Garland, *General Report* 1859, Appendix A P.P.1860 *Minutes* CCE LIV, p.563.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

The South East Shropshire District school survived into the 1890s.³⁰² It fitted the view of Poor Law Inspector Richard Hall that District Schools were only likely to be established where there was a 'fortuitous occurrence of circumstances'.³⁰³ In the case of the South East Shropshire District School the reasons for its success were related to the nature of its establishment and its subsequent development.

Firstly, the PLB waived certain building requirements. On the advice of Poor Law Inspector Doyle, initial insistence on the modification of existing buildings was shelved in the face of strong local opposition.³⁰⁴ In its anxiety to create a rural school outside the environs of London, the central authority was prepared to compromise rather than risk losing the Shropshire combination.³⁰⁵

Secondly, concessions were made to local unions. Some children were allowed to remain in the workhouse school at Cleobury Mortimer, pacifying Guardians who were reluctant to send casual attenders to the District School.³⁰⁶

Thirdly, the school always remained a manageable size. In 1853 there were only 124 children.³⁰⁷ The rationale for smaller schools was recognised and promoted by Doyle as the only sensible method in underpopulated rural areas.³⁰⁸

The appointment of Henry Garland as teacher at the Quatt School, and later Superintendent of the District School, was a primary reason for the success of the school. Garland

³⁰² See below, Appendix 2.

³⁰³ Poor Law Inspector Richard Hall, *District Schools*, Dec. 29 1848, PRO MH 32/36.

³⁰⁴ Poor Law Inspector Andrew Doyle to PLB, April 23 1850, PRO MH 27/77.

³⁰⁵ Modifications were also agreed to by the PLB at the rural Farnham and Hartley Wintney District School, Duke, *thesis*, p.127.

³⁰⁶ Cleobury Mortimer to PLB, Feb. 1849, Letter Book, 1844-1849, SRO 627/59 Bdle 60; Poor Law Inspector Andrew Doyle, *General Report*, Feb.24 1849, PRO MH 32/17. In 1852 Doyle stated that 32% of pauper children in Shropshire were casual, *General Report* 1852, P.P. 1852-3 LXXX.

³⁰⁷ Sixth Annual Report PLB, P.P.1853, Appendix. No. 34. The other two rural schools formed successfully in 1849 also had low numbers. By 1853 there were only 114 children at Reading and Wokingham and 98 at Farnham, *ibid*.

³⁰⁸ Poor Law Inspector Andrew Doyle, *General Report*, Dec. 1849, PRO MH 32/17.

remained in charge for 23 years and family links were maintained when he was succeeded by his son-in-law Lewis Roach, who had himself trained at Quatt. Such continuity was unusual; most pauper schools were more commonly noted for their rapid staff turnover.³⁰⁹

The major factor in the successful establishment of a District School at Bridgnorth was the direct involvement of Whitmore. The developments took place at a period in Whitmore's life when, following the death of his wife, he desired to consolidate his roots in Shropshire.³¹⁰ He increasingly spent more time at Dudmaston, becoming involved with the affairs of his estate and the promotion of first Quatt and later the District School.³¹¹ By the 1850s the District School was his major concern. As a former M.P. and wealthy local landowner, he was in the fortunate position of being able to exert a strong moral and financial influence over the development of the school and also to have the necessary land available for the projected expansions. In 1856 though he had lost 'much of his activity', he still had sufficient energy to stroll 'as far as his school which is his great pet'.³¹²

Following Whitmore's death in August 1858 a laudatory sermon emphasised his association with the school and his

constant personal superintendence of the establishment which his own benevolence had been the chief instrument in founding.³¹³

309 At Reading and Wokingham District School six Superintendents and Matrons were appointed in five years and between 1849 and 1853 there were five schoolmasters and six schoolmistresses, Duke, *thesis, op cit.*, p.164. For teacher changes in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere see below, Chapter 6.

310 It is clear from his correspondence with Babbage how deeply Whitmore was affected by the death of his wife, Whitmore to Babbage n.d. Mar. 1840, *Babbage Papers* Vol. X 37,19, f.345, *op cit.* As early as 1844 he informed Charles Babbage that he would no longer rent rooms from him in London as he found the city 'anything but a pleasurable residence', Whitmore to Babbage Jan. 31 1844, *Babbage Papers* Vol. XII, 37,193, f.9, *op cit.*

311 At Dudmaston Hall Whitmore was responsible for remodelling and landscaping the grounds, John Cornforth, 'Dudmaston Shropshire', *op cit.*

312 Lord Overstone to G.W.Norman, Sep. 21 1856, cited in D.P.O'Brien (ed.), *The Correspondence of Lord Overstone*, Vol. III (Cambridge 1971), p.658.

313 The Reverend E.Bellett, Incumbent of St.Leonards Bridgnorth and Chaplain of Quatt Industrial School, *A Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of Quatt on Sunday August 22 1858* (1858), *Whitmore Papers* Dud /8/67, *op cit.*

Eleven years later *The Quarterly Review* enthused about the continuing success of the school and 'Mr Whitmore's benevolence who made up from his own "home-farm" the deficiencies of the crops or the casualties of the stock'.³¹⁴ Without Whitmore's influence it is unlikely the Quatt Workhouse School would have developed successfully into one of the few District Schools to be established outside the Metropolis.

5. Robert Slaney and the Ellesmere Union, 1836-1842

Robert Aglionby Slaney (1792- 1862) became M.P. for Shrewsbury for the first time in 1826.³¹⁵ During four separate periods in Parliament his interests ranged over the Poor Laws, popular education, and the health of labouring people in towns which in due course became his abiding preoccupation.³¹⁶

Slaney became noted among his fellow M.Ps for his 'benevolent exertions to ameliorate the condition of the poor'.³¹⁷ He wanted both to improve the lot of the poor and to decrease the burden on the ratepayer. He deplored the Old Poor Law under which the able-bodied were given relief rather than work.³¹⁸

Slaney believed in the traditional approach of the liberal philanthropist, a mixture of severity, justice and paternalism.³¹⁹ This philosophy was refined over the years by an increasing allegiance to the opinions of political economists.³²⁰ In his *Essay on Rural*

³¹⁴ *The Quarterly Review*, Vol.110, July and Aug. 1861, p.494.

³¹⁵ DNB Vol. LII, 1897, p.367.

³¹⁶ Slaney was M.P. for Shrewsbury 1826- 1835; 1837 -1841; 1847-1852; 1857-1862.

³¹⁷ Duke of Richmond, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1830, Vol. xxiii, col. 481. For Slaney's involvement in the debates to amend the Poor Laws during his first term in Parliament, see above, Chapter 1.

³¹⁸ *Parliamentary Debates* Third series Feb. 24, 1828.

³¹⁹ This is evident in many of his *Journal* entries, *The Journal or Diary of Robert A. Slaney M.P. from 1818 to 1849*, MSS Morris Eyton Collection, No.1-9, Local Studies Library, Shrewsbury, hereafter *Slaney Journal*.

³²⁰ Paul Richards, 'The State and the Working Class 1833-1841: M.P.'s and the Making of Social Policy', PhD thesis, Birmingham (1975), p.145.

Expenditure Slaney stressed that poor relief should not be given without applying a test for destitution.³²¹ Slaney was a devout Christian who believed he had a responsibility to improve conditions for the labouring classes. The primary responsibility for ensuring efficient Poor Law administration lay with wealthy landowners like himself who had a duty to maintain an ordered society.³²²

To this end Slaney set himself exacting personal standards which were reflected in his *Journal*, kept regularly for over thirty years.³²³ The *Journal* is liberally scattered with self-enjoiners to 'work harder', attend more assiduously to duties and not to waste time. Family crises, illnesses and bereavements seemed to remind him of what little time he had left to be industrious and in so doing he whipped himself - 'On! On!' - to greater efforts.³²⁴

Although (*sic*) I have done something, much time and many opportunities have been wasted for the want of application and perseverance. These faults I must try to remedy.³²⁵

By 1827 Slaney had formulated his views on the Poor Laws into a substantial proposal.³²⁶ He acknowledged that the problem was less acute in his home county of Shropshire than it was in many other regions. Figures for Poor Law expenditure in Ellesmere, for instance, were low in comparison with some southern counties. Slaney visited workhouses in Sussex where the extent and amount of outrelief far exceeded that of Shropshire.³²⁷ His 1828 Bill was unsuccessful but four years later he wrote in his *Journal* that an amendment of the Poor Laws was by then a practical possibility. The government was:

³²¹ Robert Slaney *An Essay on the Beneficial Direction of Rural Expenditure* (1824).

³²² The value he placed on this responsibility is clear from its inclusion as a primary factor in his preface to the *Essay*, Preface, *ibid.*

³²³ *Slaney Journal*, *op cit.*

³²⁴ *Slaney Journal*, Oct. 1841.

³²⁵ *Slaney Journal* Jan. 1832, *op cit.*,

³²⁶ In only his second speech after entering Parliament in 1826 Slaney attempted to bring in a Bill whose main tenet was to amend the laws regarding 'the payment of able-bodied labourers out of the poor rates', Parliamentary Debates, June 13 1827.

³²⁷ *Slaney Journal*, 1828.

in earnest to improve the abuses of the poor laws! My humble efforts have not been lost and I may yet (perhaps) do some good.³²⁸

Robert Slaney was unanimously elected Chairman of the Ellesmere Board of Guardians on November 15th 1836, just one year after he had lost his first Parliamentary seat, and held the position until 1842.³²⁹ In 1837 he returned to the House and his experience of national Poor Law changes appeared to place him in a unique position to implement these in his own union. It also afforded an opportunity for a national politician to experience and witness the effect of central administration at a local level.³³⁰ Slaney was also beginning to acquire an increasing interest in the development of popular education. This appeared to augur well for the development of pauper education in Ellesmere.

5.1 Slaney and popular education

Slaney's interest in popular education was apparent well before he entered Parliament. There were several brief references to education in his *Journal* in the early 1820s and he included a chapter on 'Schools for the Poor' in his 1824 *Essay* in which he stated that education for the poor 'seems now scarcely controverted'.³³¹

In 1836, the year he accepted the Chairmanship of the Ellesmere Guardians, Slaney wrote *Symptoms of Decay*, a treatise on conditions in larger towns, which included an attack on the inadequate educational opportunities for children of the urban poor. He contended that much of the money spent on the detection of criminals would be better used educating children away from crime and pauperism.³³²

³²⁸ *Slaney Journal*, n.d., between January and May 1832, *op cit*.

³²⁹ Minutes of the Guardians, Ellesmere Union (copy) Nov. 15 1836, Ellesmere Union Correspondence PRO MH 12 9935.

³³⁰ Minutes of the Guardians, Ellesmere Union Nov. 15 1836, *op.cit*.

³³¹ 'E.g. I made enquiries and suggestions respecting establishing a school for the poor at Bomere Heath' (Shropshire); *Slaney Journal*, *op cit*., n.d., 1823.

³³² Robert Slaney, *Symptoms of Decay in Britain and Improvement of the Working Class*, May 1836, Item No 10, *Morris-Eyton Collection*, Local Studies Library, Shrewsbury. See also below, Chapter 1.

When he returned to Parliament in 1837, education became one of Slaney's major concerns. His personal involvement in the progress of popular education in 1837 can be charted through his *Journal*. In January he helped The Statistical Society to obtain 'an accurate account of the state of education in Birmingham and its suburbs'. In the same month he requested and received a report on *The State of Education in Shrewsbury*.³³³ In February he joined the Central Society for Education, giving a large donation in addition to the required subscription. In May he contacted Lord Brougham at the Committee of the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge stressing that more effort was needed to improve conditions for working classes in large towns.³³⁴

In a speech on *The State of Education of the Poorer Classes in Large Towns* in November 1837 Slaney placed strong emphasis on the moral and industrial, as well as academic, training that was needed to produce independent labourers who would not resort to pauperism or crime.³³⁵ Slaney urged that the effective training of schoolteachers was essential; inadequately trained teachers should not be employed when:

We would not employ a shoemaker or gardener who was not expert in his art.³³⁶

Slaney became increasingly involved with national education and during 1838 chaired a Select Committee enquiring into the education of the poorer classes in England and Wales.³³⁷ The Committee's emphasis was on elementary education for the children of the labouring classes in major cities, rather than for the children of the rural poor, independent or pauper.³³⁸ This reflected Slaney's own preoccupation, evident in *Symptoms of*

³³³ *Slaney Journal*, Jan. 1837, *op.cit.* Unfortunately there is no surviving copy of this Report.

³³⁴ *Slaney Journal*, February and May 1837.

³³⁵ *Speech of R.A.Slaney, Esq.M.P. on Thursday November 30th 1837 on The State of Education of the Poorer Classes in Large Towns* (1837). See above, chapter 1.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5.

³³⁷ *Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes in England and Wales*, 1838, P.P. 1837-8 VII. One of the witnesses was Kay Shuttleworth who became Secretary to the CCE in 1839, see above, Chapter One.

³³⁸ *Report...Select Committee...Education...Poorer Classes*, *op.cit.*, p.167.

Decay and in his speech to the House of Commons in 1837.³³⁹ Education for poor, rather than pauper, children was Slaney's chief concern.

5.2 Pauper education at Ellesmere

Pauper education provided a natural link between two of Slaney's interests, the Poor Law and popular education. His appointment as Chairman of the Ellesmere Board of Guardians was welcomed. There were great hopes that his influence would have a substantial effect on the local community.³⁴⁰ William Day was aware Slaney had been Chairman of a Parliamentary Committee on the Poor Laws and was:

very anxious to secure his services as Chairman of the new Union.³⁴¹

As Chairman, Slaney was in an ideal position to make education a priority. It was clear in 1832 that he deplored the poor state of schooling under the Old Poor Law.³⁴² In The House of Commons in 1840 he again passionately condemned the old system :

children were tainted by contact with the dissolute and depraved, before they knew right from wrong, nothing worthy of the name of education was afforded them ... and our gaols were constantly filled with those who began their lives in the workhouse.³⁴³

In the 1834 debates he drew attention to opportunities that would exist under the new Act for children to be 'provided with the means of education'.³⁴⁴ Later, in his *State of Education* speech in 1837, when he had already been Chairman of the Ellesmere Board for a year, Slaney cited the 'excellent establishment' at Norwood as a model institution that

³³⁹ *Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series Nov. 30 1837, *op cit.*

³⁴⁰ Day to PLC, received Nov. 25, 1836, Ellesmere Correspondence PRO MH 12 9935.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² See above.

³⁴³ Slaney, Speech in the House of Commons, quoted in *The Salopian Journal*, Aug. 5 1840. *The Salopian Journal* with its usual anti-Poor Law rhetoric attacked Slaney's speech but no criticism was made of his comments on education suggesting there was little *The Salopian Journal* could disagree with. Slaney relinquished the Chairmanship of the Ellesmere Board of Guardians in 1842.

³⁴⁴ *Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, Vol. XIII, June 19 1832. See above, Chapter 1. *Parliamentary Debates*, Apr. 14 1834.

should be emulated by other unions.³⁴⁵ However there are very few indications that Slaney took any action to secure better education for pauper children in the Ellesmere union.

Movements towards the establishment of the New Poor Law in Ellesmere progressed with surprising rapidity. In March 1836 Day complained of the obduracy of some of the Ellesmere Directors to implement the changes yet by November the Board of Guardians was formed and certain union officers had already been appointed.³⁴⁶ Advertisements for others were placed, not only in local newspapers, but in *The Manchester Guardian*, indicating the Guardians' desire to expedite matters and to encourage a wider field of applicants.³⁴⁷ A sub-committee was appointed to examine classification within the workhouse.³⁴⁸ Although the Guardians temporarily retained the Old Poor Law system of overseers their general attitude to the New Poor Law was one of co-operation and any initial obstructiveness soon disappeared.³⁴⁹

The process of implementing a more stringent attitude towards outrelief began quickly and at only the Guardians' second meeting 40% of claimants were told that their payments were to cease.³⁵⁰ The relief policy adopted under Slaney's chairmanship was to have a significant effect on the type of children eligible for pauper education. Mothers with illegitimate children were forced to send them into the workhouse when their relief was terminated. As a result illegitimate children were given access to education they would

³⁴⁵ *Speech of R.A.Slaney M.P. on Thursday November 30 1837 on the State of Education of the Poorer Classes in Large Towns* (1837 Reprint Manchester 1971), see above, Chapter I.

³⁴⁶ Day observed that the Ellesmere Directors were under the 'unfortunate' influence of the Oswestry Directors who were determined to resist the new law. Day to PLC, Mar. 3 1836, *ibid.* Oswestry was to continue as an Incorporation until the 1860's. Minutes of the Board of Guardians, Ellesmere Union Nov.15 1836, *op.cit.*

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ It has been argued elsewhere that the Ellesmere Guardians were attempting to defy the New Poor Law in their retention of overseers, see Vincent Walsh, *Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire*, *op.cit.*, p.235, however there is little evidence of this.

³⁵⁰ Minutes of the Guardians, Ellesmere Union, Nov. 22 1836, *op.cit.*

not otherwise have received.³⁵¹ This was more a consequence of a tightening up of the policy on relief rather than any deliberate attempt to enhance educational opportunity.

Unlike the approaches adopted at Atcham and Bridgnorth, there is no indication that any particular efforts were made at Ellesmere to prioritise education. As at Atcham, the Ellesmere Board was composed predominantly of farmers with little interest in education.³⁵² The Ellesmere Guardians considered it more economical to employ a schoolmistress, rather than a schoolmaster and offered £10 per annum with no allowance for board and lodging.³⁵³ In most unions it was also usual to include a percentage towards living expenses.³⁵⁴ This was a low payment. The salaries of other Ellesmere officials were fixed at levels commensurate with, and at times above, those of other newly established unions.³⁵⁵ Under the terms of the Parliamentary Grant a schoolmistress might have expected to receive two-thirds of a schoolmaster's salary, which in Shropshire in the late 1830s ranged from £15 to £30. Margaret Maiden, who was temporarily employed at Atcham in 1837, received £12.³⁵⁶ Owing to the difficulty of recruiting candidates to the remoter parts of rural Shropshire no appointment was made for a further ten months. In November the original conditions still applied and Mary Pay was appointed on a salary of £10.³⁵⁷ By then it had been decided to appoint a schoolmaster as well, also on a low

³⁵¹ See below, Chapter 6.

³⁵² Report of Assistant Commissioner Arthur Lewis, 1834, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, *op cit.* See below, Chapter 6.

³⁵³ Ellesmere Guardians to PLC Jan. 28 1837, PRO MH 9935.

³⁵⁴ E.g. Atcham, Bridgnorth, Madeley, Wellington, PRO MH 9822, MH 9850, MH 9981, MH 10059.

³⁵⁵ Hignett, lately Governor of the old workhouse was made Relieving Officer under the new regime at a generous annual salary of £100 which included an accommodation allowance Minutes of the Guardians, Ellesmere Union, Nov. 15 1836, PRO MH 9935. Relieving officers in Madeley and Wellington Unions were initially appointed at £80 and £70 respectively although these amounts were later increased. Madeley Union to PLC June 13 1836, Madeley Correspondence 1834-1842, PRO MH 9981; Wellington Union to PLC June 17 1836, Wellington Correspondence 1834-1840, PRO MH 12 10059. A new Governor was appointed at Ellesmere at £50 per annum so Hignett's new position was a definite promotion, a recognition of the importance under the New Poor Law of the role of the Relieving Officer, Minutes of the Ellesmere Guardians Nov. 15 1836, *op cit.*

³⁵⁶ Atcham Union Letter Book, 1837, SRO, 131/126 Bdl 145.

³⁵⁷ Ellesmere Union Correspondence, Nov. 7 1837, PRO MH 9935.

salary and John Roberts received £15.³⁵⁸ In comparison, schoolmasters appointed at Atcham and Bridgnorth received £30.³⁵⁹

By 1839 the management of the workhouse was giving cause for concern. Insufficient changes had been made since the introduction of the New Poor Law ; much remained as it had been before 1834, a situation not uncommon in other Shropshire unions.³⁶⁰ On more than one occasion there were complaints about Ellesmere's tardiness in completing the requisite central authority Returns.³⁶¹ In 1839 the butter and sugar allowances were reduced for the aged and infirm, and William Day was very critical of the state of the children:

Many of the boys were in rags though there is a tailor in the House to teach them to mend their own clothes. The girls were slatternly and untidy. The Children (are) imbibing habits of slovenliness and that want of self-respect which is the first step of habitual pauperism.³⁶²

Slaney's role at this time is difficult to assess. The Ellesmere Board appears to have functioned less generously when he was away from Shropshire. Slaney himself was aware that he was frequently absent from Board meetings.³⁶³ It was significant that Slaney was not present when the first decisions about schoolteacher appointments were made. When he chaired the next meeting the decision about board and lodging for the prospective schoolmistress was 'corrected' and rations were subsequently offered, although the salary remained unchanged.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁸ Ellesmere Guardians to PLC, Nov. 7 1837, Ellesmere Correspondence PRO MH 12 9935.

³⁵⁹ Atcham Union LetterBook, 1837, *op cit.*, Bridgnorth Union Correspondence, 1837, PRO MH 9850.

³⁶⁰ PLC to Ellesmere, Apr. 4 1838, Ellesmere Correspondence, *op cit.* Walsh argues that because of the refusal of some of the large Incorporations to dissolve, the Poor Laws were managed in a similar way both before and after 1834, Vincent Walsh, *thesis, op cit.*, see also, 'Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire', *op cit.*

³⁶¹ Ellesmere was the only English union in Day's district not to complete returns on time, Edwin Chadwick to William Day, July 13 1838, Ellesmere Correspondence, *op cit.*

³⁶² Ellesmere to PLC, June 13 1839; Day to PLC, Mar. 23 1839, *ibid.*

³⁶³ *Slaney Journal*, 1836, 1837.

³⁶⁴ Minutes of the Ellesmere Guardians (Copy), Feb. 4 1837, PRO MH 9935

In view of his 1837 parliamentary statement on the need for efficient teachers it is likely that Slaney was instrumental in urging early appointments and in persuading the Guardians to advertise for a schoolmaster.³⁶⁵ Three weeks after Roberts' appointment Slaney declared publicly that there should be 'a man at the head of every juvenile infant and training school'.³⁶⁶

There are no other instances of Slaney making any attempt to develop pauper education in the union. This was at variance with his increasing desire to improve popular schooling, especially when chairing the *Select Committee on Education*. in 1837. As early as November 1836, when he had just accepted the Ellesmere Chairmanship, Slaney wrote in his *Journal* that he had made some progress with his 'suggestions for the practical education and improvement of the poorer classes in Large Towns'.³⁶⁷ He made no mention of his responsibility for pauper education. Even more pertinently he recorded that he had visited the PLC to discuss a 'uniform system of Education' in Poor Law schools. This was presumably a reference to District Schools but there is no record of any attempt by Slaney to promote the system in Shropshire.³⁶⁸ Later, The Board of Guardians under a new Chairman, Lord Kenyon, subsequently declined to join the South East District School preferring to retain education within local control.³⁶⁹

In 1841 it appeared that he was atlast turning his attention more directly to his own constituency but once again it was to poor, rather than pauper, children

I must now turn to try to improve the schools for the poor near here (Shrewsbury) and other plans for their benefit. ³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ Speech of R.,A.Slaney, Esq.M.P. Nov. 30 1837, *op cit*.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁶⁷ *Slaney Journal*, Nov. 1836, *op.cit*.

³⁶⁸ *Slaney Journal*, June 1837. The only indication of Ellesmere attempting to combine education was the offer made to Atcham to send their children to Ellesmere in 1837, see above, Atcham.

³⁶⁹ Walsh, *thesis*, p.254. *op cit*.

³⁷⁰ *Slaney Journal*, Oct. 1841.

Slaney did not take advantage of his prominence as an M.P. to publicise the difficulties of implementing local Poor Law schooling. When he chaired the *Select Committee on Education* he made no mention of pauper education. Similarly, when he praised developments at Norwood school in 1840 he did not refer to the progress of education in his own union.³⁷¹

There were several reasons for Slaney's lack of involvement. Firstly, he regarded the neglect of popular education as a problem that needed to be addressed nationally. Slaney believed that his role as landowner and M.P. required him to adopt a high national profile. To devote his energies to the development of Poor Law education in one local union was not the most appropriate way of fulfilling his public duty. Secondly, pauper children in workhouses represented only a small fraction of the total number of poor children in need of education and Slaney was primarily concerned with educational opportunities for the children of the independent poor. Thirdly, Slaney was frequently absent from Ellesmere, and opportunities to promote education were missed, especially as the Board of Guardians did not place any priority on Poor Law schooling. The fact that he did not readily use his local knowledge suggests that Slaney believed Ellesmere did not present the good example of the sound local Poor Law management he advocated. Furthermore, once he was no longer Chairman of the Board of Guardians Slaney became increasingly out of touch with local Poor Law affairs. Fourthly, it is evident that Slaney regarded his work on the Ellesmere Board of Guardians as a task to be endured. It was part of his responsibility as a local landowner rather than of his commitment to improve the lot of the labouring classes. He did not accord Poor Law affairs the same attention he gave to his other interests.³⁷² In 1836 Slaney wrote in his *Journal*::

'As Chairman of the Ellesmere Union I have attended this irksome but important duty almost every week when at home.'³⁷³

³⁷¹ Speech on the State of Education of the Poorer Classes in Large Towns 1837, *op cit.*

³⁷² Day to PLC Jan. 9 1838, Day Correspondence 1835-7, PRO MH 32/15. Out of the 13 Shropshire unions Ellesmere was the last board to issue regulations.

³⁷³ *Slaney Journal*, Dec. 17 1836, *op.cit.*

If Slaney's *Journal* is an accurate reflection of his thinking, he gave little attention to his role as Poor Law Chairman. There are few references to union activities after the mid-1830s and only one to his task as Chairman. Slaney's attitude was totally different from the approach adopted by Leighton who turned the Chairmanship of the Atcham Board of Guardians into a lifetime's task.

Finally, Slaney's involvement in so many activities was a major reason why he did not adopt a more conscientious attitude to his work as a Poor Law Guardian. He drove himself too hard and took on commitments he was unable to fulfill. In 1861 George Cornwall Lewis, Secretary to the PLB and an ex Poor Law Commissioner said, with reference to Slaney's continuing attempt to obtain a permanent committee to study the conditions of the working classes, that Parliament needed to 'consider something more than a good or kind intention'.³⁷⁴

It would be unjust and inaccurate to say that Slaney was never rigorous or effective in his political career. His role in the establishment of the CCE in 1839 and his untiring and successful efforts to establish Select Committees in the 1830s and 1840s on the condition of the labouring classes are evidence of this.³⁷⁵ Slaney is, however, open to the charge that in his preoccupation with national developments he failed to use his undoubted knowledge and experience to develop pauper education in the Ellesmere Union.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Parliamentary Debates, Mar. 13, 1861.

³⁷⁵ E.g. Select Committee...Open Spaces in...Towns, 1833 P.P. 1833 XV; Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes in England and Wales 1838 P.P. 1837-38 VII; Select Committee on the Health of Towns...1840 P.P. 1840 XI; Select Committee...State of Large Towns..1844 P.P. 1844 XVII.

See above, Chapter 1.

³⁷⁶ With the notable exception of Richard Johnson (PhD Cambridge 1968, *op cit.*) and Paul Richards (PhD Birmingham 1975, *op cit.*) most historians have highlighted the work of other campaigners. Progress at the workhouse school was however little different from that achieved in the Ellesmere National Schools; industrial training for boys was particularly slow and only really began to develop in 1857, Rev.P.Norris, '*General Report*' 1857, P.P. 1857-8 XLV, p.423.

After Slaney had ceased to be Chairman of the Guardians in 1842 there was no sustained development of education at the Ellesmere school. The current Schoolmaster managed to achieve Competency certificates in 1849, 1850 and 1851.³⁷⁷ However in the ten years between 1852 and 1862 no certificate above Probation 1 was awarded.³⁷⁸ A few boys grew vegetables but they worked with adult paupers and there was little specific training.³⁷⁹ In 1853 only six boys and two men cultivated the garden even though there were 26 children above the age of 6 in the workhouse.³⁸⁰ In 1854 Symons was critical of the lack of sufficient classification at Ellesmere which enabled the children to mix freely with other inmates.³⁸¹ The slow progress at the school was not in itself unusual and differed little from developments in elementary education in the same district. At Ellesmere National Schools the industrial training for boys was poor and only began to make progress only after 1857.³⁸²

None of the three districts in this study, Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere, provided any systematic pauper education prior to the PLAA. Twenty years later Atcham and Bridgnorth were beginning to establish a national reputation for the quality of their school provision. Good quality teachers were consistently appointed at Atcham and paid high salaries. However the 'model' status achieved by the Atcham workhouse school owed much to the union's national standing as an exemplar of New Poor Law administration and cannot be justified on educational grounds alone. The progress of pauper education at the school was more representative of the views of Leighton than the ideal envisaged by the central authorities. Throughout the period of Baldwin Leighton's administration he refused to appoint a schoolmistress, or to enlarge the school's accommodation. For over thirty years pauper children at Atcham were taught in large mixed classes by a single schoolmaster.

³⁷⁷ Ellesmere Union Correspondence, PRO MH 9935. See below, Chapter 6.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, MH 9937, 9938, 9939. See below, Chapter 6.

³⁷⁹ Symons, *General Report* 1853, P.P. 1854 LI.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Symons, *General Report* 1854, P.P. 1854-55 XLII.

³⁸¹ Symons, *General Report* 1854, *op cit*.

³⁸² Rev J.P. Norris, *General Report* 1857, P.P. 1857-8 XLV, p.423.

Despite this demonstration of local autonomy, the school managed to achieve national recognition by the 1860s, particularly for its industrial training. At Bridgnorth, Whitmore personally supervised the development of pauper education at Quatt and actively campaigned to establish Quatt as the centre for the South East Shropshire School. His close involvement with the school for over thirty years had a critical impact on the development of pauper education in the union, not least because Whitmore leased part of his own land to the District School and paid for extensions from his own funds.

The progress of pauper education in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere unions gives a clear indication of how local circumstances prevailed over central direction. Whereas the central authority's expectations and approach was similar for each union, local variations in management resulted in differing levels of attainment. The value placed on education by the Boards of Guardians was reflected in their choice of staff and this in turn had a critical effect on the standard of education.

CHAPTER SIX

GUARDIANS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN: FACTORS AFFECTING PAUPER EDUCATION IN ATCHAM, BRIDGNORTH AND ELLESMERE UNIONS, 1834-1863.

In July 1838 William Day submitted his first report on the state of pauper education in Shropshire. In general he was critical of the overall standards in the county, stating that

almost without exception all schools are inefficient.¹

Day made it clear that he did not so much blame the Boards of Guardians as the problems they had to contend with. One of the organisational constraints was the small number of children in each union. This was recognised by Day not long after he had arrived in Shrewsbury. In 1838 the total number of pauper children in the Shropshire unions was 363.² Even if this number had been divided equally between the thirteen unions there would still have only been 28 children in each workhouse.³ Often only a few of these children were capable of receiving instruction, sometimes because of their young age, but mainly because many were transient, moving with their parents in and out of the workhouse.⁴ In reality the number of children in seven of the unions who were 'capable of instruction' fell well below even the low average figure of 28.⁵ Only in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere did the number of school age children reach 30 or more in

¹ Day to PLC, Returns Relative to Union Schools in Shropshire, July 26 1838, *Day Correspondence* 1835-1838 PRO MH 32/15.

² William Day to the PLC, *Returns Relative to Union Schools in Shropshire*, July 26 1838, *Day Correspondence* 1835-1838, PRO MH 32/15.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ According to William Day the number of children 'capable of receiving instruction' was three at Shiffnall; seven at Church Stretton; 12 at Newport; 14 at Ludlow; 16 at Cleobury Mortimer; 19 at Drayton; 20 at Wellington, William Day, *Report on Education in Shropshire Unions 1838*, 4th Annual Report PLC Appendix B No 5, p.168.

1836.⁶ The quality of the education was to some extent in direct proportion to the number of children in the different workhouses. Small numbers of children did not encourage Guardians to make education a priority, as at Cleobury Mortimer where the sixteen children were taught by a schoolmistress who attended one day a week and did not teach writing.⁷ It was uneconomic for unions with only a few children to spend money on education.

Some unions continued to employ pauper inmates for some time after the New Poor Law had been introduced. Day commented on the school at Church Stretton where 'Reading (was) taught by an old pauper of 80 years of age'; and at Market Drayton where the children were taught by 'two paupers in the House'. The three children at Shiffnal were taught 'reading and needlework' by an 'old widow pauper'.⁸ The use of pauper teachers in Shropshire was, however, low. In 1837 only four of the thirteen unions employed paupers as teachers, compared to over 50% of the Metropolitan unions.⁹

Of the thirteen Shropshire unions, Atcham Bridgnorth and Ellesmere, received a reasonable, if cursory, report from Day in 1838. At Atcham, Day recorded that the schoolmaster was 'competent' and that the Guardians were 'about to appoint a schoolmistress'.¹⁰ Of both Ellesmere and Bridgnorth workhouse schools Day wrote:

schoolmaster and schoolmistress...have a competent knowledge of the matters they are required to teach.¹¹

The standard of pauper education in the unions was dependent on factors including the attitude of Boards of Guardians and the quality and turnover of teaching staff. According to Day the education provided by teachers in the three unions of Atcham, Bridgnorth and

⁶ Bridgnorth, 30; Ellesmere, 48; Atcham, 52; *ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ William Day to PLC, P.P. 1837 - 8 XXVIII, Appendix B No 5, p.168; William Hickson to PLC, P.P. 1837-8 XVIII Pt III, p. 13-14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* See above, Chapter 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Ellesmere in 1836 was similar but this situation did not continue. In due course the quality of teaching at Atcham and Bridgnorth became superior to that provided at Ellesmere.

It is clear from the reports of the Poor Law Schools Inspectors in all parts of the country that it was the quality of teaching that was seen as the most crucial factor that determined standards.¹² Until the mid-1850s it was repeatedly stated in the Schools Inspectors' annual reports that teaching standards were unacceptably low.¹³ The reasons given were low salaries, a lack of training and experience and poor living conditions, all of which resulted in a high turnover of staff. Most critically it was the lack of training and the high turnover that were cited as the crucial determinants.¹⁴ The inspectors complained that there was no possibility of raising standards until teacher training improved and Boards of Guardians began to place a higher value on the appointment of trained teachers.¹⁵

1. The Boards of Guardians and Teacher Appointments

The Boards of Guardians in the rural Poor Law Unions of Shropshire, including the three unions of Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere, were dominated by local farmers. Some of the election posters have survived for Atcham, and to a lesser extent for Ellesmere, and it is possible to ascertain the composition of the Boards of these two unions with reasonable accuracy.¹⁶

In 1838 out of the 44 Guardians on the Atcham Board, 32, or 73%, were farmers. The only other occupations that were represented by more than one Guardian were Gentlemen,

¹² E.g. *General Reports*, Poor Law Schools Inspectors, 1848-9, Mins CCE, P.P. 1850 P.P. XLIII.

¹³ E.g. Symons *General Reports* 1851, P.P. 1852 XXXIX; 1853, P.P. 1854 LI.

¹⁴ E.g. Browne, *General Report* 1858, PRO ED 17/24.

¹⁵ Symons *General Report* 1854, P.P. 1854-5 XLII.

¹⁶ See Table 5 Elections to the Atcham Board of Guardians, 1839-1857 and Table 6 Elections to the Ellesmere Board of Guardians, 1843-7. It has not proved possible to locate similarly accurate and detailed information for Bridgnorth although there are some general characteristics of Shropshire Unions that are pertinent to Bridgnorth. Farmers also dominated other Shropshire Boards, see for instance, Madeley Union, Guardians' Occupations 1837, SRO 134/1; Ludlow, List of Guardians and Paid Officers 1862-3, SRO 456/6/30.

Table 5 Elections to the Atcham Board of Guardians 1839-1857

	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1857
Farmer	32	28	29	18	18	21	24	20	23	18	23	19
Gentleman	2	4	3	4	4	8	6	2	5	2	3	3
Clergyman	2	2	3	1	3	6	5	8	9	5	6	9
Yeoman	3	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	2	-	-
Baronet	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Banker	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clerk	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
Miller	1	1	2	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	-
Merchant	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dr of Medicine	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Innkeeper	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Grocer	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Esquire	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Attorney	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	1
Land-agent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Maltster	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
TOTAL	44	38	40	27	28	37	40	34	39	34	35	35

Sources: Guardians' Election Posters, Atcham Union Correspondence, 1839-1857 PRO MH 12 9823, 9824, 9825, 9826

Clergy and Yeomen, averaging 4-5% each.¹⁷ The percentage of farmers on the Atcham Board declined over the next twenty years but farmers still held the majority of seats, maintaining an average of 68% between 1839 and 1843, only falling to 60% between 1847 and 1852.¹⁸

An election poster for Ellesmere in 1843 showed a similarly high percentage of farmers. Of the 21 seats up for election in 1843, 14, or 67%, were retained by farmers, four by Gentlemen and three single seats were held by a Yeoman, a Tanner and a Clerk.¹⁹ This ratio hardly changed between 1843 and 1847.

A similar situation prevailed at other rural unions. Twenty years later at Ludlow farmers continued to dominate the Board of Guardians.²⁰ Even in the industrial regions of Madeley and Wellington farmers held up to 50% of the seats.²¹ In the town of Shrewsbury the farming influence was far less evident and in 1847 only three farmers were appointed to the Shrewsbury Board.²² In urban areas there was generally a far wider range of occupations represented than on rural Boards and fewer seats were held by the gentry.²³

As the dominant group these farmer Guardians were in a strong position to control decisions and expenditure. As in other parts of the country there was often a reluctance to spend money on education. There were few signs that any Guardians, let alone farmers,

¹⁷ List of Atcham Guardians, 1838-1843, SRO, 13/1 Bdle 3.

¹⁸ See Table 5 Elections to the Atcham Board of Guardians, *op cit.*

¹⁹ See Table 6 Elections to the Ellesmere Board of Guardians, *op cit.*

²⁰ Out of 31 Guardians on the Ludlow Board in 1862, 20 were farmers, *List of Guardians and Paid Officers in the Ludlow Union for the Year 1862-63*, SRO 456/6/30. Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in 1909 still indicated a relatively high percentage; at Shifnal in 1907 40% of the Board were farmers, Evidence of Henry Phillips, Clerk to the Shifnal Board of Guardians, July 17 1907, Minutes of Evidences, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1909, *op cit.*

²¹ E.g. Out of 32 Guardians on the Madeley Board in 1837, 16 were farmers, Madeley Union *List of Guardians 1837*, SRO 134/1.

²² Walsh, *thesis*, Table XIX, *op cit.*

²³ Cambridge Board of Guardians in 1851 came from seventeen different trades and small businesses and there were no gentry or farmers on the Board, *1851 Census*, Cambridgeshire Record Office.

Table 6 Elections to Ellesmere Board of Guardians 1843, 1845, 1847.

	1843	1845	1847
Farmer	14	12	13
Gentleman	4	5	4
Yeoman	1	-	-
Tanner	1	-	-
Clerk	1	3	4
Land-agent	-	-	1

Sources: Guardians' Election Posters, Ellesmere Union Correspondence 1843-1847, PRO MH 9936.

valued education sufficiently to appoint good quality teachers in the 1830s.²⁴ Edwin Chadwick noted the complacency of farmers under the Old Poor Law:

The farmers said 'If we cannot manage the poor, I wonder who can'.²⁵

Even by the 1850s some farmer Guardians, if not actively averse to the education of pauper children were at the very least 'indifferent'.²⁶ *The Quarterly Review* reflected in 1861 that initial interest shown by *ex officio* Guardians in the South East Shropshire District School was defeated by the negative attitudes of farmers on the various Boards.²⁷ Paul Richards has noted that with his liberalism and his concern to improve the conditions of the labouring classes, Slaney's views differed enormously from the farmer Guardians on the Ellesmere Board.²⁸

The appointment of teachers was one of the direct responsibilities of the local Boards of Guardians. In 1847 approximately half the teachers employed by Boards of Guardians in England and Wales had no previous teaching experience.²⁹ The beneficial effect of such experience had been recognised by the Poor Law Inspectorate but was ignored by most Boards of Guardians.³⁰ Before the introduction of Parliamentary Grants even when practising teachers were employed little financial account was taken of their experience. In 1847 30% of experienced teachers were paid £15 per annum, or less, which compared unfavourably with the average salary for a Poor Law schoolmaster in 1847 of £25.³¹ Although some allowance must be made for the fact that previous 'experience' was often

²⁴ E.g. In Somerset farmer Guardians were at times not prepared to agree to pay for the schooling of pauper children, G.F.Baker *thesis, op cit*, Chapter 2

²⁵ Edwin Chadwick, 'An Article on the Principles of the Poor Law Amendment Act.London 1837', *Tracts* 1835-41.

²⁶ Browne, *General Report*, 1851, P.P. 1852 XXXIX, p.227.

²⁷ *The Quarterly Review* Vol.110, July and Aug. 1861, p.493.

²⁸ Paul Richards, *thesis, op cit.*, p.17.

²⁹ *Return of the Annual Amount of Salaries paid in the year 1847 to the Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses of each Poor Law Union in England and Wales* P.P. 1847-8 LIII, p.2-22. Hereafter *Return of Salaries 1847*.

³⁰ Sir John Walsham to PLB, Dec. 31 1846, PRO MH 32/81.

³¹ *Return of Salaries 1847, op cit.*

minimal, the figure of 30% was still high. It is further evident that some of these teachers received very low salaries indeed, sometimes as little as £6 per annum or less.³²

Shropshire statistics were not dissimilar to the country as a whole. Out of the seven Poor Law schoolmasters employed in the county in 1847, three, or 43%, had taught previously.³³ One of these, the schoolmaster at Wellington Union, was paid only £12.10s.³⁴ It is not known whether he had previous teaching experience. The appointment of an experienced teacher did not necessarily guarantee better quality teaching. In the case of Wellington Union the Guardians had stated that their reason for employing a schoolmaster was primarily to do with lessening the workload of the Workhouse Governor. They did not prioritise education or the need to appoint a good teacher.³⁵

Of the three unions in this study the lowest salary in 1847 was paid by the Ellesmere Board of Guardians who gave their schoolmaster £25.³⁶ Atcham and Bridgnorth Guardians paid £40 and £30 respectively.³⁷ In 1834 Assistant Commissioner Lewis had been especially critical of the quality and management of education under the Old Poor Law in the Ellesmere House of Industry.³⁸ By 1847, however, the £25 salary paid to the schoolmaster in Ellesmere corresponded with the national average and was similar to rates paid by other unions in the Midland region.³⁹ Nevertheless this was not sufficient to secure a competent teacher. Despite a low turnover of staff at Ellesmere, salaries and later certificates, did not increase with the introduction of inspection in 1847.⁴⁰ At Ellesmere,

32 The teacher at Havant Union in Hampshire who had previously been a teacher at another Poor Law school, earned £6 per annum; at Liskeard in Cornwall two experienced teachers were paid £6 and £2.2s respectively. *Return on Salaries 1847* p.15, p.3, *op cit*.

33 *Ibid.*, p.3.

34 *Ibid*

35 Minutes of the Wellington Board of Guardians Jan. 5 1843, SRO 77/1 Book B 1839-43. The amount paid in 1843 had been £10 so there had at least been a 25% increase by 1847, *ibid*.

36 *Return of Salaries, 1847, op cit*.

37 *Ibid*.

38 Report on Shropshire from Poor Law Assistant Commissioner Arthur Lewis, P.P. 1834 XXVIII Appendix A.

39 *Ibid*.

40 See Table 7 Schoolmaster Certificates and Salaries in Atcham, Bridgnorth, Ellesmere Unions, 1849 - 1862.

Table 7 Schoolmaster Certificates and Salaries in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions 1849-1862

Year	Atcham Union		Bridgnorth Union		Ellesmere Union	
	Certificate	Salary	Assistant	Master	Salary Assistant	Certificate
1849	Competency II	£36*	none	£60	none	Competency III
1850	Competency II	£36	none	£60	none	Competency III
1851	Efficiency III	£48.10	none	£60	none	Competency III
1852	Efficiency III	£48.10	Competency I	£85	£34.8	Probation I
1853	Competency III	Not Known	Competency I	£85	£36	Permission I
1854	Competency I	£38.10	Competency I	£85	£37.10	Probation III
1855	Competency I	£38.10	Competency I	£85	£38.01	Probation III
1856	Competency I	£38.10	Competency I	£85	£38.01	Probation I
1857	Competency II	Not Known	Efficiency II	£85	£55	Probation I
1858	Competency II	Not Known	Efficiency II	£85	£55	Probation I
1859	Competency II	Not Known	Not Known	£50	-	Probation I
1860	Competency II	Not Known	Not Known	£55	-	Probation I
1861	Competency II	Not Known	Efficiency III	£53	£35	Probation I
1862	Competency II	Not Known	Teacher/sick leave	£53	-	Probation I
TOTALS	Efficiency 2 Competency 12 Probation 0 Permission 0		Efficiency 3 Competency 5 Probation 0 Permission 0 Not Known 2 Ill 1			Efficiency 0 Competency 3 Probation 10 Permission 1

*all figures are expressed in pre-decimal currency

Sources: Atcham Union Correspondence, 1849-1862 PRO MH 9822, 9823, 9824, 9825, 9826, 9827; Atcham Letter Book 131/126 Bundle 145, Shropshire Record Office; Bridgnorth Union Correspondence, 1849-1862 PRO MH 9850, 9851, 9852, 9853, 9854, 9855, 9856; Ellesmere Union Correspondence, 1849-1862 PRO MH 9935, 9936, 9937, 9938, 9939.

between 1849 and 1862, it was only in the first two years, 1849 and 1850, that teacher certificates rose above Probation level.⁴¹ The aim of the Ellesmere Board of Guardians to cut the cost of pauperism by adopting a stringent attitude to relief was not paralleled by a desire to depauperise through the establishment of an efficient level of pauper education and the employment of qualified staff.⁴²

In Bridgnorth and Atcham, however, salaries were comparable with the higher rates paid in the Metropolis where the average annual salary in 1847 was £35.⁴³ Similarly, certificates issued after 1847 were correspondingly higher than in Ellesmere.⁴⁴ It was accepted from the formation of both unions that there could be a saving in the longer term if efficient teachers were employed on reasonable salaries. This is evident from the Reports produced by Whitmore and Leighton in 1837 and 1838 which emphasised the value of good quality education.⁴⁵ Accordingly, both Atcham and Bridgnorth unions appointed their first teachers on salaries of £30.⁴⁶ Better salaries and fewer changes in staffing at both Atcham and Bridgnorth resulted in higher certificates.⁴⁷

The previous occupations of the schoolmasters in the three unions give an indication of the priority that was given to education by the respective Boards of Guardians. Out of the six schoolmaster appointments made at Atcham between 1837 and 1857, at least four had previous teaching experience.⁴⁸ Similarly, at Bridgnorth, out of the four appointments made between 1837 and 1852 three were schoolmasters, whereas at Ellesmere there is no record of any appointees having previously taught.⁴⁹

41 *Ibid.*

42 Minutes Ellesmere Board of Guardians, Nov. 15 1836, PRO MH 12 9935.

43 The average of the two salaries paid at Atcham and Bridgnorth in 1847 was £35, *Return on Salaries 1847, op cit.*

44 See Table 7 Schoolmaster Certificates and Salaries, *op cit.*

45 Whitmore Report 1837; Leighton Report 1838; *op cit.*

46 See Table 8, Salaries paid to Schoolmasters at Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions, 1837-1847.

47 See Table 7 Schoolmaster Certificates and Salaries, *op cit.*

48 See Table 9 Previous Occupations of Schoolmasters at Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions, 1837-1859.

49 *Ibid.*

Table 8 Salaries Paid to Schoolmasters in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions, 1837-1847

Year	Atcham (1)	Bridgnorth (2)	Ellesmere
1837	£30	£30	£15
1842	£40	£30	£18
1847	£40	£30	£25

Sources: Atcham Correspondence 1837-1847, PRO MH12 9822, 9823, 9824; Atcham: Letter Book 131/126 Bundle 145, Shropshire Record Office; Bridgnorth Correspondence 1837-1847, PRO MH 9850, 9851, 9852, 9853; Ellesmere Correspondence 1837-1847, PRO MH 9935, 9936.

**Table 9 Previous Occupations of Schoolmasters in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions
1837 - 1859**

Union	Date	Name	Previous Occupation
<u>Atcham</u>	1837-1842	William Harries	Schoolmaster
	1842-1851	Robert Rowlandson	Assistant Schoolmaster Liverpool National School
	1851-1853	Walter Welland	Schoolmaster
	1853-1854	George Cain	Nor Known; 'from London'
	1854-1857	John Caesar Archibold	Teacher; 'from Isle of Man'
	From 1857	George Holdcroft	Not Known
<u>Bridgnorth</u>			
(i) Schoolmaster	1837-1859	Henry Garland	Baker
	1859-	Lewis Roach	Schoolmaster
(ii) Assistant Master	1851-1852	Henry Boyer	Schoolmaster, Bluecoat School, Bridgnorth
	1852-1859	Lewis Roach	Schoolmaster
<u>Ellesmere</u>	1837-1841	John Roberts	No employment; 'from Parish of Willington'
	1841-1847	Jeremiah Howell	No employment; 'at home with parents'
	1847-1849	Not Known	Plumber and Glazier
	1849-1853	Edward Jones	Not Known
	From 1853	Job Darlington	'Journeyman and Miller, lately farming with his Mother'

Sources: Atcham Union Correspondence 1837-1857, PRO MH 9822, 9823, 9824, 9825, 9826; Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1837-1859, PRO MH 9850, 9851, 9852, 9853, 9854, 9855; Ellesmere Union Correspondence 1837-1853, PRO MH 9935, 9936, 9937.

Such differences cannot be related to the composition of the Boards of the three unions as this remained roughly comparable, with each continuing to be dominated by farmers. The different attitudes adopted towards teacher appointments were probably more to do with the three Chairmen. It is possible that Slaney had some influence over the Ellesmere Guardians' decision to grant rations to the first schoolmistress and to appoint a schoolmaster but there is no further evidence to suggest that he took any active part in union decisions over schooling.⁵⁰ At Atcham and Bridgnorth, Leighton and Whitmore were far more effective. Leighton pursued a consistent policy of employing a well paid schoolmaster but as he appointed a schoolmistress the Board of Guardians was presumably making an annual saving of, say £20. At Bridgnorth, although Whitmore ceased to be Chairman after 1838, his influence was evident in the development of both Quatt and the District School. In 1838 he was personally involved in the choice of Henry Garland as schoolmaster; in the 1850s he held out firmly against reductions in Garland's salary and was instrumental with Symons in persuading the Board of Management of the District School to agree to the appointment of extra teachers.⁵¹ Similar research in Somerset has shown that where persuasive individuals on Boards of Guardians were active in promoting education a better quality provision ensued.⁵²

2. Changes in Staffing

2.1. Atcham

Baldwin Leighton, and later Bowen-Jones, stressed that there were few changes of union Poor Law officers in the union between 1836 and 1890.⁵³ Leighton and Bowen-Jones

⁵⁰ See above, Chapter 5,

⁵¹ Bridgnorth Union Correspondence MH 12 9852, 9853, 9854, *op cit.*, SESDS Correspondence 1852 MH 27/77, *op cit.*

⁵² Lord Cavan at Bridgewater introduced an annual 'open' inspection of workhouse schools; at Wellington (Somerset) an intensive programme of garden cultivation was initiated by the clergyman, Baker *thesis, op cit.*, pp.96-97.

⁵³ Leighton Report 1856, *op cit.*, Bowen Jones Report 1890, *op cit.* See above, Chapter 5.

were chiefly referring to the posts of Chairman and Secretary but other key officers also remained *in situ* for long periods. In the first ten year period following the establishment of the Atcham Union there was only one change of schoolmaster.⁵⁴

The efficiency of teachers is difficult to quantify prior to the establishment of the Poor Law Schools Inspectorate in 1847 and the introduction of graded certificates. Robert Rowlandson who was appointed in 1842 held his salary of £40 until his first inspection by Symons in 1848. After that, Symons awarded him a Competency II certificate, in both 1849 and 1850, which only entitled him to a payment from the Parliamentary Grant of £36.⁵⁵

There were several possible reasons for the reduction in Rowland's salary. Leighton and the Atcham Board of Guardians were keen to promote education and when they appointed William Harries in 1837 and Rowlandson in 1842 they offered high salaries. By 1848, Symons, with his wider knowledge and experience and under instructions from the PLC, expected higher standards. The introduction of Parliamentary Grants helped to standardise salaries and the maximum and minimum monetary levels for graded certificates gave guidelines.

In the case of Rowlandson, Symons considered £40 an excessive salary for a teacher who was not, in the Inspector's opinion, providing an adequate level of industrial training.⁵⁶ £40 was the maximum amount any teacher could earn on a Competency II certificate in 1850, and Symons did not consider Rowlandson to be at the top of the scale.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ See Table 10 Schoolmaster Appointments in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions, 1837 - 1857. Figures given by Symons in his 1852 Report appeared to indicate that there were three changes of schoolmasters at Atcham between 1848 and 1852 but this is not supported by figures given in Atcham Correspondence at the PRO or in Guardians' Minutes at the SRO.

⁵⁵ See Table 7 Schoolmaster Certificates and Salaries, *op cit.*

⁵⁶ Symons to CCE July 26 1848 (copy), Atcham Correspondence *op cit.*

⁵⁷ Appendix to the *Third Report of the PLB*, 1850, P.P. 1851 XXXVII, p.64.

Table 10 Schoolmaster Appointments in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions, 1837-1857.

Union	1st Appointment	2nd Appointment	3rd Appointment	4th Appointment	5th Appointment	6th Appointment
<u>Atcham</u>	1837	1842	1851	1853	1854	1857
<u>Bridgnorth</u>						
(i) Schoolmaster	1837	1859				
(ii) Assistant	1851	1852	1859	1861		
Schoolmaster						
<u>Ellesmere</u>	1837	1841	1847	1853		

Sources: Atcham Union Correspondence 1837-1857, PRO MH 9822, 9823, 9824, 9825, 9826; Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1837-1861, PRO MH 9850, 9851, 9852, 9853, 9854, 9856; Ellesmere Union Correspondence 1837-1853, PRO MH 9935, 9936, 9937.

In 1851 Rowlandson changed his post at Atcham and became the Workhouse Master, which represented promotion and an increase in salary.⁵⁸ He was replaced as Schoolmaster by Walter Welland who, despite achieving an Efficiency III certificate and a salary of £48.10s, only remained in the post for two years. Welland was followed by George Cain who stayed for under twelve months.⁵⁹ Thus between 1850 and 1853 Atcham employed three schoolmasters and it was during this period that the union was in dispute with both the PLB and the CCE over the refusal of the union to enlarge its schoolroom and to appoint a schoolmistress.⁶⁰ The improvements that were subsequently made in industrial training were undoubtedly reflected in the higher level of certificate granted to Welland in 1851.⁶¹ The fact that all the schoolmasters appointed at Atcham between 1837 and 1857 were practising, experienced teachers from either the Poor Law or the elementary sector, undoubtedly reflected the union's attempts to foster education. This must be balanced against the determination of Atcham not to reduce class sizes, enlarge school accommodation or appoint a schoolmistress. In practice this meant that the whole burden of teaching was devolved to one schoolmaster who was expected to educate up to 75 children in cramped conditions.⁶²

2.2 Bridgnorth

Out of the three unions the smallest number of teacher changes was at Bridgnorth. Henry Garland remained as the teacher in charge, first of Quatt Workhouse School and then at the South East Shropshire District School for a period of twenty-two years, from 1837 to 1857.⁶³ Although he had no previous teaching, Garland's annual starting salary was £30 which he held until 1849 when, under the new system of inspection and certification, he

⁵⁸ Atcham Correspondence 1851 PRO MH 9825.

⁵⁹ Symons *General Report* 1854, PP 1854-5 XLII. See Table 10, Schoolmaster Appointments in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions, 1837-1857, *op cit.*

⁶⁰ See above, Chapter 5.

⁶¹ See Table 7, Schoolmaster Certificates and Salaries in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere 1849-1862, *op cit.*

⁶² See above, chapter 5.

⁶³ See Table 10 Schoolmaster Appointments, *op cit.*

received £50.⁶⁴ This figure was the highest amount that could be earned on an Efficiency I Grade and it is singularly impressive that Garland was never awarded less than an Efficiency I certificate throughout the whole of his career at Bridgnorth.⁶⁵

Once the school became a District School other Assistant Teachers were appointed but the quality of teaching remained consistent. Although there were Assistant Schoolmaster changes in 1852, 1859 and 1861 these figures taken alone do not accurately reflect the situation at the South East Shropshire School.⁶⁶ Lewis Roach succeeded Henry Boyer as the second Assistant Schoolmaster in 1852 and remained at the school for the rest of his career, with a break of only a few months in 1859, after which he returned to the school as its Superintendent and main schoolmaster.⁶⁷ Lewis Roach's marriage to Henry Garland's daughter Susannah, who was then the schoolmistress, also ensured continuity for the girls' school between 1853 and 1859.⁶⁸ This stability was only partially maintained after 1859 for when Susannah Roach became Matron on her husband's appointment as Superintendent, she ceased to retain any responsibility for teaching. Four schoolmistresses were subsequently appointed in close succession between 1859 and 1862.⁶⁹ All had the requisite skills, achieving certificates at Competency Levels I to III, yet each left the school within a short period of time.⁷⁰ This may have been the result of unsatisfactory working conditions. To work under the Matron, who had previously been not only the Schoolmistress but also the daughter of the former prestigious Schoolmaster, could well have created tensions.

⁶⁴ Bridgnorth Correspondence Mar 1837, PRO MH 9850 *op cit.*, *Return of Salaries 1847, op cit.*

⁶⁵ See Table 7 Schoolmaster Certificates and Salaries, *op cit.*

⁶⁶ See Table 10 Schoolmaster Appointments, *op cit.*

⁶⁷ *South East Shropshire School Correspondence*, 1859, PRO MH 27/77. Henry Garland emigrated to New Zealand in 1859. Roach died in 1907 and was buried with his wife Susannah Roach (nee Garland), in the Quatt Parish Churchyard, directly opposite the District School. The inscription on the tombstone was still clearly legible in 1991.

⁶⁸ *South East Shropshire School Correspondence* 1853-1859, PRO MH 27/77;27/79. See Table 11 Schoolmistress Appointments at Quatt/South East Shropshire District School, 1848-1863.

⁶⁹ See Table 11 Schoolmistress Appointments *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Table 11 Schoolmistress Appointments *ibid.*

Table 11 Schoolmistress Appointments at Quatt/South East Shropshire District School 1848-1863

Date	Name	Certificate	Salary	Previous Occupation
1848	Mary Elizabeth Pereira	n/a	£20*	Schoolmistress from Ghent, Belgium.
1852	Elizabeth Carter	Probation II	£25	Not Known
1853	Susannah Garland	Probation I	£22.15	Industrial Teacher at South East Shropshire District School. Daughter of Schoolmaster
1854	Susannah Garland	Probation I	£24	" "
1855	Susannah Garland	Probation I	£24	" "
1855 (Nov.)	Susannah Garland	Probation I	£23.16	" "
1857	Susannah Garland	Competency III	£28	" "
1858	Susannah Garland	Competency III	£28	" "
1859 (Apr.)	Ann Bowen	Not Known	£30	Not Known
1859 (Nov.)	Emma Jones	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known
1861	Emma Jones	Competency I	£36	Not Known
1861 (Dec.)	Emma Vale	Not Known	£35	Pupil Teacher for 3 Years
1862	Ellen Kemp	Competency III	£35	Schoolmistress already on Competency III, from Chelmsford
1863	Ellen Kemp	Competency III	£28	
1863 (Oct.)	Ellen Kemp	Competency II	£32	*all figures are in pre-decimal currency

Sources: Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1849-1863, PRO MH 9853, 9854, 9855, 9856; South East Shropshire School Correspondence 1849-1863, PRO MH 27/77, 27/28, 27/79; Schools Inspector Symons *General Report* 1854, P.P. 1854-5 XLII; Annual Calendar of Certificates P.P. 1854-5 XLII.

Poor relationships with Susannah Roach may also have contributed to the very high turnover of female Industrial Teachers at the District School.⁷¹ There were at least eleven appointed between 1852 and 1863.⁷² A large number of unmarried women took up positions as trainers in Poor Law and Reformatory institutions.⁷³ They were mostly recruited from domestic service and were often young women looking for a rise in social status. The austere living conditions and long hours contributed in Poor Law schools to a high turnover of staff.⁷⁴ The first appointee at the South East Shropshire school was Susannah herself who began her working life as an Industrial Teacher.⁷⁵ An interesting fact emerges from the succession of female Industrial Teachers at the school. Elizabeth Garland, younger daughter of Henry, and sister of Susannah, was also appointed in 1858 as an Industrial Teacher on a salary of £20. This was well in excess of salaries paid before or after, suggesting nepotism.⁷⁶ All the other female Industrial Teachers received low salaries throughout the 1850s. By 1861 although the average annual salary of the female Industrial Teachers at the District School had risen by 50%, staff turnover remained high.⁷⁷

Discounting the appointments of Susannah and Elizabeth Garland, where there were family connections, three out of the remaining nine female Industrial Teachers appointed in the 1850s and 1860s had previously been employed at the school in domestic service and were familiar with the working conditions.⁷⁸ The prior employment of each of the four external appointees varied considerably. There is no evidence to suggest that they joined or left the school for the same, or even similar reasons. One had been a domestic servant;

⁷¹ The term 'Industrial Teacher' was commonly used in SESDS Correspondence until 1863 when it changed to 'Industrial Trainer', SESDS Correspondence PRO MH 27/79.

⁷² See Table 12 Female Industrial Teachers South East Shropshire District School 1852 - 1863.

⁷³ A 1992 study of trainers and teachers in Reformatory schools reveals similarities between the two sectors. See Michelle Cale, 'Working for God? Staffing the Victorian reformatory and industrial school system', *History of Education*, 1992, Vol 21, No 2.

⁷⁴ There was lower turnover in industrial as compared with Poor Law schools, Cale, *ibid*.

⁷⁵ Table 12 Female Industrial Teachers, *ibid*.

⁷⁶ Table 12 Female Industrial Teachers, *ibid*.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*.

⁷⁸ Mary Haycock 1856, Ann Haycox 1860, Anna Turner 1863, See Table 12 Female Industrial Teachers, *ibid*.

Table 12 Female Industrial Teachers at the South East Shropshire District School 1852-1863

Date	Name	Post	Salary	Previous Occupation	Age on Appointment	Extras
1852	Susannah Garland	Industrial Teacher	£10	Not Known	Not Given	Not Stated
1855	Hannah Robert	Industrial Teacher	£10	Not Known	Not Given	Not Stated
1856	Mary Haycock	Industrial Teacher	£12	Cook and dairy woman at Quatt	Not Given	Not Stated
1858	Elizabeth Garland	Industrial Teacher	£20	Not Known	Not Given	'Rations'
1859	Ellen Moore	Industrial Teacher	£10	Not Known	19	Not Stated
1860	Ann Haycox	Industrial Teacher	£10	Laundress and domestic work at Quatt	Not Given	Not Stated
1860	Isabel Haynes	Industrial Teacher Housework	£10	Domestic Servant	20	Not Stated
1861	Sarah Ann Ebery	Industrial Teacher	£15	'Assisted Aunt who was a Laundress'	22	Rations
1862	Elizabeth Clark	Industrial Teacher	£15	'Cook in a gentleman's family'	Not Given	Rations
1863	Anna Turner	Industrial Trainer	£15	'Cook and House Servant at Quatt'	20	Not Stated
1863	Emma Griffiths	Industrial Trainer	£15	'Domestic Service and dress making'	23	Not Stated

Sources: South East Shropshire District School Correspondence, 1852-1863, PRO MH 27/77; MH 27/78, MH 27/79.

another was employed both in domestic service and dressmaking; a third was a laundress employed by her aunt. The fourth was a 'cook in a gentleman's family'. This was a high status occupation compared with the other appointees but the woman in question, Elizabeth Clark, did not receive a higher salary.⁷⁹

Extra emoluments were occasionally noted. 'Rations' were granted to the female Industrial Teachers appointed in 1858, 1861 and 1862, and it is likely that they were also given to Ellen Moore in 1859, and Anna Turner and Emma Griffiths in 1863.⁸⁰ There can be less confidence about making this assumption before the first mention of rations in 1858.⁸¹ Despite the increased salaries paid from 1861 an average figure of £15 per annum, even with extra rations, was low and must have been a factor in the high turnover. The process of inspection followed by certification did not apply in the case of Industrial Teachers and their duties were not clearly defined by the central authority.⁸² Although from 1850 Schools Inspectors were directed to check that the children were being taught industrial skills to a level of 'satisfactory proficiency', no clear guidelines were set.⁸³ Frequent changes such as those experienced at South East Shropshire District School must have had a detrimental effect on the standard of industrial training provided for the girls.

2.3 Ellesmere

Within the same twenty year period, 1837-1857, there were only four schoolmasters at Ellesmere, which provided some consistency to the teaching of pauper children in the union.⁸⁴ However, continuity did not equate with quality. The Ellesmere Guardians did not place any value on appointing teachers with either training or experience. John Roberts

⁷⁹ Isabel Haynes 1860, Emma Griffiths 1863, Sarah Ebery 1861, Elizabeth Clark 1862, *ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² PLB Circular March 12 1867, Appendix 2, cited in R.A. Leach, *Pauper Children and Their Education and Training* (1890), p.44.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ See Table 10 Schoolmaster Appointments, *op cit.*

appointed in 1837 and his immediate successor Jeremiah Howell in 1841, were paid £15 and £18 respectively. Edward Jones appointed in 1847 was paid the higher salary of £25. Prior to the introduction of inspection the salaries for schoolteachers at Ellesmere were generally low. After Symons' first inspection there was a noticeable improvement. Symons clearly had a higher opinion of Edward Jones' abilities than the Ellesmere Board of Guardians and in 1849 the teacher received a Competency III certificate and his salary rose to £33.⁸⁵ None of these schoolmasters, however, had any previous teaching experience when they were appointed. It is not stated what occupations, if any, had been held by Roberts and Howell; Edward Jones had previously been both a plumber and glazier.⁸⁶ Despite their similar lack of teaching experience, Jones was rated more highly than either of his two predecessors. £33 was the highest amount earned by any Ellesmere teacher during the period 1837 to 1857. However Jones retained this salary for only three years. By 1852 his teaching had deteriorated, his certificate was reduced by one grade to Probation I, and his salary returned to £25.⁸⁷ The following year, 1853, he resigned and the Guardians appointed yet another schoolmaster with no previous experience. Job Darlington was a journeyman, a miller and a farm labourer and it is not clear why Ellesmere decided to appoint him.⁸⁸ There is little doubt that Symons was not impressed by the new teacher. Darlington was awarded a Permission I certificate which allowed him a fixed payment of only £15, which was the amount John Roberts had earned when the union had been formed some sixteen years before.⁸⁹

In that year, 1837, the first schoolmistress Mary Pay had also been appointed and remained in post for twenty years, not retiring until 1856.⁹⁰ Mary Pay was a saddler's widow who

⁸⁵ See Table 10 Schoolmaster Appointments, *ibid.* See also Poor Law Inspector Doyle *General Report* July 14 1849, Ellesmere Correspondence, MH 12 9937.

⁸⁶ See Table 9 Previous Occupations of Schoolmasters, *op cit.*

⁸⁷ Annual Calendar of Certificated Teachers of Parochial Union Schools P.P.1852 XXXIX, p.49.

⁸⁸ See Table 9 Previous Occupations of Schoolmasters, *op cit.*

⁸⁹ Symons *General Report* 1853, P.P. 1854 LI. Teachers holding Permission certificates were not entitled to any further payments from the Parliamentary Grant for any additional children they were required to teach, whereas other grades increased or decreased *pro rata*, Appendix to the Third Report of the PLB, *op cit.*

⁹⁰ Ellesmere Union Correspondence, Sep. 19 1856, PRO MH 12 9938. See Table 13 Schoolmistress Appointments in Atcham, Bridgnorth, Ellesmere Unions 1837-1862.

Table 13 Schoolmistress Appointments in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions 1837-1862

Union	1st Appointment	2nd Appointment	3rd Appointment	4th Appointment	5th Appointment	6th Appointment
<u>Atcham</u>	none					
<u>Bridgnorth</u>	1848	1852	1859	1859	1861	1862
<u>Ellesmere</u>	1837	1856	1859	1859		

Sources: Atcham Union Correspondence 1837-1862, PRO MH 9822, 9823, 9824, 9825, 9826, 9827; Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1837-1862, PRO MH 9850, 9851, 9852, 9853, 9854, 9855, 9856; Ellesmere Correspondence 1837-1862, PRO MH 9935, 9936, 9937, 9938, 9939; South East Shropshire School Correspondence, 1849-1862, PRO MH 27/77, 27/78, 27/79.

began on a salary of £10 per annum, increased to £15 in 1847.⁹¹ By that time she was teaching reading, writing, arithmetic and sewing to 40 girls.⁹² Following her first examination by Symons in 1849 she was awarded a Probation II certificate which entitled her to an allocation of £20 from the Parliamentary Grant.⁹³ However in 1852 - the same year that Edward Jones' certificate was reduced - Symons also reduced Mary Pay's award to Probation III, indicating his general dissatisfaction with the progress of the Ellesmere schools.⁹⁴ A year later Mary Pay regained her former grade of Probation II but by that time there had been a significant reduction in the number of children being taken into the workhouse school. This was reflected in her salary of £17.6s for teaching 12 girls.⁹⁵ The reason for the decrease is not stated but it was similar in both schools, with the average number of children dropping to half its level between 1847 and 1851.⁹⁶ Pupil numbers remained low throughout the rest of Mary Pay's employment; her certificate never rose above Probation II and her salary only reached a maximum of £18.5s in her final years at the school.⁹⁷

Although there were few teacher changes in the Ellesmere Workhouse this had little effect on the progress of pauper education in the union. During the twenty years from 1837 to 1857 only the appointment of Edward Jones in 1847 ensured an adequate level of teaching, and then only for three years. Similarly, although the steady employment of one schoolmistress during a nineteen year period provided continuity, Mary Pay's consistently low certificates suggest that the quality of teaching did not improve.

⁹¹ *Return of Salaries, 1847, op cit.*

⁹² *Ellesmere Union Correspondence*, July 1847, PRO MH 12 9937.

⁹³ Schools Inspector Symons *General Report* July 7 1849, *Ellesmere Union Correspondence*, PRO MH 12 9937. See Table 14 Schoolmistress Certificates and Salaries in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions, 1848-1862.

⁹⁴ Symons, *General Report* 1852, PP 1852-3, Vol. LXXIV.

⁹⁵ *Ellesmere Union Correspondence*, Oct. 1852, PRO MH 12 9937.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ See Table 14 Schoolmistress Certificates and Salaries, *op cit.*

**Table 14 Schoolmistress Certificates and Salaries in Atcham, Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions
1849-1862**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Atcham</u>	<u>Certificate</u>	<u>Bridgnorth Salary</u>	<u>Certificate</u>	<u>Ellesmere Salary</u>
1849	No Schoolmistress Appointed	Not Known	£20*	Probation II	£20
1850		Not Known	£20	Probation II	£20
1851		Not Known	£20	Probation II	£20
1852		Competency I	£35	Probation III	£16
1853		Probation I	£22.15	Probation II	£17.6
1854		Probation I	£24	Probation II	£17.6
1855		Probation I	£23.16	Probation II	£18.5
1856		Probation I	£23	Probation II	£19
1857		Competency III	£28	Probation II	£19.3
1858		Competency III	£28	Probation III	£16
1859		(i) Competency III (ii Nov.) Competency I	£30	Probation III	£15
1860		(ii Dec.) Competency I	£36		
1861		Competency I	£36	Permission	£12
		(i) Competency I (ii Dec.) Competency III	£35	Probation I	£19.16
1862		Competency III	£35	Probation I	£18.16

TOTALS

Efficiency = 0	Efficiency = 0
Competency = 9	Competency = 0
Probation = 4	Probation = 13
Permission = 0	Permission = 1
Not known = 3	Not known = 0

*all figures are in pre-decimal currency

Sources: Atcham Union Correspondence 1849-62, PRO MH 9824, 9825, 9826, 9827; Bridgnorth Union Correspondence 1849-62, PRO MH 9853, 9854, 9855, 9856; Ellesmere Union Correspondence, 1849-62, PRO MH 9937, 9938, 9939; South East Shropshire School Correspondence 1849-1862, PRO MH 27/77, 27/78, 27/79/.

3. Categories of Children, 1847

Analysis of the categories of children resident in workhouses gives an insight into who was receiving poor law education. In the elementary sector it has been shown that contemporary statistics cannot be relied upon to reflect accurately who and what was included in such terms as 'scholar' and 'school'. Phil Gardner has indicated that contemporary definitions within elementary education were ambiguous. For instance, many private working-class schools were excluded from the definition 'school' because they did not meet current middle-class criteria.⁹⁸ In the pauper education sector the definitions were clearer. All school-age children received into Poor Law institutions were, under the terms of the PLAA, to be provided with education even though in practice the quality of instruction varied from one union to another.

A Return sent to all unions in 1847 requested the number of children maintained in workhouses.⁹⁹ Replies returned by Bridgnorth and Ellesmere Unions have survived, as have the national aggregates.¹⁰⁰ No less than fifteen different categories were given, including illegitimate children, children of widows and widowers, orphans, deserted children, children of criminals, children of the infirm, children of the able-bodied and children who did not fall into any specific category.

The criteria used for listing the children was not stated but illegitimate children came first, at the head of the Return. This indicated the likelihood that in most unions illegitimate children would be one of the highest categories. However it also represented the concern that was still felt over the cost to the Poor Rates of illegitimacy.¹⁰¹ Both Leighton and Whitmore

⁹⁸ Phil Gardner, *op cit.*, pp. 45-80.

⁹⁹ *Return of the Number of Children in the Workhouses of various unions in England and Wales*, Mar 18 1847, P.P. 1847-8 LIII. See Table 15 Categories of Children in Workhouses, 1847.

¹⁰⁰ *Return of the Number of Children in Workhouses*, Mar. 18 1847, *op cit.*; Number of Children in the Bridgnorth Workhouse, Mar. 18 1847, Bridgnorth Correspondence PRO MH 9853; Number of Children in the Ellesmere Workhouse, Mar. 18 1847, Ellesmere Correspondence PRO MH 9937. See Table 15 Categories of Children, *op cit.*

¹⁰¹ There was a further distinction in public attitudes towards illegitimacy. For instance, children of a couple who intended to marry were more acceptable than the child of a married woman by another

Table 15 Categories of Children in Workhouses 1847

<u>Children</u>	<u>In 614 Unions</u>	<u>Bridgnorth</u>	<u>Ellesmer</u>
	<u>in England</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1847</u>
Illegitimate, mothers in workhouse	10,001	16	32
Parents dead	8,509	8	17
Deserted by father	5,698	2	8
Illegitimate, mothers not in workhouse	5,229	6	25
Of ablebodied parents in workhouse	4,502	4	-
Of widows in workhouse	3,777	-	1
Of widows not in workhouse	1,985	10	1
Of parents with afflictions	1,913	15	-
Of fathers removed for crime/transportation	1,586	3	1
Deserted by mother	1,550	7	1
Not in any other category	1,433	-	1
Deserted by both parents	1,410	-	1
Of widowers in workhouse	1,330	-	1
Of ablebodied parents not in workhouse	1,229	-	-
Of widowers not in workhouse	1,085	-	3
TOTAL	51,237	71	92

Sources : A Return of the Number of Children in the Workhouses of various unions in England and Wales on Thursday, 18th March 1847, P.P. 1847-8 LIII. Table showing the number of children in the Workhouse of the Bridgnorth Union on Thursday, 18th March 1847, Bridgnorth Correspondence, PRO MH 12 9853. Table showing the number of children in the Workhouse of the Ellesmere Union, on Thursday the 18th of March 1847, Ellesmere Correspondence, PRO MH 9937.

had voiced their anxiety over the 'abuse' by which mothers of illegitimate children received outrelief payments.¹⁰²

Children in workhouses were classified according to the status of their parents. The national aggregates revealed that most children fell into six categories, namely - illegitimate children whose mothers were resident in the workhouse; illegitimate children whose mothers were not resident; children whose parents were dead; children who had been deserted by their fathers; children of able-bodied workhouse inmates and children of resident widows.¹⁰³ Fewer children came into the remaining nine categories.¹⁰⁴ These figures show that in 1847 although orphan children comprised a high percentage of the resident children, the number of illegitimate children was even higher - 29% as compared to 16.5%.¹⁰⁵ Within the Illegitimate category the highest figure represented children whose mothers came with them into the workhouse. Presumably some of these children had also been deserted by their fathers, but as illegitimacy was considered the greater evil they were categorised under 'Illegitimate - Mothers in workhouse', rather than 'Children deserted by father', and the latter category only referred to legitimate offspring.¹⁰⁶ Illegitimate children of mothers who remained outside the workhouse were fourth highest and brought the national total of illegitimate children held in workhouses to 15,330, almost half the figure of 36,007 legitimate children.¹⁰⁷

A percentage of the illegitimate children who were taken into the workhouse without their mothers could conceivably have been termed 'outdoor' children but the figures did not

man. For a brief summary of attitudes see Eve McLaughlin, *Illegitimacy* (Birmingham 1985). In Table 15 Categories of Children, *op cit.*, the categories used in the national 1847 Return have been readjusted in percentage order.

102 *Leighton Report 1838, op cit., Whitmore Report 1837, op cit., Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, June 1834, Vol. XXIV.*

103 *Return of the Number of Children in Workhouses 1847, op cit.*

104 I.e. children of parents' with afflictions, children of criminal parents, children deserted by their mothers or by *both* parents, children of widowers - both resident and non-resident, children of the able-bodied and children who did not fall into any other category, *Return of the Number of Children in Workhouses 1847, op cit.*

105 *Ibid.*

106 *Ibid.*

107 *Ibid.*

indicate whether the mother remaining outside was still, or ever had been, receiving outrelief.

In addition, three other categories of children were taken into workhouses without their parents. These were the children of widows, the able-bodied and widowers. In national terms these totalled 9,528 or 18.5% of the total workhouse child population.¹⁰⁸ There were no children of able-bodied parents in either workhouse in 1847.¹⁰⁹

Further comparisons between the figures for Bridgnorth and Ellesmere and the national statistics reveal that the two highest categories in all three instances were illegitimate children who had come into the workhouse with their mothers, and orphans.¹¹⁰ However, whereas in Bridgnorth these two categories totalled 39% of the children in the workhouse, reflecting the national figure of 36%, in Ellesmere the percentage was far higher at over 53%.¹¹¹ It was beyond the control of the Guardians to reduce the number of orphans but the illegitimate children who were brought into the workhouse with their mothers was dependent upon local relief policies and was controllable. Although relief policies in Bridgnorth and Ellesmere were not dissimilar the percentage of illegitimate children in the Ellesmere workhouse was higher.¹¹² The percentage of children deserted by their fathers was lower in Bridgnorth and Ellesmere, at 3.5% and 8.5% respectively, than the national percentage of 11%.¹¹³

The striking difference between the figures is apparent in the number of illegitimate children who were removed from their mothers and placed in the workhouse. Both

¹⁰⁸ See Table 15 Categories of Children, *op cit.*

¹⁰⁹ Table 15 Categories of Children, *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Categories 1 and 2, Table 15 Categories of Children, *op cit.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Category 1, Table 15 Categories of Children, *ibid.*

¹¹³ Category 3, Table 15 Categories of Children, *ibid.* The Bridgnorth figure for children deserted by their mothers (Category 10) was 11% whereas nationally and in Ellesmere it was approximately 2-3% but as the figures for this category were so low this cannot be taken as a reliable statistic. Categories 9 and 11 to 15, represented less than 3% of the total figures for Ellesmere and for the country as a whole. In Bridgnorth there were no children at all in Categories 11 to 15, Table 15 Categories of Children, *ibid.*

nationally and at Bridgnorth the percentage was similar, around 10%, whereas at Ellesmere the figure was 27%.¹¹⁴ When this figure is taken in conjunction with the number of illegitimate children in the workhouse who were resident with their mothers, it brings the illegitimate total for Ellesmere to 62% of all the children in the house. In Bridgnorth the same categories totalled only 39% and the national figure was 29%.¹¹⁵ This can be related to the relief policies adopted by the Ellesmere Board of Guardians.

At their first meeting in 1836 the Guardians were determined to cut the cost of poor relief. Forty individual cases were considered. Of these, twenty-four claimants were told that their outrelief would be continued for the time being.¹¹⁶ Ten were informed that their relief would cease in six weeks time, on January 3rd, 1837.¹¹⁷ Of these, six had adult children who, it was considered, could support their elderly relatives.¹¹⁸ The remaining four were parents with young children; on January 3rd, if relief was still sought, their children would be taken 'into the House'.¹¹⁹ To continue to maintain children on outrelief was considered uneconomical and, following the recommendations of the PLAA, they were to be brought into the workhouse wherever possible.

The most inflexible policy was, however, reserved for illegitimate children. As in the *Rules* set down for the Atcham Union, Ellesmere Guardians stated that:

no relief be given to ablebodied women in respect of their bastards ¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Category 4, Table 15 *Categories of Children, ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Categories 1 and 4, Table 15 *Categories of Children, ibid.*

¹¹⁶ One claimant, Elizabeth Leeke, was 'not to be admitted to the house at present' and was included in the number of those whose relief was continued, Minutes of the Guardians, Ellesmere Union, Nov. 22 1836, PRO MH 9935.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* A further unspecified number who had ignored the notice to attend the meeting had their relief stopped forthwith, *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ One such an example is Elizabeth Edwards 'having one son married, without any child chargeable to him and two more sons, single men, without families'. Even the grandson of one of the claimants was expected to support his grandfather, Minutes of the Guardians, Ellesmere Union, Nov. 22 1836, *op cit.* Two years later Leighton was to observe in Atcham that adult children often managed to evade responsibility for their elderly parents who then became an expense on the rates, *Leighton Report 1838, op cit.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Minutes of the Guardians, Ellesmere Union, Nov. 22 1836, *op cit.* See Appendix VII for the *Rules for the Atcham Union.*

Gradually the number of illegitimate children brought into the workhouse increased. By 1841 the percentage had reached 35%.¹²¹ In 1847 this total had nearly doubled to 62%.¹²²

At Atcham 271 bastards who were being supported on outrelief in 1836 had been reduced by 1838 to 32.¹²³ There is no surviving return for Atcham Union for 1847 so it is not known whether the percentage of illegitimate children in the workhouse rose accordingly but it would seem likely.¹²⁴

The educational significance of the figures for 1847 is that as a direct result of relief policies a large number of illegitimate children was given access to schooling that would otherwise have been denied them.

From the creation of the unions in 1836, both the Atcham and Bridgnorth Boards of Guardians were committed to improving the standard of education. Both unions had the advantage of Chairmen who made education a priority. Good quality experienced teachers were appointed at both unions and paid above average salaries. Bridgnorth had the lowest turnover of Schoolmasters, both before and after the creation of the South East Shropshire District School and despite the more frequent changes of Schoolmistress and female Industrial Trainers, the overall quality of the certificates gained was consistently higher.

At Ellesmere there is no evidence that the Guardians fostered education, either during the period of Slaney's chairmanship or later. Low to average salaries were paid prior to the introduction of inspection in 1847 and no teachers appointed at Ellesmere had any previous

¹²¹ Return of the Total Number of Children in Workhouses distinguishing Legitimate from Illegitimate, Feb. 15 1841, P.P. 1841 XXI.

¹²² Return of the Number of Children in Workhouses, 1847, *op cit.*

¹²³ Leighton 1838 Report, *op cit.*

¹²⁴ See above, Chapter 5.

experience. Although Ellesmere had fewer staff changes than Atcham the certificates awarded were consistently lower than at the other two unions.

In 1847 the categories of children taken into the Bridgnorth and Ellesmere workhouses reflected national trends. In Ellesmere the percentage of illegitimate children who were removed from their mothers into the workhouse, and hence, if of school-age, into the workhouse school, was far higher. A similar situation probably prevailed at Atcham. While Inspectors' Reports have been an important source for historians of education on workhouse practice there is little direct evidence of the correlation between the social background of children entering the workhouse and their standards of scholastic achievement.

Data from the three unions between 1837 and 1862 suggest that education at the Quatt Workhouse School, and later the South East Shropshire District School, at Bridgnorth was of a higher quality than that given at Atcham, and that each of these unions provided schooling for their indoor workhouse children that was consistently better than was available at Ellesmere. Little account was taken in any of these unions of the far larger number of pauper children who remained outside the Poor Law education system. These children were neglected by most unions in England and Wales, with some notable exceptions, both before and after Denison's permissive act of 1855 allowed Boards of Guardians to pay for their schooling.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EDUCATION AND THE OUTDOOR PAUPER CHILD 1834-1880

Throughout the nineteenth century education for the vast majority of pauper children - those whose parents were in receipt of outdoor relief - was not generally provided, even after permissive legislation made this a possibility in 1855.¹ Although specific reports on pauper education appeared in 1839 and 1841, these concentrated solely on children in workhouses.² The Webbs maintained:

So complete was the preoccupation of the Poor Law Commissioners with the suppression of the primary evil of Outdoor Relief to the able-bodied; so deeprooted was the esoteric hostility of the Poor Law Commissioners and the Poor Law Inspectors alike, to the continuance of any class maintained on Outdoor Relief; and so indisposed were Poor Law Guardians to encourage any idea that might lead to increased expense, that, for a whole generation, the annals, with regard to children on Outdoor Relief, are blank.³

Little attempt has since been made to ascertain whether the Webbs' conclusions were correct. Previous work on pauper education has concentrated on the indoor child. Scant attention has been paid by historians to the restricted educational opportunities available to the children of parents on outrelief.⁴

A closer examination suggests that education for a small percentage of outdoor children was provided in some unions. There were some Boards of Guardians, who, even as early

¹ The children of paupers were encompassed within a wide range of categories, for instance ragged children, waifs, the children of beggars and vagrants, etc. see C.F. Montague, *Sixty Years in Waifdom* (1904 new impression, 1969); Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood* (1991).

² Kay Shuttleworth, *The Training of Pauper Children*, 1838, XVIII. Reports on the Training of Pauper Training, P.P. 1841 XXXIII, *op cit*.

³ S. and B. Webb, *English Poor Law History*, Part II, *The Last Hundred Years* (1929, Reprint 1963), p. 249.

⁴ Two studies have included short excerpts on outdoor children but there has been no detailed examination of educational opportunities. Ross concentrates more on the care rather than the schooling of outdoor children (Ph.D. 1954-5) *op cit*., Purdy makes the incorrect statement that there was little information on outdoor children before 1860 (M. Ed 1973) p. 190, *op cit*.

as the 1840s, encouraged outdoor children to attend schools intended only for the use of indoor children.

1. Official attitudes 1834 - 1855

The official neglect of outdoor pauper children came about as a direct result of the emphasis the PLAA placed on the deterrence of relief to adult able-bodied paupers. Both the 1834 Act and the Poor Law Report which preceded it, concentrated their attention on this group with the result that little information and few statistics were acquired regarding the sick, the old and the children.

These groups greatly outnumbered the able-bodied. By the middle of the century the number of adult paupers relieved outside the workhouse reached 900,000 or 5% of the population of England and Wales. In January 1849 their dependent children numbered 328,090.⁵ Between 1834 and 1900 the number of children on outrelief rarely fell below 200,000 until the latter years of the century. Such was the determination of the Central Authority in 1834 to eliminate outrelief that thousands of children were officially discounted under the New Poor Law and were considered merely as dependents of recalcitrant outdoor paupers.

Outrelief policies had a direct effect upon educational opportunity. From 1834 any central plans for pauper education were directed solely at the indoor child. Less eligibility was, in effect, reversed. Those children who came into the workhouses were compulsorily included in the developing Poor Law education system whereas those who remained outside became educationally disadvantaged. Children of parents on outrelief were in effect punished educationally for their parents' determination to remain outside the workhouse system.

⁵ Twenty third Annual Report PLB, 1870-1, Appendix 36, p. 356.

This was acknowledged by Charles Richson who from the early 1840s was an active educational reformer and campaigner in Manchester.⁶ Richson was sympathetic to the difficult plight of parents on outrelief.

as compared with the absolute pauper, there appears great injustice, when we see a most excellent education provided to children of the pauper clan, and no education whatever, and no means of providing education provided within the reach of those, whose relief is small, partial, and often under great emergency; and who, for the most part, are striving to do the best they can for themselves.⁷

Originally there had been no specific intention to exclude any group of pauper children from receiving education. It was assumed in 1834 that efforts to eliminate outrelief would be successful and that as a result all pauper children would be brought into workhouses and encompassed within the Poor Law education system. Outdoor children were therefore not considered to be in need of education as they were not expected to continue as a separate category. However, despite the intention of the PLAA to abolish outrelief, successive Poor Law authorities found themselves having to accept the fact that in many unions this policy became virtually impossible to implement. It was often cheaper for Boards of Guardians to maintain paupers outside the workhouse. There were loopholes in the legislation that allowed the legitimate continuation of outrelief; these 'escape clauses' included the extensive and often manufactured use of relief in times of sickness.⁸ Additionally, it had not been fully recognised in 1834 that economic fluctuations would have a considerable bearing on the implementation of a non-outrelief policy. Rural Guardians, in particular, needed to resort to outrelief in order to combat the growing problem of insufficient employment opportunities. It has been calculated that in

⁶ Rev. C. Richson founded the Manchester and Salford Education Committee in 1851, of which Kay Shuttleworth was also a member, which advocated combining religious and secular teaching in elementary schools, DNB Vol. XLVIII. See Rev. C. Richson "A Plan adopted for promoting Education in Manchester and Salford, by means of a Legislative Measure, constructed upon the Basis of Existing Institutions", *Pamphlets, Education* (1851).

⁷ Rev. C. Richson, "Education in Manchester," No 17, *Tracts*, (1850) p. 13.

⁸ Michael Rose, "The Allowance System under the New Poor Law", *op cit.*, p. 611. Anne Digby, "The Labour Market and the Continuity of Social Policy after 1834: The Case of the Eastern Counties", *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, Vol. XXVIII (1975), p. 73.

Norfolk, the percentage of ablebodied adult pauper males in receipt of outrelief never fell below 64% and was at times as high as 86%.⁹

Trade depressions were to have a profound effect on the numbers applying for relief. In Nottingham in 1837 the Guardians stated that it was 'inexpedient and impracticable' to prohibit outrelief at a time of mass unemployment.¹⁰ Seasonal fluctuations in the labour market also had a significant effect on the numbers applying for relief. It was clearly not possible for workhouses to contain all of the jobless. As the number of adults on outrelief increased in times of depression, so accordingly did the recorded number of dependent children. In 1863 the number of outdoor children rose as high as 381,448.¹¹ Even without trade depressions, however, the Poor Law authority totally failed to eliminate outrelief and so was unable to establish national uniformity. The central authorities did not manage to effectively restrict outrelief until after the creation of the Local Government Board in 1871.¹² The majority of paupers remained outside the workhouse system as did their children. The inability to curtail outrelief thus had a direct effect on the opportunity for many thousands of outdoor children to have access to education.

Faced with large numbers of children on outrelief, a rigorous approach was adopted by the PLC Circulars in 1844 and 1847 explicitly forbade Boards of Guardians to pay for the education of outdoor children from the Poor Rates.¹³

Despite the approach officially adopted by the PLC certain anomalies were present from the outset regarding outdoor children. In the Instructions issued to the Assistant

⁹ Anne Digby, 'The Rural Poor Law', in Derek Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (1976), p. 162.

¹⁰ David Ashforth, 'The Urban Poor Law', in Fraser, *ibid*, p. 133.

¹¹ *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report* LGB, pp. 1896-7, Appendix 62, p. 318.

¹² Michael Rose, 'The Crisis of Poor Relief in England 1860-1890', W.J.Mommsen, *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany* (1981).

¹³ PLC Circular No 31 1844 PRO MH 10/11, PLB Circulars Nos 18 and 19 Sept. and Oct. 1848 PRO MH 10/12.

Commissioners in 1834 one of the points included under the heading 'Considerations as to Workhouses' referred to the use of indoor education as a means of alleviating distress.

A mode of relief may here be noticed as being calculated to assist the industrious labourer whilst it is open to comparatively little objection when judiciously applied. Each workhouse must of course be provided with a school and in the winter months, or when employment is scanty, one or more of a labourer's children, must be admitted to the school in the daytime and be instructed and fed and returned to the parents at night. Important relief would thus be afforded without weakening the natural ties or breaking down the independent or moral feelings of the children.¹⁴

In the following year, 1835, Edwin Chadwick adamantly reiterated his support for the strict upholding of the tenets of the PLAA especially with regard to the banning of outrelief. Yet he nevertheless included the following statement:

Advantage has been taken in some instances of a school established at the workhouse to send some of the children of labourers burthened (sic) with large families, to be instructed there: in other instances they have been admitted in the daytime only - returning to their parents at night - these modes of affording relief in such cases seem but little open to objection and may, the Commissioners believe, be beneficially adopted, wherever there is a workhouse school established.¹⁵

Chadwick's letter gave no indication as to how many or which unions adopted this policy. In 1837 Kay Shuttleworth, then Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in East Anglia, also urged the PLC to use this form of relief to aid large families.¹⁶ In their Seventh Annual Report in 1841 the PLC were in favour of the practice that was currently in use at Stockport:

where the families were too large to relieve them by taking a portion of their Children into the school. This measure has fully answered the expectation of the Board; it has checked the inordinate desire for outdoor relief and opened an extended means of industrial education amongst the children of the poorer classes.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Instructions to Assistant Commissioners*, Note 15, PLC Book 1. 1834, PRO MH 1/1.

¹⁵ Edwin Chadwick to Viscount Barrington, May 1 1835, *Instructions to Assistant Commissioners* 1834-5, PRO MH 10/1.

¹⁶ Kay Shuttleworth to PLC, May 29 1837, PRO MH 32/49.

¹⁷ *Seventh Annual Report* PLC, P.P. 1841 XI, p.144.

However, this did not become a uniform policy. It appears to have been favoured only in circumstances where severe trade depressions indicated that a higher than usual number of people were applying for relief. Even if the policy had been adopted more widely it would not have been affected by the two Poor Law Circulars of 1844 and 1847 prohibiting the payment of school fees. Where workhouse schools were already part of the existing Poor Law framework attendance would not have incurred a payment. However after the introduction of teachers' certificates - based on competency and the number of children taught - the amount allocated from the Parliamentary Grant could well have been increased if a significant number of outdoor children had been educated in this manner. As it was, it appears that this was not the case. This access to education was a possibility for some children that was countenanced by the Poor Law authority but only infrequently adopted by individual unions. After 1847 the PLB continued to adopt a stringent policy. They instructed Ludlow Union:

The Act authorising the formation of District Schools contemplates the admission to them of (indoor) pauper children only, and that no other class of children can under the present statement of the law be educated in them.¹⁸

An indication of the low priority given to the education of outdoor children by the central authority is evident from the lack of documentation and correspondence on the subject. A Return in March 1855 of 'all communications' concerning the education of outdoor children that had passed between the CCE and the PLB contained a brief letter from Schools Inspector Browne referring to the union of Glossop. Browne recommended that outdoor children in the union should be brought into the workhouse in order to form a viable school. This would prevent Glossop indoor children having to be sent to the already overcrowded industrial school at Swinton in Manchester.¹⁹

¹⁸ PLB to CCE, Feb. 3 1849, *Ludlow Correspondence* 1847-51, PRO MH 12/9957.

¹⁹ A Copy of "all Communications which have taken place between the President of the Privy Council and the President of the Poor Law Board, relative to the Education of Children receiving Outdoor Relief, Mar. 16 1855, P.P. 1854-5 XLI.

Overcrowding was always an issue, as Poor Law Inspector Doyle also reminded Ludlow:

I pointed out the difficulties which ... would arise from sending to a District School all the children who might be admitted to the workhouse or ... (sending) the considerable number of the children of Outdoor Paupers to the District School.²⁰

Symons however was generally in favour of sending outdoor children to District Schools. Such a policy would not only provide suitable industrial training and education for outdoor children but also give practical assistance to families with large numbers of children.²¹

For some outdoor children, however, the gap left by the determination of the central authority not to provide payment for schooling was alleviated from other sources - from relatives of the children themselves, or from charitable and philanthropic efforts. In 1853, 34% of outdoor children received schooling paid for by relatives. A further 15% were supported by 'other parties'. 19% were already at work.²² 'Other parties' included organisations such as the Ragged School Union.²³ Ragged schools were established in over thirty towns in England and Wales and partially bridged the gap between Poor Law education and the elementary schools.²⁴ The Ragged School Union listed thirteen categories of children in special need, including

children of honest parents too poor to pay for schooling or to clothe the children so as to enable them to attend an ordinary school.²⁵

The contribution of parents and other agencies thus reduced the number of outdoor children who were left entirely without formal education. In 1853, out of 193,180

²⁰ Poor Law Inspector Doyle to PLB, Dec. 28 1848, *ibid.*

²¹ Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report 1854*, P.P. 1854 XLII, p. 147.

²² Return... Children Chargeable to Poor Rates 1853, P.P. 1854 LV.

²³ C.F. Montague, *op cit.*

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 211.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 47.

outdoor children between the ages of three and sixteen, only 61,102 remained uneducated. This still exceeded the number of indoor children, but was only one third of the total outdoor child population.²⁶

In addition certain Boards of Guardians deliberately refused to comply with the rulings of the Central Authority and paid for the education of outrelief children from the Poor Rates.

2. Local Responses

The union where most effort was made to secure education for outdoor children was Manchester. The Board of Guardians, under a progressive chairman, tried for some years to provide a form of schooling for large numbers of outrelief children. In a long letter to Sir George Grey on the subject of pauper education in 1850, Charles Richson cited Manchester, where the number of children on outrelief presented an enormous problem. Referring to the city's Outrelief Returns, he stated:

we may assume that in any given number of cases relieved, the children will be nearly one half....out of that number, 5040 children, or about one third will be of age and in circumstances to require educational provision.²⁷

This approximation by Richson of 5040 was for the three unions of Manchester, Salford and Chorlton. He calculated that 3,808 outdoor pauper children were resident within Manchester Union alone.²⁸ It is thus unlikely that the large number of children involved was a permanent factor in any decision to provide education. There was no legal reason why Manchester should have accepted responsibility for children who were not resident in the workhouse. The union even went so far as to establish a simple 'outdoor school' explicitly for the purpose of educating these children. The Guardians were condemned

²⁶ Return... children... chargeable to the Poor Rates, June and July 1853, P.P. 1854 LV, *op cit*.

²⁷ Reverend C. Richson, *Pauper Education: Its Provisions and Defects with certain objections to its extension considered in a letter to the Right Honourable Sir George Grey, Bart., M.P.* (1850), pp. 44-45.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

by the PLB who questioned the legal status of the school and refused to sanction it. Frequent correspondence passed between the Guardians and the PLB concerning the legality of the school in the years 1850 to 1855.²⁹ Although Manchester's protracted defiance of the PLB was not repeated elsewhere, there were some other unions prior to 1855 where attempts were made to provide education for outdoor children. Although there appeared to be no discernible pattern linking these different unions it is noticeable that the majority was in the Midlands and the North - perhaps associated with a lack of identification with the southern-based central Poor Law authority. Browne's recommendation that outdoor children should be taken into Glossop gave a certain credibility to the actions of the Manchester Guardians.³⁰ Browne's attitude, which reflected his growing opposition to District Schools, was immediately condemned by Poor Law Inspector Doyle, firstly because Browne had not consulted the PLB prior to making the entry, and secondly because Guardians were not legally empowered to adopt such a suggestion.³¹

In response to fluctuating trade depressions, Nottingham Guardians, like their colleagues at Stockport, took outdoor children into the workhouse. Up to 200 children were admitted each day into the workhouse school at 8 a.m., given meals throughout the day and only sent home again when the indoor children went to bed. Nottingham's response was noted by the PLB in their 1848 Circular but no attempt was made to curtail it.³² As so few unions flouted the Circular the central authority tended to ignore deviations. At Quatt School in Shropshire outdoor children were admitted on a daily basis - to lessons and industrial pursuits. The PLB in an Official Circular in 1848 recognised the presence of outdoor children at Quatt and stated that they were sometimes permitted to attend so that they could receive industrial training to remove:

²⁹ Minutes Manchester Board of Guardians, cited in S. & B. Webb, *English Poor Law Policy* (1910), p. 104.

³⁰ 'A copy of all Communications... between the President of the Privy Council and the President of the PLB... Education of Children Receiving Outdoor Relief, *op cit.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

³² *PLB Circular Nos. 18 & 19*, Sep - Oct 1848, *op cit.*, p. 276; Nottingham Union Correspondence PRO MH 12 9448.

habits of idleness and incapacity and to facilitate the means of a permanent and independent livelihood when they leave the school.³³

This acceptance in an Official Circular of the presence of outdoor children in a workhouse was unusual. It does not appear to have been repeated elsewhere and when the school became a District School in 1849 the PLB refused to allow the practice to continue. Clearly it was either easier to insist on rules and regulations when the nature of a school was changed, or else the publicity attaching to the formation of a District School highlighted a practice which the Poor Law Board would have found difficult to justify.³⁴ Berwick on Tweed was another union where outdoor children were educated alongside workhouse children very successfully for many years.³⁵ Poor Law Inspector Hurst noted that the number of outrelief children at the school had for a long while been well in excess of the indoor children.³⁶

However, when Berwick Guardians had wanted to give an extra two pence per child towards the education of outdoor children in 1844 the PLC had refused to sanction this payment, noting their refusal in the 1844 Circular.³⁷

Some Norfolk Boards of Guardians managed to pay parents an extra amount towards their children's schooling well before the 1855 Act which made this sort of payment permissible.³⁸ These unions were exceptions to the general trend and clearly represented examples of individual unions acting autonomously in defiance of the central Poor Law authority.

³³ 1848 Circular, *ibid*.

³⁴ For pauper education in Shropshire, see below and Chapters 5 and 6.

³⁵ Schools Inspector Browne, *General Report* 1858, *Minutes* CCE, Appendix IV, PRO ED 17/24, p. 510.

³⁶ Poor Law Inspector Hurst, *Report on Berwick upon Tweed Workhouse*, May 2 1859, Berwick upon Tweed Correspondence, PRO MH 12 8985.

³⁷ Official PLC Circular Jan. 31 1844 pp. 178-9, PRO MH 10/11.

³⁸ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

A letter from a Shropshire ratepayer to the PLB in 1849 indicated a growing concern for the tens of thousands of pauper children who remained uneducated:

to go on with a system that consigns so many children to hopeless ignorance is a fearful evil, moral, social and political...³⁹

The PLB reply stated that the subject was 'under consideration'.⁴⁰ In reality there was little the central authority could do independently - what was needed was legislative action.

3. The Education of Poor Children Act, 1855⁴¹

By the 1850s there was a growing realisation that action needed to be taken to alleviate the educational plight of the outdoor child. Kay Shuttleworth's brother, Joseph, suggested that education for pauper children should be made a condition of relief, but this was a minority view.⁴² Generally those who favoured education for outdoor pauper children preferred that it should not be made conditional. This was more to do with a fear of religious rivalries than with any educational or practical arguments. If education was made compulsory the absence of a school of the correct religious persuasion might result in children being educated in a different creed from their parents. How many parents struggling on outrelief would in reality have objected to the religious persuasion of a particular school is open to question.

Charles Richson, in his long plea for education for outdoor children in 1850, dismissed the argument as irrelevant:

³⁹ Mr Wayne to PLB, March 1849, Madeley Union Correspondence 1848-1852. PRO MH 12 9983.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ 18 and 19 Vict. C. 34, *The Education of Poor Children Act*, 1855.

⁴² Joseph Shuttleworth, *The Condition and Education of Poor Children in English and German Towns* (1853), p. 60.

...in such cases, if the children are to be retained, a concession will be necessary ...and the learning of the creed and formularies must not be insisted upon. But if it should happen that the rule of the school upon this subject cannot be relaxed, other educational facilities must be sought...⁴³

Richson was not in favour of education being made a condition of relief, mainly because he believed public opinion was not ready for such a change.⁴⁴ Using information from the Schools Inspectors' reports he advanced a substantial case for permissive legislation. Richson emphasised it was unlikely that parents on outrelief could afford school fees:

Mr Ruddock justly remarks, that persons whose condition is fluctuating between pauperism and independence, and whose scanty earnings are barely sufficient to support life, are unable to incur the expense of sending their children to the National Schools and...this is illustrated in 'the extreme ignorance' of the children whose 'periodical influx' into the workhouse I have before attended to. This 'class of children', says Mr. Symons, is 'especially in need of moral and industrial training at the hands of the State, who seem to be wholly excluded even from the meagre provisions afforded to the handfals in the workhouses'.⁴⁵

Yet despite their poor financial circumstances a percentage of outrelief parents did manage to secure education for their children. The 1853 figure of nearly 34% supported by parents remained exactly the same six years later.⁴⁶

However, much more was necessary to ensure schooling for the remaining core of outdoor children. In order for the state to intervene 'advantageously' it was necessary to provide:

-1st, a sufficiency of schoolroom; 2ndly, that due regard be paid to the differences of religious opinions among the parents of the children. 3rdly, that there be an effective regulation and supervision of all matters of detail respecting school attendance and payments.⁴⁷

⁴³ Richson, *op. cit.*, p. 51-2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3, quoting from *Minutes CCE 1847-8-9*, incorporating Inspectors' Reports.

⁴⁶ Return... children... chargeable to the Poor Rate, 1853, *op. cit.*, Return... Outdoor Children 1859, P.P. 1860 LVIII, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁷ Richson, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Richson expanded these points in great detail with an analysis of why earlier Parliamentary attempts had failed.⁴⁸ A petition from 10,000 people resident in Manchester, where attempts were being made to legitimise the Union's school for outdoor children, had stimulated discussion in both Houses of Parliament in 1849.⁴⁹ The M.P. for Oxford, Mr W. Page Wood, proposed that a clause should be inserted in the Poor Law Union Charges Act Amendment Bill stating that:

it shall be lawful for the Guardians of any Union... to pay ...the cost of.. attending the education of such children... subject.. to the rules and regulations which may from time to time be made by the Poor Law Board in respect of the schools at which such children shall be placed, and the maximum amount to be made for such payments in respect of each child...⁵⁰

Page Wood's clause was lost. The first objection was that the children concerned were the children of outdoor paupers and therefore *per se* , should be excluded from education. Additionally, many outdoor children would only acquire education when their parents were in receipt of relief but this was a peripheral argument:

The short periods during which the pauper children, in common with other poor children may...be able to obtain instruction, is undoubtedly a disadvantage; but if such can be considered a sufficient objection... then the efforts of the trends of education generally, and the laws which provide for the support of Workhouse and Prison Schools, have been framed upon a radically wrong basis; and no education for the poor whatever should be provided, unless the children to be benefited can be compelled, by force of law, to remain under instruction for a certain prescribed period.⁵¹

There was concern lest Guardians saw the provision of education as a duty. However, this was unlikely so long as any measure considered was permissive rather than compulsory. The problem was more one of persuading Guardians to take initial action, rather than any likelihood of over-zealousness.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-69.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Mr. W. Page Wood's proposal to the House of Commons, July 20 1849, cited in Richson, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁵¹ Richson, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

The final objection to Page Wood's clause was more significant. It was emphasised that the rules and regulations regarding pauper education should not be left in the hands of the PLB who might then hold too much educational control. Richson argued there was no intention to 'convert the Poor Law Board into an Educational Board' and no power to insist that Guardians implemented the measure against their wishes as their co-operation was essential.⁵² Problems already existed between the authorities involved in administering workhouse education, there was no intention to exacerbate the situation.

It was a further five years before an Act incorporating many of Richson's ideas was brought before Parliament.⁵³ In 1855, *The Education of Poor Children Act* was passed, permitting but not compelling, Boards of Guardians to provide for the education of the children of outdoor paupers.⁵⁴ It was Parliament's first attempt to legislate on behalf of outrelief children. The Bill was proposed by the moderate Whig, Evelyn Denison, M.P. for South Nottingham, and later Malton in Yorkshire.⁵⁵

On April 17 1855, Denison moved leave to bring in a Bill:

...to enable the Guardians of the Poor to grant relief to the poor persons receiving relief out of the workhouses to enable them to provide education for their children, such education not being proposed to be made a condition of relief; the guardians not to compel attendance at any school to which the parents should object.⁵⁶

Matthew Talbot Baines, President of the PLB acknowledged that:

many boards of guardians including...Manchester - had for years been anxious to possess the very powers which the present Bill proposed to confer upon them.⁵⁷

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵³ Richson continued to be influential; some of his views were also incorporated into the 1870 Elementary Education Act, DNB XLVIII, *op. cit.*,

⁵⁴ *The Education of Poor Children Act, op. cit.*

⁵⁵ In April 1847 Denison was made Speaker of the House of Commons, gaining the respect of both sides of the House until he moved to the Lords, adopting the title of Viscount Ossington., DNB, Vol. XIV.

⁵⁶ *Parliamentary Papers* Third Series, Vol. 137, Apr. 17 1855, col. 1528.

⁵⁷ *ibid.* Matthew Talbot Baines was the first Dissenter to hold Cabinet Office.

He was supported by the Earl of Burlington:

The reports of the Poor Law Inspectors contained many ... suggestions on this subject... [he] saw no reason why the powers of the boards of guardians should not be...extended.. The workhouse schools were capable of affording accommodation to double the number of children at present receiving instruction.. it appeared from the reports of the inspectors that many of these schools were in a very unsatisfactory condition...the effect of this Bill would probably be to improve their character.⁵⁸

Others had reservations. Lord Colchester agreed it would be prudent to admit outdoor pauper children into workhouse schools, but

...did not see how far it was to go... whether...education...was to be extended to the children of the poorer classes generally, or confined to the children of those who came within the scope of the Poor Law.⁵⁹

A further note of caution was added by the Bishop of St Asaph who welcomed the Bill but was concerned lest Guardians be required to maintain children of parents who could afford to pay.⁶⁰

Further discussion centred on whether outdoor pauper children should also be educated in Reformatory and Industrial schools.⁶¹ This was rejected by Matthew Baines and others who argued that pauper children should not be brought into contact with criminal children. There were sufficient places in good workhouse schools to accommodate all outdoor children requiring education.⁶²

In a decade in which most education bills were lost, the success of Denison's Bill to permit outdoor children to be educated at the cost of the ratepayer was especially remarkable. However, it did not contain the controversial elements that caused the other

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, cols. 1645-6.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *The Times*, May 22 1855.

⁶² *Ibid.*

education bills to falter - contentious religious clauses and the principle of compulsion.⁶³ Yet much caution remained over costs and parental rights and there was still a residual feeling that pauper children should not be seen to have an advantage over the children of independent labourers.

The Leeds Mercury, one of the few newspapers to find editorial space for education bills at the height of the Crimean War, was scathing over chances of securing any of the other elementary education bills currently under debate. The paper recognised an immediate and clear necessity for Denison's Bill and was confident sufficient safeguards were included to ensure payments would cease if the parent stopped receiving outrelief. Additionally as the Bill was not designed to be a compulsory measure it stood a greater chance of a successful passage through Parliament - and Denison's Bill was praised as the 'only Education Bill ..likely to pass this Session'.⁶⁴

The Bill became law in June 1855. However, it was not until a year later that the PLB issued a Circular to Guardians on the implementation of the new Act.⁶⁵ Any support from the central Poor Law authority was clearly limited. No regulations were issued compelling Guardians to adhere to the provisions of the Act. All that was circulated were a few informative remarks. Although some statements in the Circular were ostensibly supportive, there was in general a lack of interest in the measure. Comments such as

The Board trusts that the Guardians will endeavour to give full effect to the spirit of the enactment and not suffer it to be neglected.

were negated by statements such as

⁶³ James Murphy, *Church, State and Schools in Britain, 1800-1870* (1971) pp.43-48. Most successful Bills throughout the nineteenth century were permissive.

⁶⁴ *The Leeds Mercury* May 25 1855; June 3 1855. The attention paid by the newspaper to the Bill reflected both Matthew Baines' support in Parliament and also family connections as *The Leeds Mercury* was owned by the powerful provincial nonconformist Baines family and run by Edward Baines. The newspaper made many other references to Denison's Bill - 21 April, 28 April, May 22, May 25, June 16, June 30, 1855.

⁶⁵ Official Circular, Jan. 9, 1856, Ninth Annual Report of the PLB P.P. 1857 XXII.

(The Guardians) can also impose such conditions as they shall see fit upon the providing of the education.⁶⁶

As far as the PLB was concerned, the crucial factors for Boards of Guardians were the costs and the importance of ensuring that any proposed education was not abused by parents. Critically, Guardians were instructed not to refuse outrelief to parents whose children did not attend school. This meant that neither outrelief parents nor Guardians were in general anxious to spend precious money on education when there were other financial demands.

4.The situation after 1855

The PLB did little to promote Denison's Act. Bowyer, in his 1857 Report, criticized the lack of effort expended by the PLB to encourage unions to conform to the Act.⁶⁷ Out of 612 unions, 418 had 'not availed themselves of powers under the Act'. The remaining 194 had:

...only done so to the extent of educating 5,353 children by aid afforded to their parents, and 1,184 orphans or deserted children.⁶⁸

Within the 418 unions not attempting to implement the Act, Bowyer stated that there was an:

...enormous number of 126,703 children dependent on widows most of whom were probably long enough in the receipt of ordinary relief to have derived inestimable benefit from the additional educational relief...very few of these widows were even aware that they might claim the additional relief... Unless... orders be given by Boards of Guardians...to call attention to ... educational relief in every case in which there are children between 4 and 16 years of age...the Act must inevitably become obsolete in the course of time.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Schools Inspector Bowyer, *General Report 1857, Minutes CCE*, P.P. 1857-8, XLV, p. 135.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.135-138.

Bowyer included a return from the East and Midlands region of outdoor children receiving education under Denison's Act. Out of 121 unions, 100 made no provision. Of those unions that provided some schooling, three, Mitford and Launditch Union in Norfolk, Wangford in Suffolk and Wisbech in Cambridgeshire were exceptional for the high number of outdoor children they educated. Mitford and Launditch, Wisbech and Wangford were examples of unions where efforts were made almost immediately to implement Denison's Act. Of the nine unions in Cambridgeshire, Wisbech catered for 133 children whereas six made no provision at all.⁷⁰ Bowyer commented that Wisbech, Mitford and Launditch, and Wangford were clearly unions where Denison's Act was being worked successfully. Other Boards of Guardians should contact these unions to 'ask them how they did it'.⁷¹ There is no evidence to indicate whether this suggestion was implemented. Correspondence from the three unions contained no explanations as to why Denison's Act was adopted so wholeheartedly. There were apparent contradictions. For instance, at Mitford and Launditch union although the Guardians readily accepted payments for schooling for outdoor children, they quibbled over clothing costs for children being sent into service.⁷²

At Wisbech the suggestion that Denison's Act should be implemented was presented to the Guardians by the Reverend W.B. Hopkins. At the time Hopkins was involved in a dispute with other Wisbech Guardians over the appointment of a workhouse chaplain. Hopkins held the minority view that a chaplain was essential. Most Wisbech Guardians considered that the work could be undertaken adequately by the local vicar.⁷³ Despite Hopkins' failure to convince the Board of the need to pay for a chaplain, his resolution that the union should provide financially for the education of outdoor children was passed.⁷⁴ The Wisbech Board did, however, insist on certain conditions. Each case was

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁷² Mitford and Launditch Correspondence, 1855-1857, PRO MH 12/8480.

⁷³ Minutes of Wisbech Board of Guardians, cited in *The Wisbech Advertiser*, Dec. 28 1855.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

to be considered separately and payments were not to exceed a penny halfpenny per child per week.⁷⁵ Before any payment was made the parent would be required to produce an attendance certificate from the school confirming that the child had attended on at least two out of every three days each week. Finally, the school could be inspected by the Board at any time.⁷⁶

Wangford Guardians indicated their 'desire to give full effect to the spirit of the 1855 Act but stipulated that 'regularity of attendance' was to be made a condition.⁷⁷ One thousand 'tickets' were printed to be used by outrelief families desiring education for their children.⁷⁸ Schools accepting 'tickets' would be reimbursed by the Guardians.⁷⁹ Only selected local schools could participate in the scheme.⁸⁰ By this means the Guardians attempted to monitor the quality and extent of education for outdoor children in the union.⁸¹

Another union providing education was Sheffield where outdoor children were able to attend elementary schools from the late 1850s.⁸² Some other unions, although sympathetic, preferred to continue with their own arrangements. Manchester Board of Guardians stated they would not be implementing the new Act.⁸³ Two hundred outdoor children were already being educated at schools attached to the workhouse, at one shilling per head per week, which also covered the provision of three daily meals.

...this system is productive of very beneficial results...whilst (the children) are provided with some learning they are at the same time morally improved, as well

⁷⁵ Wisbech Board of Guardians, Correspondence, Jan. 6 1856, PRO MH12/747.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Extract from the Minutes of the Wangford Board of Guardians*, Jan. 30 1856, PRO MH 12/12067.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ *Schedule of the Schools to which in the opinion of the Guardians of this Union Tickets may be issued for the Education of Pauper Children*, Wangford Union Correspondence, Feb. 6 1856, PRO MH 12/12067.

⁸² J.H. Bingham, *Education under the LEA in Sheffield: The Period of the Sheffield School Board, 1870-1903* (n.d.).

⁸³ Return of the number of children who are now provided with education by Aid... 18 + 19 Vict, c 34, p. 5, note a, P.P. 1857, Session Two XXXII.

as properly fed...greater regularity of attendance is ensured than seems likely to be obtained (although their parents may be in receipt of outdoor relief) if sent to school under the provisions of the Act above named.⁸⁴

The Manchester Guardians had concluded that education linked to daily sustenance would be more attractive to parents than schooling alone. The evidence from Manchester showed that where outdoor children were educated through local initiatives before 1855, Denison's Act had little new to offer.

Instances of individual action must be set against the large number of unions which continued to ignore outdoor children with the covert approval of the PLB. This apathetic approach may have been partly attributable to a lack of knowledge. The PLB depended on its Inspectorate for information but a survey conducted two years after Denison's Act was passed demonstrated what little knowledge Poor Law Inspectors possessed regarding outdoor children. As part of the investigations undertaken by the Newcastle Commission into the state of popular education the Inspectors were required to complete a questionnaire on the education of children on outrelief.⁸⁵ Although the questions in the survey appeared straightforward there was a built-in assumption, apparent in question three, that the answers to questions one and two would be negative.

1. What do you believe to be the moral, intellectual, physical and industrial state of the outdoor pauper children?
2. To what causes do you attribute that state?
3. What remedies can you suggest?⁸⁶

⁸⁴

Ibid.

⁸⁵

Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England, P.P. 1861 XXI. (Newcastle Commission).

⁸⁶

Letter from the Education Commissioners to the PLB, *Minutes CCE*, Mar. 31 1859, PRO MH 19/16.

Replies were received from Poor Law Inspectors Walsham, Weale, Piggott, Mainwaring, Hurst, Farnall, Hawley, Graves and Lambert. Only those from Weale, Piggott, Mainwaring, Hurst and Farnall have survived.⁸⁷ Their responses varied, both in length and content. Weale and Mainwaring stated there was little they could contribute and did not attempt to give specific answers. Weale's minimal contacts with outdoor pauper children led him to conclude that :

... the Moral, Intellectual, Physical and Industrial state of the Children of the Poor that are not [indoor] Paupers mainly depends on the personal characteristics of the parents.⁸⁸

Mainwaring replied that he had no more knowledge of the subject than any private individual:

and perhaps not so much as I am seldom stationary and the opportunities of forming an opinion on any part of the points mentioned seldom occur.⁸⁹

It appears surprising that these two Poor Law Inspectors had not acquired more knowledge of the outdoor children in their districts. Their inspectoral duties included an overview of outrelief practices, as well as inspection of workhouses. Inspector Farnall also did not attempt to answer the questions specifically but launched into a lengthy condemnation of the state of outdoor pauper children in the Metropolis, where he felt the children displayed a 'marked inferiority' when compared with children on outrelief in rural parishes.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Poor Law Inspector Weale to PLB, Apr. 15 1859, *Inspector's Correspondence 1855-1867*, PRO MH 32/89.

⁸⁹ Poor Law Inspector Mainwaring to PLB, Apr. 20 1859, *Inspector's Correspondence 1855-1865*, PRO MH 32/54.

⁹⁰ Poor Law Inspector to PLB, Apr. 23 1859, *Inspector's Correspondence 1859-1871*, PRO MH 32/24.

Hurst and Piggott, on the other hand, gave separate answers to each of the three questions. Hurst, like Farnall, believed that the state of the outdoor children depended on whether the children lived in a rural or urban environment. Although there was some opposition in agricultural areas to the education of outrelief children :

I do not consider that sending the children to school will benefit them physically or industrially, seeing they would probably otherwise be engaged in the healthy occupation of field work.⁹¹

There was 'great improvidence' in mining or manufacturing areas, and few opportunities for suitable industrial training. If children between 6 and 14 years were encouraged to go to school their position would be 'materially improved'.⁹² Piggott's response was less specific than Hurst's or Mainwaring's and was more of a general comment on his district. Most outdoor children were orphans, placed with other families.

Boards of Guardians in such cases make usually, as empowered by law, a small weekly allowance for the education of such children, and their moral, intellectual, physical and industrial state cannot be said to differ in any material respect from that of the children of the same Class, in the same district, not receiving Parish relief.⁹³

Piggott's conclusion that conditions for outdoor pauper children were similar to those of other poor children in the same district was probably accurate. His assertion that most Boards of Guardians usually made payments for children whose parents were on outrelief, is unusual. He gave no information to support this statement.

Piggott's and Hurst's analyses of the reasons for the poor state of outdoor children differed. Piggott gave as the fundamental reason the upheaval caused by the Settlement Laws which frequently disrupted education.⁹⁴ Hurst placed the blame with parents who

⁹¹ Poor Law Inspector Hurst to PLB, Apr. 20 1859, *Inspector's Correspondence 1847 1867* PRO MH 32/47.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Poor Law Inspector Piggott to PLB Apr 15 1859 *Inspector's Correspondence 1851 1864* PRO MH 32/62.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

did not value education and desired to 'profit by the wages of their children rather than make educational provision for them'.⁹⁵

Only Hurst emphasised that the permissive clause in Denison's Act had been detrimental to any chances of improving education. He argued that similar provision should be made to that available under the Factory Acts. He quoted Schools Inspector Browne who:

...considers the Education by the Guardians of a percentage of the population or of those persons in receipt of relief should be a condition precedent to all aid from the Parliamentary Grant.

Hurst concluded that since Denison's Act had been passed, he had, at every opportunity, urged Guardians in his district to pay attention to the education of outdoor pauper children.

and... furnish lists... of Children... from 6-11 years... who do not attend some school..⁹⁶

Boards of Guardians needed further inducements if they were to provide education; Denison's Act as it presently stood was insufficient.

Piggott's solution to the problem also concentrated on the 'abolition of the power of removal'.⁹⁷ The suggestion that changes in the Settlement Laws alone would ensure education revealed Piggott's poor understanding of the issues involved.

The Inspectors' replies were considered by the Newcastle Commission who included the questionnaire in their section on the education of outdoor children.⁹⁸ The Commissioners regarded the Inspectors' answers as:

⁹⁵ Poor Law Inspector Hurst to PLB, Apr. 20 1859, *op. cit.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Poor Law Inspector Piggott to PLB, Apr. 15 1859, *op. cit.*

⁹⁸ *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England 1861, op. cit.*

...all to the same effect. They describe their condition - moral, intellectual, and physical - as being as low as possible.⁹⁹

They concluded that conditions had not significantly improved in the twenty-five years since the passage of the PLAA and that very little account had been taken by Guardians of the permissive nature of Denison's Act. On January 1 1859, 262,204 children were listed as dependents of outrelief parents, yet the number of these children for whom education was provided by Boards of Guardians was 6,537.¹⁰⁰ The Commissioners stated that:

In many parts of the country the law is hardly acted on at all. In the nine counties of Dorset, Durham, Monmouth, Northampton, Oxford, Gloucester, Rutland, Hampshire and Cornwall, containing 38,451 outdoor pauper children the Guardians educate only 11 children, at an aggregate expense of £2. 8s. 4d. a year.¹⁰¹

The number of children receiving no schooling at all was decreasing but this was attributable more to the involvement of relatives and charitable societies than to any active intervention by Boards of Guardians.¹⁰²

Some evidence was also given which showed that even after 1855 children were taken out of school if their parents applied for aid. In some cases aid was refused if the children continued to attend school.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

¹⁰² By 1859 the number of outdoor children without education had fallen to 48,385 or 25% of the total number of children on outrelief, Return of Outdoor Children, 1859, *op. cit.*

¹⁰³ Evidence of Mr Snell, of East Coker, Yeovil to the Newcastle Commission. Answers 3 and 20, cited in S. Leon Levy (ed.), *Nassau Senior: Industrial Efficiency and Social Economy* (1928), p. 338.

The Commissioners concluded that the only logical course was the amendment of Denison's Act so that education became a condition of relief. They emphasised that this course of action had the support of the Schools Inspectors.¹⁰⁴

[Outrelief children] are, as a class, in a condition almost as degraded as that of indoor pauper children.....the remedy for this is to be found in making it compulsory on the guardians to insist on the education of the children as a condition of outdoor relief to the parent and to provide such education out of the rates.¹⁰⁵

The marginal note by the final paragraph on outdoor children explicitly stated:

Outdoor paupers should be educated out of the rates.¹⁰⁶

In placing the status of indoor children below that of outdoor, the Commissioners reiterated their earlier opinion that workhouse education was of little value. The Schools Inspectors, however, saw the educational position of outdoor children as markedly inferior when compared with that of children maintained in the workhouses.¹⁰⁷

Despite, or perhaps because of, their important conclusion that education for outdoor children should be provided through the rates, the Commissioners' recommendations were not implemented. *The Select Committee on Destitute Children*, which reported in the same year, also strongly recommended that Denison's act 'be so altered as to make it compulsory upon guardians to enforce children being sent to school as a condition of relief'.¹⁰⁸ *The Select Committee*, which included Leighton the Chairman of the Atcham Guardians, came to this conclusion after listening to evidence from many witnesses who

¹⁰⁴ Newcastle Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ See, for instance, Schools Inspector Bowyer, *General Report 1858, Minutes CCE*, PRO ED 17/24.

¹⁰⁸ Report from *The Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children*, P.P.1861 VII, p. 397.

gave testimony to the ignorant state of numerous neglected and destitute outdoor children.¹⁰⁹

However, objections to compulsion were voiced by the authority which would be responsible for administering any payments for education, namely the PLB. Their inspectors, reporting to *The Select Committee on Poor Relief* in 1864, rejected the principle of educating pauper children on the rates when such a privilege was not available to the children of independent labourers.¹¹⁰

This statement in an official Select Committee Report, thirty years after the passage of the PLAA revealed the misconceptions regarding less eligibility and schooling that still plagued the development of pauper education.

The proposal of the Education Commissioners to compel Guardians to insist upon the education of the child as a condition of outrelief to the parent is, in the opinion of your committee, inconsistent with the principles upon which the relief of the poor is established.¹¹¹

The long lasting effect of such entrenched views was apparent despite a gradual increase in the 1860s in the number of outdoor children receiving education. One example was the absence of opportunities for apprenticeship. J.S. Stallard, writing in 1867, stated:

The Guardians of the English Poor Law cannot point to a single instance in which a pauper child in receipt of Outdoor Relief has been apprenticed to a trade.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ *Select Committee on Destitute Children*, *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Report from *The Select Committee on Poor Relief* P.P. 1864 IX, May 31 1864.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹¹² J.S. Stallard, *London Pauperism among Jews and Christians - an inquiry into the principles and practice of outdoor relief in the Metropolis* (1867), p. 107.

There were exceptions, but in general a lack of opportunities for apprenticeship was commonplace despite the fact that the 1834 Act had empowered the PLC to make regulations and provision for 'apprenticing the children of poor persons'.¹¹³

Such was the inadequate nature of Denison's Act and the lack of promotion by the PLB that the CCE found it necessary in 1862 to remind the Poor Law authority that the Act could be utilized to alleviate distress in the cotton districts.

I am directed by the Lord President to inform you that with the concurrence of Lord Palmerston, he desires to recommend to the consideration of the Poor Law Board the propriety of issuing a circular to the Boards of Guardians in Cotton Districts calling their attention to the Act 18, 19 Victoria c 34 whereby they are authorised to grant relief for the purpose of enabling persons lawfully relieved out of the workhouse to provide for the education of their children. The Committee of Council on Education is of the opinion that the power given by this Act may be usefully exercised in favour of the operatives who are prepared to regard all payments of this kind which the Guardians may see fit to make on behalf of children attending schools under inspection as equivalent to the same amount paid in fees by the parents themselves or by those standing to the children *in loco parentis*, wherever such fees enter into the consideration of a grant.¹¹⁴

This suggests how rarely the Act was implemented. The CCE's approach was an *ad hoc* response to an emergency situation and the PLB's reply was brief - they would consider the possibility of issuing a circular.¹¹⁵ An internal memo revealed that the PLB did consider the matter:

... Guardians could establish a temporary school, similar to that for some time established in Manchester where the children of the outdoor poor are received, and fed and instructed. Any of the well educated and intelligent men and women... out of employment might be employed by the Guardians in the case of instruction of the children; and if instruction could not be provided I think that payments out of the Parliamentary Grant might with the sanction of the Treasurer be made in order to provide suitable instructors.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ In Norwich the Guardians stated that outdoor children living at home with their parents were more acceptable as apprentices to local tradesmen than children from the workhouse. S. & B. Webb, *Poor Law Policy, op. cit.*, p. 110. S. G. Checkland (eds), *The Poor Law Report of 1834, op.cit.*, p.466

¹¹⁴ CCE to PLB, *Minutes CCE*, Sep. 10 1862, PRO MH 19/17.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, PLB to CCE, Sep. 11 1862.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, PLB Memo Sep/Oct. 1862.

After 1855 the PLB had been forced to accept the existence of the school at Manchester and it is likely that by 1862 the authority realised that definitive statements were required. There was mounting concern that the distress in Lancashire might lead to similar disturbances to those of 1842 and earlier. The legal stand taken with regard to outrelief was, however, unequivocal and the PLB continued to refuse to suspend the 1852 Outdoor Relief Regulation Order for fear that indiscriminate relief would be granted. Yet, unofficially, in numerous instances, relief was allowed and no punitive action was taken towards such unions by the central authority.¹¹⁷

The acceptance by the PLB that in certain circumstances temporary schools should be established for outdoor children was both humane and realistic. By 1870, despite entrenched attitudes, fees were paid by Boards of Guardians for 22,033 outrelief children.¹¹⁸ This represented a large increase compared to the figure given nine years earlier to the Newcastle Commission.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, negative attitudes persisted. In 1871 the Liberal M.P. Henry Fawcett, a lifetime advocate of compulsory schooling for all elementary children, said of the pauper on outrelief:

no trouble is taken to ensure the education of his children; he still continues to receive his weekly allowance, although it may be notorious that his children never enter the school, but are each day sent into the streets to beg or steal.¹²⁰

A more comprehensive view may be deduced from a survey into outrelief conducted by Poor Law Inspector Edmond Wodehouse in the same year.¹²¹ Wodehouse examined

¹¹⁷ See Michael Rose, 'Rochdale Man and the Stalybridge Riot. The Relief and Control of the Unemployed during the Lancashire Cotton Famine', in A.P. Donajgrodzki, *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1977), pp. 185-201.

¹¹⁸ *Return of Children on Outdoor Relief* P.P. 1870 LVIII, No 123. Anne Digby notes that 19% of outdoor pauper children in Norfolk schools in 1869 were being paid for by local Guardians. Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

¹¹⁹ The figure given by the Newcastle Commission in 1861 was 6,537.

¹²⁰ Henry Fawcett, *Pauperism. Its Course and Remedies* (1871), pp. 47-8. For a detailed account of the life and work of Henry Fawcett, see Lawrence Goldman (ed.), *The Blind Victorian. Henry Fawcett and British Liberalism* (Cambridge 1989).

¹²¹ Report of Poor Law Inspector Edmond Wodehouse '... on Outdoor Relief in Seventy Unions in the Counties of Berkshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucester, Kent, Somerset, Southampton, Surrey, Sussex and Wiltshire' 23 June 1871. *First Report Local Government Board*, P.P. 187, Vol. XXVII. See below, Appendix VIII. No mention is made by the Webbs of this survey. See S. & B. Webb, *Poor Law Policy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-6, 179-85.

seventy unions in the South of England and his findings confirmed that progress remained slow and patchy. Question five enquired -

Do the Guardians take any, and what steps for securing the attendance at school of children whose parents are in receipt of outrelief?

Replies can be grouped into ten categories. The commonest answers, given by more than thirty unions, were similar to this reply from Wokingham:

No steps were taken by the Guardians with regard to the attendance at school of outdoor pauper children.¹²²

Eleven unions made a note if they found children of school age kept at home, but did not pay school fees in order to ensure attendance.¹²³ In a further seven unions parents applying for relief were asked whether their children went to school but no action was taken if the answer was negative.¹²⁴

Plymouth occasionally demanded to see certificates of school attendance.¹²⁵ Four other unions replied:

The school pence are paid in a few cases but no certificates of school attendance are produced.¹²⁶

Wells and South Stoneham unions instructed their Relieving Officers to report to the Guardians if children for whom payments were made did not attend school. There is no note of 'school pence' being withheld for non-attendance.¹²⁷ Two unions asked their

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 109. Reply from Wokingham Union.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Falmouth, Penzance, Stoke Damerell, Alverstoke, Bath, Bedminster, Alresford, Chichester, Hastings, Chippenham, Mere.

¹²⁴ Reading, Truro, Axminster, East Stonehouse, Newton Abbott, Clifton, Christchurch.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Cookham, p. 105; Bridge, p. 142; Dover, p. 145; Guildford, p. 188.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, Wells, p. 167; South Stoneham, p. 178.

visiting officers to report any school age children who were at home and to ask for school certificates to be produced.¹²⁸

It is evident that few of the seventy unions made any significant attempt to implement Denison's Act. However, amongst those that did were Bristol, Medway, Tenterden, Shepton Mallet and Alderbury Unions where 'school pence' were paid in several parishes and certificates of school attendance were required.¹²⁹

The two unions that returned the most positive replies were Kingston and Andover. Kingston stated:

Every child attends at the annual revision and the Guardians personally ascertain if they can read or write. If they fail they are required to attend again in three months and produce certificates of school attendance.¹³⁰

Of all the unions in this survey only Andover was prepared to refuse relief to parents who did not send their children to school. By taking this action the Andover Guardians were clearly ahead of national thinking:

Persons in receipt of relief are required to send their children to school and their relief would be stopped if they did not do so.¹³¹

Whether Andover included an additional sum for school fees in the relief given was not made clear.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Portsea Island, Brighton, p. 177.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Bristol, p. 137; Medway, p. 150; Tenterden, p. 153; Shepton Mallet, p. 164; Alderbury, p. 207.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171. That it should be Andover Union taking such an active step to promote pauper education is significant in view of the public scandal over conditions in the Andover Workhouse in the 1840s. It is possible that the scandal provoked a radical change of attitude on the part of the Board of Guardians towards pauper children. See Ian Anstruther, *The Scandal of the Andover Workhouse* (1973); Norman Longmate, *The Workhouse* (1974).

Edmond Wodehouse concluded his report with a general summary. Five of the counties included Berkshire, Sussex, Cornwall and Devon who had never responded favourably to the 1855 Act and Cornwall who was still sending in a nil return in 1870.¹³²

...in a large number of unions no steps are taken to enforce or even encourage the attendance at school of outdoor pauper children, or to ascertain whether in point of fact they do attend school or not. In some unions the Guardians question the parents on the subject when they appear before them; in others the Relieving Officer is directed to report if he finds children of school age kept at home, and there are a few in which the school pence are paid under Denison's Act and certificates of school attendance are produced.¹³³

Wodehouse had been asked to complete his survey by the LGB because of a rising concern over the cost of outrelief in the 1870s, rather than any desire on the part of the authority to increase the amounts spent on education.¹³⁴ 1871 saw the beginning of a general tightening up of Poor Law procedures.¹³⁵ In the light of this Wodehouse's conclusions and recommendations appear surprisingly independent of central Poor Law thinking. Wodehouse made a clear plea for improvements in education for outdoor children and expressed his regret that more unions were not prepared to meet the cost of this provision.¹³⁶

A detailed examination of Shropshire, a county well removed geographically from those included in Wodehouse's survey, supports the view that Denison's Act was chiefly ineffectual. Overall progress in Shropshire was in fact slower than in most other counties.

5. The Outdoor Child in Shropshire

The plight of outdoor children in Shropshire was highlighted by a Madeley Guardian who

¹³² Return of the Number of Children Chargeable on the Poor Rates, Mar. 18, 1870, P.P. 1870 LVIII.

¹³³ Wodehouse Report, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Lord Stansfield, President PLB, to Edmond Wodehouse, p. xv.

¹³⁵ Michael Rose, 'The Crisis of Poor Relief', *op cit.*

¹³⁶ Wodehouse Report, *op cit.*

wrote to the PLB in 1849 describing the lack of educational opportunities in his district as a 'very serious evil':

where the parent is not highly principled the only education the children obtain is a disrupted training in habits of petty plundering.¹³⁷

Despite this situation, Madeley Guardians were initially not prepared to spend ratepayers' money to educate the children of parents on outrelief. This attitude persisted well after 1855 and in common with many other unions progress was not apparent until the late 1860s.¹³⁸ Elsewhere in the county there was a similar lack of educational opportunity for the outrelief child in the 1840s and 1850s. During negotiations for the establishment of the South East Shropshire District School at Bridgnorth the question arose over the suitability of sending all pauper children there, irrespective of whether they were the offspring of indoor or outdoor paupers. Ludlow Guardians were divided on the subject and wrote to the PLB for advice and clarification.¹³⁹

In accordance with central policy Andrew Doyle and the PLB were firmly opposed to any inclusion of outdoor children in the proposed District School, citing the large numbers of children who would be involved.¹⁴⁰ No reference was made to the 1844 and 1847 Circulars that expressly forbade the payment of school fees for the children of outrelief parents.¹⁴¹ The terms of these Circulars were never implemented nationally as only a small number of unions was actively involved in educating outdoor children.

In his 1854 Report on the West of England and Wales, Symons concentrated on the disparity between the number of children of indoor paupers receiving education and the

¹³⁷ Mr. H. Wayne to PLB, n.d. Mar. 1849, Madeley Correspondence 1848-52, PRO MH 12 9983.
¹³⁸ In the Union's annual report for 1855 it was stated that Madeley did not intend to implement Denison's Act. *Report of the Madeley Union* July 1855, Madeley Correspondence 1853-6, PRO MH 12 9984. For Madeley in 1869, see below.
¹³⁹ Ludlow Union to PLB Dec. 12 1848, Ludlow Correspondence 1847-51, PRO MH 12 9957.
¹⁴⁰ Doyle scribbled a note to this effect on the reverse of the Ludlow letter before forwarding it to Viscount Ebrington, Secretary to the PLB, *ibid*.
¹⁴¹ 1844, 1848 Circulars, *op. cit*.

large number of outdoor children who received no schooling whatsoever.¹⁴² As part of a survey into the possible implications of district schooling in his area, Symons attempted to ascertain the number of outdoor children who attended day schools in each union.¹⁴³ The question evoked little interest from Boards of Guardians. This response was symptomatic of the neglect that concerned Symons and others. Of the 34 replies to the survey, only one union, Haverford West, addressed the question and then only to state that 'the Guardians had no current statistics'.¹⁴⁴ Yet as Symons pointed out in his Report, the number of outdoor children continued to greatly exceed indoor. Returns for England and Wales in 1853 showed that outdoor children of school age totalled 84% of the total number of child paupers between the ages of 3 and 15.¹⁴⁵ The figure for Shropshire was slightly higher at nearly 85%.¹⁴⁶ However analysis of the data for Symons' district showed that in each of his other counties there was an even greater percentage of outdoor school age children than in Shropshire. Although Symons' calculations were slight overestimations, owing to inaccurate addition, the figures revealed the high percentage of outdoor children between 3 and 15 in the West of England and Wales.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Symons *General Report* 1854, P.P. 1854-5 XLII.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁴⁵ The total number of indoor children between 3 and 15 in England and Wales was 35,211; outdoor children 235,749, Returns on Outdoor Children June 15 1853, P.P. 1854, LV.

¹⁴⁶ Symons, *General Report* 1854, P.P. 1854-5 XLII.

¹⁴⁷ In Symons' Report the total number of outdoor children between 3 and 15 was given as 30,624. This included 14,345 children who, according to Symons, did not attend day school. These were data summed incorrectly in Symons' Report and the figure should have been 13,635 making a total of 29,914 and not 30,624. However this only represents a difference from Symons' figures of 0.2%, *ibid.* Inaccuracies were not uncommon in Symons' Reports, see above, chapter 4.

Table 16 School-age Pauper Children in Symons' District, 1853¹⁴⁸

<u>Region</u>	<u>Outdoor</u>	<u>Indoor</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Outdoor%</u>
Shropshire	2307	414	2721	84.8
Gloucester	2695	430	3125	86.2
Hereford	1168	201	1369	85.3
Monmouth	1673	240	1913	87.5
Worcester	3623	326	3949	91.7
S. Wales ¹⁴⁹	8083	494	8577	94.2
N. Wales	10,410	408	10,818	96.2
Total	29,959	2,513	32,472	92.3

As was the case in other regions not all outdoor school-age children in the West of England and Wales were without education. Symons gave a breakdown of figures for his district which included the number of children who were being educated despite the fact that their parents were on outrelief.¹⁵⁰ Out of a total of 29,959 outdoor pauper children in the region, 11,878 were being educated 'at cost of parents' or by 'other parties'; a further 4,401 were 'at work'. This left 13,680, or 46%, presumably available for education but not at school.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Symons' district included all the Welsh counties: in South Wales - Brecon, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, Pembrokeshire; in North Wales - Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* It is unclear from Symons' Report where he obtained this information, bearing in mind the negative response to his earlier survey, but it is likely to have been calculated from the 1853 Returns.

Table 17. Outdoor children, 1853¹⁵¹

	<u>At day school at parents' cost</u>	<u>At day school other parties cost</u>	<u>At work</u>	<u>Not at school or work</u>	<u>Total outdoor children</u>	<u>% not at school</u>
Shropshire	550	694	441	622	2,307	46%
Symons district	7,155	3,479	3,960	13,013 ¹⁵²	27,607	61%
Eng. & Wales	66,653	29,154	61,102	36,271	193,180	50%

The figures for Shropshire in 1853 were similar to the country as a whole. After the 1855 Act Symons expressed little hope that Guardians in his district would implement the new Act, regarding it as a 'dead letter' in the West of England and Wales.¹⁵³ He was not unaware of some of the problems inherent in bringing outdoor children into the ordinary schools. The suspicion and distaste with which outdoor children were frequently regarded was a further reason for their slow integration into both elementary and Poor Law schools. Both Symons and Wayne, the Madeley Guardian who had expressed concern in 1848, recognised the effect on the existing school population of newly-admitted outdoor children.¹⁵⁴ Symons was sympathetic to the schoolmistress at Abergavenny workhouse school who became 'overpowered and disheartened' by an influx of outdoor children who were 'far too young, and nearly all dirty, unruly and ignorant of everything'.¹⁵⁵

Similarly Poor Law Inspector Mainwaring warned the PLB of 'the great danger to the children in the workhouse from the introduction of all kinds of disease and filth' if outdoor children were admitted to workhouse schools.¹⁵⁶ The disruption frequently

¹⁵¹ Symons *General Report* 1854, *op. cit.*, Returns... Outdoor children 1853, *op. cit.*

¹⁵² Calculated on my amended figure of 13689 outdoor children at school in Symons' district.

¹⁵³ Symons' *General Report* 1857, P.P. 1857 XXXIII Sesion 2.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Wayne at Madeley Union also recognised the problem of 'miserably clothed' outdoor children mixing with the elementary school children, H. Wayne to PLB, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁵ Symons, *General Report* 1856, P.P. 1857 XXXIII.

¹⁵⁶ Poor Law Inspector Mainwaring to PLB Feb. 29 1856, Mainwaring Correspondence PRO MH 32/54.

caused by the admission of outrelief children into District Schools was pointed out by Poor Law Schools Inspector Tufnell. Tufnell emphasised the difference between the disciplined children already in attendance at District Schools and the ignorance and lack of self control of children outside the system.¹⁵⁷

Andrew Doyle, who, with Symons, was the most knowledgeable authority on the Poor Law in the West of England and Wales, was equally convinced that Denison's Act would have little impact in Shropshire, the surrounding counties or the country as a whole.¹⁵⁸ If parents could afford fees they would generally 'avail their children of education'; they did not need the impetus of legal persuasion.¹⁵⁹ This view was supported by Symons' 1854 figures.¹⁶⁰ Apart from Shropshire and Monmouth, all areas in Symons' district had more children at school who were paid for by parents than were financed from any other source. Although education could not be made a condition of relief, Doyle stated that enquiries were always made locally into the educational state of the children and almost as many parents were persuaded to send their children to school as would be the case if they were legally compelled to do so. This was especially true of children of parents on temporary relief and the children of disabled parents.¹⁶¹ Doyle was convinced the Act would only be applicable to the children of widows and those receiving permanent relief, of whom there was only a small number, and that consequently few Boards of Guardians would be interested in providing education.¹⁶²

Doyle's prediction that Denison's Act would not be readily adopted proved correct. Nationally, only 5,353 outdoor children were receiving education paid for out of the Poor Rate in 1857. Of these 2,546, or 48%, were confined to two counties, Lancaster and

¹⁵⁷ Evidence of Carleton Tufnell, *Report of the Royal Commission on the State of Popular Education in England and Wales* (The Newcastle Report), P.P. 1861 XXI, .3164.

¹⁵⁸ Poor Law Inspector Andrew Doyle to Viscount Courtenay, President PLB, Mar. 31 1855 PRO MH 32/18.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Symons, *General Report* 1854, P.P. 1854-5 XLII.

¹⁶¹ Doyle, Mar. 31 1855, *op. cit.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

the West Riding.¹⁶³ Four counties, Dorset, Monmouth, Northampton and Oxford made a nil return; five others returned numbers that were in single figures only.¹⁶⁴ Shropshire educated 84, the highest number of any English county in Symons' district.¹⁶⁵

Table 18. Outdoor Children educated on the Poor Rate in the English Counties in Symons' District 1857¹⁶⁶

Shropshire - 84
Worcester - 22
Hereford - 10
Gloucestershire - 1
Monmouth - 0

The same 1857 Return revealed that the average amount spent on the education of outdoor children in English counties in 1856 was 5/- (five shillings) per child per annum.¹⁶⁷ Rates across the country ranged from nil expenditure in Dorset, Monmouth, Northampton and Oxford, to 10/6 per head spent by Northumberland.¹⁶⁸ Shropshire, together with Cornwall and the West Riding of Yorkshire, spent 4/- per child per annum. Only 12 counties out of 42 spent less than Shropshire.¹⁶⁹ There was not necessarily any correlation between the amount spent per child and the number of children catered for. Whereas Shropshire spent 4/- per head for only 72 children, the West Riding of Yorkshire spent the same amount per head on 1,552. Lancaster educated a similar number of children as the West Riding, but spent at the higher rate of 7/- per child. Among counties educating a similar number of outdoor children as Shropshire, rates also varied although it is possible to detect an upward trend as the number of children increased.

¹⁶³ Return of Outdoor Children, June 22 1857, P.P. 1857 Session 2 XXXII.

¹⁶⁴ Gloucester - 1; Cornwall - 5; Leicester - 9; Rutland - 2; Southampton - 3; *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ See Table 18.

¹⁶⁶ Return of Number of Children... provided with Education... according to Provisions of Act 18 & 19 Vict c34 (Denison's), May 22 1857, P.P. 1857 XXXII Session 2.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Five shillings is equivalent to twenty-five pence in modern currency.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Kent, Cambridge and Buckingham spent 3/6; Essex, Bedford, Hereford and Derby spent 3/-; Westmoreland 2/6. Nothing was spent by Dorset, Monmouth, Northampton and Oxford.

Table 19. Amount spent per child by counties with 70 -90
outdoor children ,supported from the Poor Rate, 1857¹⁷⁰

<u>County</u>	<u>No of children</u>	<u>Amount per child</u>
Bedford	71	3/-
Shropshire	72	4/-
Berkshire	77	5/-
Devon	80	4/-
Middlesex	90	6/-

Of the six counties spending the average figure of 5/- per annum per child there was no correlation between total expenditure and the number of children educated. There were, however, some geographical similarities. All six , apart from Leicester were in the south and east of England, and Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire and Southampton (Hampshire) adjoined the south and west of London.

Two years later, in 1859, the proportion of children attending day schools at the cost of the Poor Rate in these counties was approximately the same, apart from Surrey where the number increased by over 25%.¹⁷¹ In the majority of English counties the Act was still generally ignored but there were some exceptions. Table 20 shows the number of children educated from the Poor Rate in 1857 and 1859. In percentage terms Shropshire increased the number of outdoor children it educated by 152%, however, this increase was not sustained. ¹⁷²

Ten years later five counties continued to show an increase in the number of children educated but the rate of the increase varied considerably. Surrey, Durham, Middlesex and Kent all exceeded their percentage increase of 1857-1859. Cambridgeshire, on the

¹⁷⁰

Ibid.

¹⁷¹

Return showing the number of children between 3 and 15 years chargeable to the Poor Rates... attending Day Schools, July 5 1859, P.P. 1860 LVIII.

¹⁷²

See Table 20.

other hand, showed a decrease.¹⁷³ Progress was especially slow in the counties of Berkshire, Bedford, Sussex and Hertford. Hereford and Cornwall continued to send in a nil return.

Shropshire expanded its provision at a slower rate than the other counties, increasing the number educated by just 48%.¹⁷⁴

Table 20. Counties showing a significant % increase in the number of outdoor children educated between 1857 and 1869 compared with Cambridgeshire and Shropshire¹⁷⁵

	<u>1857</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>% increase</u> <u>1857-1859</u>	<u>1869</u>	<u>% increase</u> <u>1859-1869</u>
Surrey	152	222	46	635	186
Durham	46	255	454	1751	587
Middlesex	95	361	280	2533	602
Kent	212	374	76	1160	210
Cambridge	160	318	99	247	-22
Shropshire	90	227	152	336	48

The percentage increase in Shropshire between 1859 and 1869 was far lower than the average in the rest of the West country, or the whole of England and Wales. The significant increase that had occurred between 1855 and 1857 had not been maintained.

Table 21. Number of Outdoor Children educated on the Poor Rate, 1859 and 1869¹⁷⁶

<u>Area</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1869</u>	<u>% increase</u>
Shropshire	227	336	48
West & Wales	1186	4738	299
England & Wales	6863	22033	221

Individual unions within Shropshire responded slowly to the 1855 Act. By 1857 only five, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Madeley, Shifnal and Wellington, were educating outdoor

¹⁷³ Return... Number of Children between 3 and 15 chargeable to the Poor Rates, Mar. 18 1870, P.P. 1870 LVIII.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* See Table 20.

¹⁷⁵ Return on Outdoor Children, 1857, 1859, 1870 *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1857, 1859.

children. The increase in Shropshire was chiefly in the industrial union of Madeley where, in addition to sending longstay indoor children to the South East Shropshire District School, the union retained a workhouse school for casual children and by 1869 also maintained 140 outrelief children in local day schools.¹⁷⁷ This was in direct contrast to the other, mainly rural, unions in the county who by 1869 were paying for the education of only a very few outdoor children from the Poor Rate. Atcham, Clun, Market Drayton, Ellesmere, Wellington and Wem made no payment at all towards the education of their outrelief children, while Bridgnorth paid for 16.¹⁷⁸ In the case of Atcham and Ellesmere it is clear that this decision stemmed from a desire to continue to abide by the tenets of the 1834 Act.¹⁷⁹

Bridgnorth may have sent their children to the South East Shropshire School but there is no mention of this in any correspondence and the PLB opposed such a policy.¹⁸⁰ It is more likely that Bridgnorth, like Madeley, maintained some outdoor children in local ordinary schools. Wellington Union specifically stated that from the end of September 1856 money would only be allocated for outdoor children if they attended the union workhouse school.¹⁸¹ This was presumably a cheaper way of implementing Denison's Act than if the Guardians paid school fees at the local elementary school, as the union was already paying the salary of the workhouse school teacher.

Atcham and Ellesmere, together with the remaining Shropshire unions, did not implement the Act. From 1836 Ellesmere had refused to entertain the payment of outrelief to claimants with school age children insisting that the children be brought into the workhouse.¹⁸² Correspondence between the Diocesan Inspector Reverend H.P.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, July 1 1869, P.P. 1870 LVIII. Madeley was never satisfied with the financial arrangements for sending children to the District School, see above Chapter 5.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ See above, Chapter 5 and 6.

¹⁸⁰ See above, Chapter 5.

¹⁸¹ Return of Outdoor Children 1857, *op. cit.*

¹⁸² Minutes Ellesmere Guardians Nov 22 1836, PRO MH 12 9935. See above, Chapters 5 and 6.

Ffoulkes, who was based in Ellesmere, and the PLB, however, revealed some local misunderstanding over the scope of the Act.¹⁸³ Ffoulkes was clearly under the impression that relief could be refused to parents who did not send their children to school. Furthermore, his expectation of the payments likely to be entertained by the Boards of Guardians was over optimistic.

Table 22 Shropshire unions educating outdoor children , 1857

<u>Union</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Annual Expenditure</u>
Atcham	0	nil
Bridgnorth	17	£3. 10s. 10d
Church Stretton	0	nil
Cleobury Mortimer	0	nil
Clun	0	nil
Market Drayton	0	nil
Ellesmere	0	nil
Ludlow	2	12s. 5d
Madeley	53	£12. 1s. 6d
Newport	0	nil
Shiffnal	6	4s. 0d
Wellington	6	5s. 8d
Wem	0	nil
Whitchurch	0	nil

¹⁸³ Letter from Diocesan Inspector Ffoulkes to the PLB Aug. 8 1855; PLB to the Reverend Ffoulkes Aug. 16 1855.

He suggested that Guardians should be prepared to pay 4/6 to 5/- per child a quarter, or 18/- to £1 a year.¹⁸⁴ In reality the Shropshire average for the year ending 1857 amounted to only 4/- per child. Without the large payment made by Madeley Union this average would have been far lower as 9 out of the 13 Shropshire unions paid nothing.¹⁸⁵

By 1870 the difference between Shropshire, the rest of the West of England and Wales, and the country as a whole, was marked. Shropshire had a far less significant increase in the education provided for outdoor children, between 1859 and 1869, than most other counties.

Prior to 1855 unions paying for the education of outdoor children did so at times of economic depression and were concentrated in the northern half of England where seasonal fluctuations in the labour market were the most damaging. After the permissive legislation of 1855 individual unions across the country, particularly in the counties of Surrey, Durham, Middlesex and Kent also began to make payments. However Denison's 1855 Act was slow to be implemented and reports, such as that from the Newcastle Commission in 1861, revealed that the majority of outdoor children remained uneducated.

Not until 1873 was the Denison Act finally made compulsory and the schooling of pauper children up to the age of 14 years a condition of the payment of outdoor relief to their parents. The Liberal education minister, W.E. Forster, had been forced by opposition within his own party to abandon his proposal in the 1873 Bill to make the Boards of Guardians responsible for paying the school fees of very poor *non-pauper* children.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ See Table 22.

Three years earlier, the 1870 Elementary Education Act first permitted the new school boards the controversial powers, if they wished, to enforce attendance and (under Section 25) to pay the school fees of these very poor children. At this point, some Boards of Guardians paid for their workhouse children to attend elementary schools.

While, in this way, the 1870s saw the gradual merging of the elementary and pauper school systems, the distinction between children of the very poor and pauper parents remained deeply entrenched in late Victorian society. In 1876 Sandon's Act finally gave Guardians the responsibility of paying the fees of non-pauper children, (up to threepence per week) where the parents could prove extreme poverty which was not destitution. Nevertheless, some Boards of Guardians, such as 18 out of 39 Metropolitan Boards in 1881-1883, refused outright to pay for non-pauper children. Others discouraged applications, mainly from mothers, by cynical offers of the workhouse.¹⁸⁶

The 1870 Elementary Education Act first permitted the new School Boards the controversial powers, if they wished, to fix bye-laws to enforce attendance and under Section 25 to pay fees for very poor children.¹⁸⁷ In 1873 W.E. Forster introduced an amendment to the 1870 Act to bring all children who were not receiving schooling into the education system.¹⁸⁸ From 1873 Boards of Guardians had to ensure that children between 5 and 13 years of age attended school but the view still persisted that the children of outdoor paupers did not come into the category of the 'deserving poor'. After the introduction of compulsory elementary education in 1880 and the decline of pauper education, there was a gradual merging of both indoor and outdoor children into the

¹⁸⁶ Gillian Sutherland, *Policy-Making in Elementary Education 1870-1895* (1973), pp. 124-25, 170-171. See also, *idem*, 'Education', *The Cambridge Social History of Britain*, 1750-1950 Vol. 3, p.143-44.

¹⁸⁷ The Elementary Education Act, 1870, P.P. 1870 I; Gillian Sutherland, *Policy Making...ibid.*, p.168.

¹⁸⁸ 36 and 37 Vic.c 86, Sec. 3 (Elementary Education Act 1873). Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, July 17 1873, Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series 1873, Vol. CCXVII, cols 567-570.

ordinary elementary sector. Throughout most of the nineteenth century , however, the majority of outdoor pauper children had remained educationally disadvantaged .

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DECLINE OF PAUPER EDUCATION IN THE LATE VICTORIAN PERIOD

Changes in attitudes towards the schooling and care of pauper children in the latter half of the nineteenth century gradually eroded the provision of a separate Poor Law education system. By 1870 there was a decline in the number and size of workhouse schools. Only one school in Bowyer's district had more than 80 children, whereas 70 schools had only 20-30 children in each.¹ It became increasingly difficult for small workhouse schools to retain satisfactory teachers. Treasury Grants were based not only on teacher competency but on the number of children taught.² Unions began to send their children to local elementary schools despite the disapproval of the central Poor Law authority. Additionally, where there had often been two schools in a workhouse - catering separately for boys and girls - many schools combined.³

From the 1860s alternative means of dealing with pauper children were attempted. Only the method whereby children were boarded with ordinary labouring families, and sent to local elementary schools, proved at all satisfactory. The rapid growth of the boarding out, particularly in the 1870s and 1880s, failed to change official attitudes. There was a preference for District Schools until almost the end of the century when these large

¹ Schools Inspector Bowyer, *General Report* 1866, *Schools Inspectors Correspondence* 1863-1871, PRO MH 32/108.

² See below, Chapter 2.

³ E.g. - in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, out of 23 schools, 13 were mixed by 1857. Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report* 1857, *Minutes CCE P.P.* 1857-8, Vol. XLV, Appendix. A, p. 228 - In Ruddock's district one third of the schools were mixed by 1858. Schools Inspector Symons, *General Report* 1858, *Schools Inspectors Correspondence*, PRO ED 17/24.

institutions came under heavy criticism.

1. The Newcastle Commission and the Select Committee on Poor Relief:
official views in the 1860s

By the 1860s a fundamental change was occurring within informed public opinion over the most suitable and effective means to educate pauper children. Neither of the two main reports of the decade, the Report of the Newcastle Commission in 1861 and The Select Committee on Poor Relief in 1864, gave these developments sufficient recognition.⁴ The Newcastle Commission was the first detailed enquiry into elementary education.

Its brief was:

to consider and report what Measures, if any, [were] required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people.⁵

One of the reasons for the formation of the Commission in 1858 was the increase in Parliamentary Grants. Workhouse and District Schools in receipt of the Grant were included within the scope of the investigation. Although the Commission made many recommendations, the only one to be adopted was 'payment by results'. The Newcastle Commissioners devoted 34 pages of their report to the current state of pauper education. Their conclusions criticised the present state of workhouse schools and reiterated the 1834 view that pauperism was hereditary. The Commissioners emphasised that education was a means by which depauperisation could be achieved but that

⁴ *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Present State of Popular Education in England*, P.P.1861 (2794-I-VI) XXI (Newcastle Commission); *House of Commons Select Committee on Poor Relief*, P.P. 1864 IX.

⁵ Newcastle Commission, *op. cit.*

workhouse schools were not achieving this aim. Children were still associating too closely with adult paupers. The only solution, according to the Commissioners, was the 'general establishment' of District Schools.⁶

Criticism can be levelled at both the conduct and conclusions of the Report. The only Schools Inspector invited to give evidence was Tufnell who emphasised that it was of paramount importance to establish District Schools. Both Tufnell and Kay Shuttleworth strongly condemned the 'evils' of workhouse education. They gave 'evidence' of demoralisation. Kay Shuttleworth claimed, for instance, that the majority of girls from Greenwich Workhouse, 'had turned to prostitution'.⁷ Tufnell produced statistics alleging that of the 39 boys who had recently left a London workhouse, only seven were still 'doing well'.⁸ The evidence of Louisa Twining was particularly damning concerning the effect of the workhouse environment on pauper girls - if anyone should:

inquire into the history of the girls and women to be found in adult wards of workhouses ... they will be found to have been, generally speaking, brought up in pauper schools.

Brief summaries in the margins of the Commissioner's Report gave a clear indication of their attitude to workhouse schools:

Schools destroy spirit of independence.
Bad moral state of pauper children.
Pauper boys do not make good labourers.⁹

The Commission was later accused of bias. Nassau Senior, who had been a

⁶ *Ibid.*, Part II, The Education of Pauper Children, Chapter IV, Conclusions and Recommendations, pp. 384-5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 353.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 355-357.

member of the earlier Commission which had produced the 1832 Poor Law Report, took the chair on 'pauper education' days and was known to be in favour of District Schools. In defence of Senior it should be recognised that he made no secret of his concern over the state of pauper education. In 1859 while the Commission was still investigating, Senior presented a preliminary memorandum.

With respect to the indoor pauper children, we have ... much information. It is very painful. It shows that, with the exception of children in district schools, or (separate) schools established in large and populous unions, ... the workhouse children contaminated by the society and the example of the adults, ... taught no useful trades, except perhaps the overstocked ones of needlework, shoemaking and tailoring, ... are unfit for the exterior world ...¹⁰

It would have been more prudent of Senior to have conducted a more balanced enquiry. Few witnesses were called in defence of workhouse schools and their evidence was qualified and condensed in the Commissioners' conclusions to only a page and a half. Only a brief statement was included from Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Hedley who favourably compared workhouse schools with elementary schools.¹¹ Schools Inspector Browne, who by 1858 was strongly critical of District Schools, was not called. A brief quotation from one of his reports concentrated on his desire for improvements in workhouse classification rather than his doubts over the wisdom of district schooling.¹² No Poor Law Inspectors were called to give evidence. This infuriated the PLB who were already incensed over attacks upon their management of workhouses.

¹⁰ Nassau Senior, *On the Education of Pauper Children in Unions* (1839).

¹¹ Newcastle Commission, *op. cit.*, Pt. I, p. 365.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 366.

It was not surprising that the Newcastle Report was followed a year later by reports from four Poor Law Inspectors which strongly refuted the Commission's findings. In their Reports evidence was presented vindicating both local Guardians and the progress that had been made in the various districts through the efforts of the Poor Law Inspectors.

Poor Law Inspector Hawley argued that the Commissioners had:

only sought for and obtained such evidence as would cast discredit on the workhouse system for the purpose of fostering a bantling of their own, namely the general establishment of district schools.¹³

Weale made exhaustive enquiries of his own and presented detailed results which contradicted Louisa Twining's findings. He concluded that very few women in workhouses had begun life in pauper schools.¹⁴ The number of women currently in workhouses who had been raised in Poor Law institutions was far fewer than had been stated by Twining.

Both Weale and Walsham accused Louisa Twining of bias against workhouse schools and of a desire to promote District Schools at all costs. Walsham pointed out that her evidence was contradicted by Schools Inspector Bowyer who believed that most workhouse schools produced satisfactory results, especially considering the number of problems they had to contend with. Weale stated that in many instances there were insufficient children to warrant the establishment of a District School.¹⁵ Doyle was critical of Nassau Senior's method of extracting partial information from Schools Inspectors' reports rather than calling for direct evidence. This was a

¹³ Poor Law Inspector Hawley, Report Feb. 25 1862, *Return containing copies of the Reports made to the Poor Law Board on the Education of Pauper children by WHT Hawley, Esq; Robert Weale, Esq; Sir John Walsham Bart; and Andrew Doyle Esq; Poor Law Inspectors*, P.P.1862 (510) XLIX, Pt. I, p. 33. The term 'bantling' is derived from the German word for bastard.

¹⁴ Poor Law Inspector Robert Weale, *ibid.*, pp. 531-3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

professional reaction from Doyle who made no secret of his distrust of the Schools Inspectorate - an aftermath perhaps of his long feud with Jelinger Symons.¹⁶ The most critical counter argument presented by the Poor Law Inspectors was that most workhouses *did* successfully separate children from adults. It was on the question of effective separation that the District School lobby had always centred their case. Genuine anger is apparent in the Inspectors' reports and to some extent their comments redressed the balance.¹⁷

By the time the Select Committee on Poor Relief reported in 1864 there was contradictory evidence on the value of both workhouse and District Schools. All the main protagonists gave evidence. Tufnell and Nassau Senior put forward strong arguments for District Schools while the four Poor Law Inspectors defended the PLB's record on workhouse education.¹⁸ The Select Committee, under the chairmanship of C.P. Villiers, President of the PLB, found itself unable to ascertain which method was preferable and concluded diplomatically that:

..the state of workhouse education is upon the whole satisfactory in its character and result. The Committee think that it would be inexpedient, and in many cases impracticable, to enforce the general establishment of district or separate schools, but they are of the opinion that schools entirely distinct from the workhouse should continue to be encouraged as being attended with beneficial results to the children, and affording most effectual means of separating them from other classes of paupers.¹⁹

¹⁶ Poor Law Inspector Doyle, *ibid.* For the relationship between Inspectors Symons and Doyle, see below, Chapter 6.

¹⁷ Weale, *ibid.* Poor Law Inspector John Walsham, *ibid.*, p.554. Poor Law Inspector W.H.T. Hawley, *ibid.*, pp. 537-38.

¹⁸ House of Commons Select Committee on Poor Relief, *op. cit.*, E.C. Tufnell and Edward Senior, Third Report, pp. 14-37, Walsham, Hawley, Doyle, Weale, Second Report, pp. 117-194.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 36.

This conclusion did not alleviate the antagonism between the two Inspectorates which had followed the Report of the Newcastle Commission in 1861. Tufnell was at the centre of the controversy, singled out for attack by the Poor Law Inspectors because of his insistence that District Schools were preferable in all instances.²⁰

The strenuous attempts by Tufnell, Senior and Kay Shuttleworth to keep the District School question at the centre of the pauper education issue was aided by a clause in the Metropolitan Poor Law Act of 1867.²¹ Under Section 69 a Common Poor Fund was established, its income derived from a special rate to be levied on the whole of the Metropolitan area. The maintenance of pauper children in District Schools was included. With costs spread more widely, Guardians were more prepared to accept change and in 1868 two additional School Districts were formed in the London area - Forest Gate and West London. This acceleration in the fortunes of the District School movement was to be shortlived. In 1869 under a Poor Law Act designed specifically for the Metropolis it was possible for London School districts to be dissolved. This decision rested with the newly appointed Local Government Board into which the PLB was incorporated in 1871. The threat of possible dissolution was enough to prevent the formation of any new school districts and the final total remained at eleven. The 1869 Act was not, however, the only reason why the District School movement had reached its zenith by the 1860s.

Rapid progress was being made in the development of alternative methods for the care and education of Poor Law children. Both the Newcastle

²⁰ R.J. Phillips, 'E.C. Tufnell: Inspector of Poor Law Schools. 1847-1874', in *History of Education*, 1976, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 227-40.

²¹ 30 and 31 Vic. c.6.

Commission and the Select Committee on Poor Relief adopted a simplistic approach and incorrectly viewed the issue as merely one of workhouse versus District Schools. The situation was far more complex, involving the development of a network of institutions and agencies, all attempting to provide some sort of framework to contain and educate the pauper child.

2. Alternative methods of education

A growing body of opinion developed in the 1860s which challenged the dominant orthodox theory that pauper children needed a distinctive and separate education. Many Boards of Guardians began to recognise the impracticality of dealing adequately with these children within existing frameworks. Alternative methods were increasingly considered by many unions in an attempt to deal with the problem. One solution was to remove children from their environment - and from union responsibility - by instituting schemes of emigration.

2.1 Emigration

Under arrangements which began in the 1850s pauper children could be sent abroad, mainly to Australia. Once the home union had paid the child's passage and provided sufficient clothing, no more expense was entailed. Tufnell saw emigration as an opportunity for pauper children to begin new lives away from their pauper origins.²² However the PLB regarded sending children abroad permanently as more complicated because of problems associated with parental and Guardian objections to the loss of control. The number of unions applying for emigration for their pauper children in the

²² Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report 1853, Minutes CCE 1852-3*, P.P. 1853, pp. 60-2.

middle years of the century was never high.

In 1852 the total number of pauper children sent abroad was:

Australia	2,712
Canada	551
New Zealand	5
New Brunswick	3 23

In 1869 there was a relaxation in emigration control and many more children were sent to Canada - a closer option than Australia. These were usually orphan or deserted children who were permitted to emigrate once a J.P. had given consent.²⁴ This new opportunity for abandoned pauper children was recognised by Miss Rye who founded The Female Middle Class Emigration Society in 1869. By 1875 Miss Rye had arranged for the emigration of 727 pauper girls and 160 boys, with 120 alone coming from Kirkdale School in Liverpool.²⁵

Andrew Doyle, who became a Local Government Inspector after 1871, was highly critical of the arrangements for supervision. He accused Miss Rye of making a profit out of the scheme, a charge she strongly refuted.²⁶ However unjustified the criticisms may have been - and it has been argued that Doyle was concerned with his own redundancy if emigration schemes were more widely adopted - it was decided to discontinue emigration to Canada unless effective supervision could be ensured.²⁷ Miss Rye restarted her scheme in 1883 with more efficient monitoring in both Canada and England. 4,213 children emigrated between 1883 and 1896, a fact applauded by the 1896

²³ *Fifth Report PLB*, P.P. 1852, p. 7.

²⁴ A.M. Ross, *thesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

²⁵ M.S. Rye, *Synopsis of a Report on the Emigration of Pauper and other children from Great Britain to Canada* (1876).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Ross *thesis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-9.

Departmental Commission as:

the most economical method of providing for the children of the state²⁸

It may have been economical; it was not educational. Emigration schemes were not primarily concerned with schooling but with relieving Poor Law unions of the costly responsibility of pauper children.²⁹ Of all the alternative methods that were developed to care for pauper children emigration was the most drastic. Other methods concentrated on adapting current practice rather than relinquishing it.

2.2 Boarding out

The practice of placing pauper children with local labouring families who were paid to act as foster parents was common under the old Poor Law but fell into disuse after 1834. Boarding Out payments were often higher than the amount an average labourer could spend on his own children, a situation quite unacceptable under the New Poor Law regime of less eligibility. Furthermore the distinctive nature of pauper education was not available to these children who attended ordinary schools. There was the additional fear that Boarding Out could exacerbate the problem of pauperism by creating a form of unregulated outdoor relief. These attitudes predominated between the 1830s and 1860s.

²⁸ *Report of the Departmental Committee, appointed by the LGB, to inquire into the existing system for the Maintenance and Education of Children under the Charge of Managers of District Schools and Boards of Guardians in the Metropolis, and to advise as to any changes that may be desirable*, P.P. 1896 XLIII, p. 137.

²⁹ Ross, *thesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

Only a few unions actively pursued a Boarding Out policy before 1870. In Bath the Board of Guardians was strongly influenced by Board member and local J.P., Colonel Grant, who wished to remove children from the pauperising effects of workhouse life.³⁰ Grant's account of the scheme became influential in developing arguments for boarding out during the next twenty years.³¹

It was only after the 1870 Act that Boarding Out came to be recognised as a credible alternative and more effective regulations were introduced into many unions. These changes occurred despite a lack of support from the LGB, who still saw the issue of pauper education in terms of a choice between district and workhouse schooling.

The LGB was not alone in maintaining a healthy scepticism. Besides the more vocal interjections of Tufnell to protect the reputation of large Poor Law Schools, there were others who were critical of the new developments and wanted to maintain the status quo. The blind Liberal M.P. Henry Fawcett, otherwise progressive in his thinking, was strongly opposed to Boarding Out. Fawcett restated the argument common earlier in the century, that pauper children should not receive a better education than the children of the average labourer - 'how many labourers could afford 5/- per week' - and he reiterated his support for separate Poor Law schools.³²

Fawcett, Tufnell and others became increasingly isolated. The rapid development of Boarding Out owed much to the publicity it received from its many vocal proponents - often articulate upper middle class women with time

³⁰ Baker, *thesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

³¹ Colonel C.W. Grant, *A Practical Guide to the Boarding Out Systems for Pauper Children* (1870).

³² Henry Fawcett, *Pauperism. Its Causes and Remedies*, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 91.

and energy to spare. Boarding Out committees began to be established in different parts of the country. In Norfolk by the 1890s there were two committees responsible for two hundred children placed with local families.³³

Much of the evidence in favour of Boarding Out was collated by Florence Davenport Hill in her first edition of *Children of the State* in 1868 in which she attacked both workhouse and District Schools.³⁴ Florence Hill criticised District Schools for their large numbers and institutionalising effect, and workhouse schools for their pauperising influences.³⁵ She was keen to encourage 'without union' Boarding Out, i.e. the boarding of children in homes outside their own Poor Law union. Although Guardians were free to board children 'within the union' this did not often occur in urban areas as there were few suitable homes available. The pressure from individuals such as Florence Hill, and later Anette Preusser, to send children outside their own home areas was aided in 1870 by a report from Poor Law Inspector Henley on Boarding Out in Scotland which was generally favourable but emphasised the need for effective regulations if the system was to function efficiently.³⁶ In England, Reports from all eleven Poor Law Inspectors on the use of Boarding Out in 1870 revealed that relatively few unions were had adopted the system.³⁷ By the end of the year restrictions on 'out of union' boarding were removed and by 1876 approximately a third of

³³ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

³⁴ Florence Davenport Hill, *Children of the State* (2nd ed. 1889), p. 22.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

³⁶ Miss Anette Preusser, *A Reprint of the Memorial of Ladies and subsequent orders as to the Boarding Out of Pauper Children issued by the PLB; to which is appended suggestions by a Lady* (1871). Miss Preusser arranged with Bethnal Green Union to take pauper children to be boarded out in her home town of Windermere; Poor Law Inspector J.J. Henley, 'Report on the Boarding Out of Pauper Children in Scotland', Accounts and Papers 18 P.P. 1870 LVIII

³⁷ Reports of Poor Law Inspectors to the PLB on The Boarding Out of Pauper Children in certain unions in England, *op cit.*

the unions in England and Wales were using the system.³⁸ However in 1877 out of 9,248 children boarded out, only 374 were under any effective regulation by the LGB. The remainder were part of a system that was 'little more than a disguised form of outdoor relief' paid to relatives of the children.³⁹ Boarding Out 'within' unions remained uncontrolled. Andrew Doyle urged that Boarding Out regulations 'applicable to children within the union' should be issued to every Board of Guardians to ensure more efficient supervision. Often the care of boarded out children compared unfavourably with that received by children in workhouses:

(Children) are not as a rule regularly visited nor is there any systematic supervision..There are..very few Unions in the District in which the condition would not contrast favourably in all essential respects with the children who are placed out.⁴⁰

It was not until after 1885 when the first Boarding Out Inspector was appointed that the system became more manageable and not until 1889 was Boarding Out officially recognised and fully regulated by the LGB. Two new General Orders governing boarding 'within' and 'without' the union were introduced and by the end of the century approximately half the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales were operating the system.⁴¹ The growth of this alternative care meant that pauper children were increasingly removed from the Poor Law system and integrated into ordinary elementary schools.

³⁸ Twenty-Third Report PLB 1870-71, Appendix 8, p. 19.

³⁹ Michael Rose, 'The Crisis of Poor Relief in England, 1860-1890', in W.J. Mommsen, *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany* (1981), p. 61. Francis Duke, 'Pauper Education', *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁴⁰ Doyle to LGB, Jan. 23 1874, Doyle Correspondence 1871-77, PRO MH 32/20.

⁴¹ S. & B. Webb, *The Last 100 Years*, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

2.3 Cottage and Scattered Homes

'Cottage Homes' became popular in the late 1870s and arguably combined some of the better features of both Boarding Out and District Schools. The Webbs saw them, however, as merely 'an improved type' of district school rather than a means of obtaining the 'benefits of Boarding Out within the security of an institutional framework'.⁴²

Pauper children were divided into small groups and placed in separate houses with central communal buildings. Each house held approximately 15-40 children under the supervision of house parents. The idea was not new and had developed from a system devised in Mettray in Belgium earlier in the century. At that time a positive report on the Belgian experiment was made by Schools Inspector Joseph Fletcher but it evoked little response. Doyle recommended the system to Merthyr and Neath Unions where it was adopted as an alternative to a District School.⁴³ It was not until the District Schools system came under increasing attack in the 1870s that Cottage Homes were given more serious consideration. Fletcher resurrected his report and it was published as a pamphlet in 1878.⁴⁴ In the same year F.J. Mouatt, LGB Inspector, recommended the system.⁴⁵

The most successful cottage home was established at Banstead in Surrey in 1876, under the management of the Kensington and Chelsea School District. Owing to the high number of children in their main school at Anerley the Kensington Guardians decided to form a separate establishment. The LGB

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁴³ Andrew Doyle, *Proposed District School on the System of Mettray* (1873).

⁴⁴ J. Fletcher, *Statistics of a Farm School System on the Continent* (1878).

⁴⁵ LGB Inspector F.J. Mouatt, 'The Home and Cottage System of Educating Children of the State', P.P. 1878 LX.

agreed to support the venture if Chelsea children could also be incorporated, to make a total of between 350 and 400 children.⁴⁶ Initially, high costs were involved. A central complex of administration buildings, shop, laundry, bakery, staff houses, chapel and three schools was surrounded by 25 separate 'cottages' housing classified groups of children.⁴⁷ Schooling was similar to that available in District Schools but with certain modifications.⁴⁸

Gradually higher costs began to outweigh the advantages. Other criticisms were also voiced, such as the unreality of a 'family' atmosphere where children and house parents were constantly changing and groups were too large.⁴⁹ Few Cottage Homes were ever established. After Banstead the most well known were the Marston Green Cottage Homes in Birmingham⁵⁰

An attempt to move further away from the established systems can be seen in the creation of 'Scattered Homes' in Sheffield in 1893. A variation on Cottage Homes, the 'scattered' system placed children in small separate homes in different areas of the city and sent them to ordinary elementary schools. In his evidence to the Departmental Committee on Metropolitan Poor Law Schools in 1896, J. Wycliffe Wilson, chairman of the Sheffield Board of Guardians, described how Sheffield wanted a system that would have 'the best features of boarding-out...and yet where we shall be able to select our own mothers'.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Walter Monnington and F.J. Lampard, *Our London Poor Law Schools* (1898), pp. 14-15.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. An 1881 Return shows that the Banstead Cottage Home became the most expensive in London, P.P. 1881 LXXIX, p. 2.

⁴⁸ A circulating library of 656 books was created for the children to use, Monnington and Lampard, *ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁹ *The Times*, Oct. 24 1894, p. 3, col. d.

⁵⁰ F. Hill, *Children of the State*, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁵¹ Report of the Departmental Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 104 c. 8027.

The Departmental Committee was sufficiently impressed by the Sheffield experiment to recommend that the system be more widely adopted with no more than two houses adjacent to each other with a maximum of 25 children in each.⁵² In response, Whitechapel Union withdrew all its children from Forest Gate District School in 1897 and established them in scattered homes. Despite early optimism, however, the scheme only received cautious approval from the central authority, mainly because there was often a dearth of good management and a lack of adequate inspection.⁵³

3. Changing attitudes in the 1870s

The gradual establishment of Board Schools throughout the country after the 1870 Education Act led to unions closing workhouse schools and sending their children to local schools instead. In 1871 there were approximately 27,800 pauper children in workhouse schools; by 1915 this figure had dropped to 304.⁵⁴ This change was not solely due to the increasing availability of schools but was indicative of the growth of a more enlightened approach to the education of children from all the poorer classes. Kay Shuttleworth contrasted attitudes in the 1860s and 1870s with those of the 1840s when public opinion had generally not been in favour of education for the poorest sectors of society. By 1868 he felt able to state that there was:

a more general sense of the political necessity that Parliament should make adequate provision for the education of the people.⁵⁵

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵³ S. & B. Webb, *English Poor Law Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁵⁴ Foster Watson (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia and Dictionary of Education*, Vol. 3 (1922), p. 1320.

⁵⁵ James Kay Shuttleworth, 'Memorandum chiefly on the Influence of the 'Revised Code' on Popular Education, written in 1868', in *Thoughts and Suggestions on Certain Social Problems* (London, 1873), p. 194.

By 1870 this had less to do with social control and was more a genuine concern over the lack of educational opportunities for large numbers of poor children. Current opinion was gradually moving towards the care and protection of pauper children as well as attempting to secure the most efficient means to train them for economic independence.

Paradoxically these changing attitudes occurred at a time when the Poor Law authority began to adopt a more stringent attitude towards other groups of paupers. As more concern was shown to pauper children, the sick and aged, able-bodied paupers were subjected to a stricter regime after the inauguration of the LGB in 1871. A more stringent approach was taken towards the granting of outrelief and outdoor allowances were successfully reduced.⁵⁶ It was not until the mid 1870s with the curtailment of relief to the able-bodied, that the Poor Law began to be implemented in the manner originally intended by the 1834 Act.⁵⁷ There were two distinct features of the Poor Law in the 1870s - a growing compassion for the young, sick and aged and a hardening of attitudes towards the able-bodied with an emphasis on a doctrine of self help.

This division is also recognisable in the dilemma which developed within pauper education circles over which type of schooling was, by then, the most appropriate. The controversy that began in the 1860s over different forms of pauper schooling concentrated in the 1870s almost solely on the merits, or otherwise, of large District and separate schools. Concern was expressed over the suitability of these institutions to either educate, or care for, large numbers of children. Three of the Metropolitan District - or 'Barrack' -

⁵⁶ LGB Circular Dec.2 1871, *First Annual Report LGB*, P.P. 1871-2. Michael Rose, 'The Allowance System under the New Poor Law', *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, Vol. XIV (1966), pp. 607-20.

⁵⁷ Michael Rose, 'The Crisis of Poor Relief in England, 1860-1870', *op. cit.*

Schools as they were increasingly called, housed around a 1000 children each.⁵⁸ Health problems were endemic among such large groups. In particular ophthalmia and skin complaints were commonplace. In his preoccupation with the merits of large schools, Tufnell, who was responsible for the Metropolis, failed or refused to recognise, the health hazard these schools represented. However, in 1873 the problems were openly acknowledged by the LGB in a Circular letter to Metropolitan Boards of Guardians.⁵⁹

The severity of the problem was evident following a report on ophthalmia by eye specialist Edward Nettleship in 1875. Dr Nettleship was so appalled by the children's living conditions that his report became a wider indictment of the District School system in general. He was greatly concerned over the lack of individual care and the tendency to treat pauper children as inferior. He condemned the continued segregation, the poor play facilities and the noticeable 'lack of knowledge' that pauper children exhibited with regard to 'common things'.⁶⁰

Nettleship's report was all the more critical because it appeared only a year after the first report from the LGB's first woman inspector, Jane Senior, daughter in law of Nassau Senior. Jane Senior was appointed by James Stansfield, President of the LGB, who was concerned about the reports of ophthalmia and general bad health in Poor Law schools. Jane Senior's appointment was disliked but not contested, possibly because she had a

⁵⁸ Report of the Departmental Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁵⁹ Cited in Hill, *Children of the State*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁶⁰ Dr. Edward Nettleship, 'Report to the LGB', *Fourth Annual Report LGB*, P.P.1875 XXXI, pp. 55-170.

number of notable friends including Robert Lowe, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁶¹

As one of her first duties Jane Senior inspected seventeen Metropolitan schools to examine the education and training of pauper girls. Her brief was to assess current education and aftercare, particularly physical, moral and domestic training. One of the reasons for the report's subsequent success was the logical and cogent manner in which it was presented. Senior argued that girls were adversely affected by prolonged periods in institutional schools which left them in an unsatisfactory condition, stunted in size...delicate in health'.⁶² Conversely, she regarded the intellectual education given to girls as not only adequate, but in many instances excessive. By the age of 12 she believed that two hours daily schooling was sufficient and that the majority of the girls' time should be spent learning to perform household tasks more efficiently. Senior strongly supported Boarding Out and Cottage Homes in which older girls assisted the 'house mother' and thus gained excellent training in housewifery'.

Jane Senior's report was immediately criticised by Tufnell.⁶³ Far from creating problems the District School system had achieved its original aim of depauperisation through effective education. In his 1873 Report Tufnell included quotes from 'old boys' who praised their education in Metropolitan schools.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 204-5.

⁶² LGB Inspector Jane Senior, Report to the LGB, P.P. 1874 XXV, Appendix No. 22, pp. 343-4.

⁶³ Edward Tufnell, *Training of Pauper Children* (1880).

⁶⁴ Schools Inspector Tufnell, *General Report* 1873, P.P. 1874 XXV. See also above, Chapter 3.

However Jane Senior was supported by other informed critics of pauper education. In *Boarding-Out and Pauper Schools* Menella Smedley presented Jane Senior's arguments in detail but also included excerpts from Tufnell's 1873 Report.⁶⁵ In an attempt to present all the arguments Smedley included reports from Schools Inspectors Bowyer, Browne, Mozeley and Courtenay on the state of pauper schooling. Browne, Mozeley and Courtenay were generally dissatisfied with both workhouse and District Schools. Mozeley was particularly critical of the status accorded to the teachers, many of whom were still dissatisfied with their situations.⁶⁶ At a time when fundamental changes were occurring within the elementary sector Bowyer saw the 1870s as a quiescent period in pauper education when few advances were made. He continued to be strenuously opposed to Boarding Out and remained convinced that pauper children needed the distinctive education only possible in District Schools.⁶⁷ Bowyer's views, like Tufnell's, remained static and did not take account of changes and developments. Jane Senior's informed conclusions were a critical factor in the decline in popularity of large institutional schools.

Thomas Mackay in his *History of the English Poor Law* concluded that although Jane Senior's attack on Poor Law education was 'probably more or less justified' both she and other protagonists failed to recognise that it was not possible to have a good system of education under the Poor Law. Children needed to live within families and 'a really adequate substitute for homelife, has not yet been discovered'.⁶⁸ Although the inadequacy of different schemes was beginning to be recognised the complete abolition of the Poor Law education system was not under serious discussion at this time.

⁶⁵ Menella B. Smedley, *Boarding-Out and Pauper Schools* (1875), p. 165.

⁶⁶ Inspector Mozeley, *General Report* 1873, quoted in Smedley, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁶⁷ Bowyer, *General Report* 1872, PRO MH 32/109.

⁶⁸ T. Mackay, *History of the English Poor Law*, Vol. III, 1834, 98 (1904), p. 432.

In addition to a number of individuals who took up the cause of pauper children, there was a growth of societies in the 1870s and 1880s concerned to protect and support children after they had left Poor Law establishments. William Chance, in his detailed account of children under the Poor Law in the late nineteenth century, listed many agencies that became involved in 'after-care'.⁶⁹ The Metropolitan Association For Befriending Young Servants (MABYS) was founded by Jane Senior in an attempt to put into practice some of the beliefs she held concerning the fate of ex-Poor Law children. By the mid 1880s the Association had over 800 women visitors who between them placed more than 5,000 pauper girls into domestic employment every year, including for instance in 1886, the majority of girls who had left the District Schools in 1885.⁷⁰ The dedication of the women running MABYS was mirrored in other organisations including the Workhouse Visiting Society, founded by Louisa Twining in 1857 and disbanded in 1865 because it had accomplished its aim to establish the credibility of the woman workhouse visitor. Many of these women moved from workhouse visiting to after-care societies and also, even more effectively, became members of local Boards of Guardians. In 1875 Martha Merrington became the first woman guardian and in 1881 the Society for Promoting the Return of Women as Poor Law Guardians was established. By the late 1880s women guardians were addressing the poor law conferences. While women guardians took the initiative in improving and humanising workhouse conditions, particularly in the care of children and the aged poor, they often

⁶⁹ MABYS (Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants); GFS (Girls Friendly Society); Bristol Preventative Mission; Bolton Society for Befriending Young Servants; Sheffield House of Help; Young Men's Friendly Society; Kensington Lads Union; South Metropolitan Schools Visiting Association; Homes for Working Boys in London; Lincoln Working Boys Aid Society, listed in W. Chance, *Children Under the Poor Law*, *op. cit.*, Chapter XI. It is interesting that Chance does not include the Y.M.C.A. or the Y.W.C.A., two agencies that might be expected to have been involved.

⁷⁰ F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England*, *op. cit.* (1980), pp. 150-1.

took an uncompromising , at times ruthless, line on the separation of children from mothers and foster parents considered unsuitable in instilling and achieving the necessary character training to avoid adult pauperism. ⁷¹

The growth of concern for the poorest children in society coincided with developments in the elementary system which facilitated this fundamental change in policy. Many of the children who were taken into Board Schools, especially in the decade following the 1870 Act, were children from the poorest families. Their circumstances were in many instances worse than those of children retained in workhouses. The enormity of the problem was only fully recognised after Board Schools had been established for a few years. Information obtained from the reports of school attendance officers - 'visitors' - among others, was instrumental in awakening public consciousness to the circumstances in which society's poorest children were to be found. These reports revealed a high degree of absenteeism, especially in the Metropolis, after the introduction of compulsory education in the 1880s.⁷²

From 1868, regional Poor Law conferences were held in different parts of the country. Conferences held in the Northern and Midland districts commanded a higher attendance than those held in the East and South West - probably because of the rural nature of the latter regions.⁷³ A variety of opinions were voiced at the different venues. Despite a growing concern for the Poor Law child, Guardians from different regions were still divided over

⁷¹ For a comprehensive study of women in local government, see Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect, op. cit.* chapters 4 & 5.

⁷² See David Rubinstein, 'Socialization and the London School Board (1870-1914): aims, methods and public opinion', in Phillip McCann (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century* (1977).

⁷³ Anne Digby, 'The Rural Poor', in G.E. Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 2 (1981), p. 600.

which method of education was preferable. Although Boarding Out and attendance at local elementary schools was increasingly popular, there were still Guardians who argued strongly that other options should be maintained. At the Tenth Annual Poor Law Conference for the South East District, held in the Brighton Pavilion on October 30 1879, a paper by the Reverend F. Thoyts examined the educational duties of Guardians. He was unconvinced about the value of Boarding Out and recommended District Schools as by far the best provision.⁷⁴ Guardian W.H.Rinder at the Yorkshire Conference a year later expressed dislike for both District and workhouse schools, regarding them as 'unnatural therefore unsuccessful' institutions for which some excuse could be made prior to the passage of the 1870 Act, but not afterwards.⁷⁵

In 1894 the Local Government Act removed virtually all property and technical qualifications, thereby opening the door for working class men and women to become poor law guardians. In fact, the most famous working class guardian, George Lansbury, who was elected with his SDF colleague Lena Wilson in the previous year *before* the Act, caused a storm at his first poor law conference by challenging a paper read by Sir Willam Chance on this parliamentary measure.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Reverend F. Thoyts, 'The Duties of Guardians With Regard to Education', Tenth Annual Poor Law Conference for the South East District, Oct. 30 1879, in *Poor Law Conference Reports*, 1879, 1880, p. 177.

⁷⁵ Mr. W.H. Rinder, 'The Education of Pauper Children', Yorkshire Poor Law Conference Dec.1880, pp. 228-9, *Poor Law Conference Reports*, *ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷⁶ *Report of the Annual Poor Law Conference*, 8&9 November 1893, pp. 339-340. The strong indelible belief in hereditary pauperism in the nineteenth century is shown even in the humanitarian Poor Law campaigner, George Lansbury's first election address: 'They (the children) shall receive such education and training as shall fit them to fulfil the duties of citizenship and counteract any *hereitary* tendency to lapse into pauperism', (emphasis added), George Lansbury, *Election of Guardians Leaflet, Parish of Bow*, 1893, Lansbury Papers, f.186. See also George Lansbury, *Principles of the English Poor Law* (1897) and, for his reforming campaigns against the Victorian Poor Law, see Pat Ryan, 'Politics and Relief: East London Unions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', Michael

The widening of the membership of the guardians, including the election of working class socialist and labour representatives by the 1890s was an important factor as guardians' views gradually altered in the late nineteenth century. By this time there were far more who would have agreed with Mr. Rinder than with the Reverend Thoyts. The focal point was becoming the individual child, rather than the system. The first Boarding-Out Inspector, Miss M.H. Mason, made this clear on her appointment in 1885:

The inspection of foster homes is too often regarded in the same manner as the inspection of an institution, and attention is directed chiefly at the situation of the cottage and the manner in which it is kept ... This is an entirely wrong view of the boarding out system, the object of which is to graft each child into a respectable family as one of its members. The treatment of the child rather than the condition of the cottage is the point to be ascertained.⁷⁷

It was to be the negative arguments concerning District Schools rather than any positive features of Boarding Out, that were the deciding factors in the mid 1890s. Sadly it was to be a tragedy that brought this about. Twenty six children died in a fire at Forest Gate District School in 1890; at the inquest it was revealed that the children had been locked in their dormitories for the night with inadequate adult supervision. In 1893, also at Forest Gate, two children died of accidental poisoning. A year later, in 1894, it was revealed that a child had died at Hackney Poor Law School because of the cruelty of a certain Nurse Gillespie which led to a highly publicised court case and a five year sentence for Gillespie.

Rose (ed.), *The Poor and the City: the English Poor Law in its urban context 1834-1914* (Leicester 1985), pp.134-172; A.M.McBriar, *An Edwardian Mixed Double*, *op cit.*, *passim*; Pat Ryan, 'Poplarism' 1894-1930, Pat Thane (ed.), *The Origins of British Social Policy* (1978), pp.56-83; George Lansbury, *My Life* (1928), chapter VIII.

⁷⁷ Miss M.H. Mason, *General Report* 1885, quoted in W.E. Chance, *Children Under the Poor Law* (1897), p. 193.

Pauper education was certainly highlighted at these points probably at no time clearly than after the Gillespie court case in 1895.⁷⁸ Almost immediately the LGB set up the Departmental Commission to enquire into the large Metropolitan Schools. It reported in 1896 and was strongly critical of the ethos and atmosphere of very large schools.⁷⁹ The Committee concluded that 'more individual care and a more natural life' was needed.⁸⁰

For the first time there was a recommendation that the system of aggregating children together in large numbers should be abandoned. Although the Committee was later criticised for discrepancies between the Report and the evidence, the ramifications of its conclusions were marked.⁸¹ The report did not immediately lead to the transfer of Poor Law children out of the large schools, or away from LGB control had been hoped, but a movement for change was underway. Although there had been a recognition in 1834 that children were not responsible for their pauperism, in the language adopted in the 1890s the use of phrases such as independent 'citizen' rather than 'labourer', indicated the higher value that was beginning to be placed on the quality of children's lives:

The children are not to blame for the misfortunes, folly, or even wickedness, of their parents; in any case, the aim must be to produce the best possible citizen out of the material. This is now clearly recognised, and has worked a revolution in the environment of the children.⁸²

⁷⁸ A recent thesis asserts that a 'well publicised scandal in the press seems to have been a recurring factor in the Poor Law treatment of pauper children which underlines the periods of change in their treatment, from Hanway's disclosures of child mortality rates in London workhouses in the eighteenth century, the Drouett scandal, through to the scandals of the late nineteenth century', McCrory, *thesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁷⁹ Report of the Departmental Committee, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁸¹ William Chance was very critical of details in the Report, W.Chance, *Children Under The Poor Law*, *op cit.*

⁸² C.S.Bremner, *The Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain*, *op cit.*, p.56.

CONCLUSION

The 1905-1909 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief commissioned a comprehensive study of 112 pages and 163 appendices on the condition of Poor Law children prepared by Dr Ethel Williams, Mary Longman and Dr Marion Phillips. They discovered that in 1907 there were still 234,004 Poor Law children, of whom 73% were on outrelief and 60,421 indoor children including 21,498 resident in workhouses.¹ The authors looked back to the beginnings of pauper education in this country and concluded:

With regard to the children under the care of the Poor Law the policy since 1834 has always been one of education to independence, although in the earlier days success was made difficult by defective machinery.²

While historians now increasingly stress the continuities between the Old and New Poor Laws the 1834 PLAA was a major watershed in the development of pauper education. This landmark was part of the formative decade for working class education, including the 1833-39 Treasury grants, the beginnings of the half-time system of factory education and, with the creation of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, the genesis of a department of Education and the introduction of school inspection. At the same time, within the New Poor Law, pauper schooling for approximately 50,000 workhouse children each year became the first national system of education, directed and inspected from the centre but administered locally by the new Boards of Guardians. Both sectors drew ideas from each other, particularly seen in Kay Shuttleworth's move from Assistant Poor Law Commissioner to become the Secretary to the Committee of Council on Education.

¹ Dr Ethel M.N. Williams, Mary Longman, Dr Marion Phillips, 'Report on the condition of the Children who are in Receipt of the Various Forms of Poor Relief in England and Wales', Appendix Vol. XVIII, in *Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress 1905 - 1909*, P.P. 1910 LII, p.3.

² *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws ... op. cit.*, Vol. I, Part IV, p. 233.

However, owing to the general policy adopted by the PLAA towards poor relief Poor Law schooling only applied to the minority of pauper children resident in workhouses, as Poor Law reformers eagerly anticipated that outrelief would soon be abolished. The failure of this social policy led to four times as many pauper children outside workhouses, for whom the authorities had no statutory power to pay for schooling. Where children temporarily entered the workhouse, as the well known 'ins and outs', their educational experience was ad hoc and fragmentary, like many other nineteenth century poor children

However this thesis has shown that the Webbs' claim, largely accepted by historians, that the annals were blank on the education of the outdoor child, was inaccurate. Unions such as Manchester, Nottingham and Stockport paid for the education of outdoor children at times of economic depression. After 1855 more unions slowly adopted the Denison Act, but with no clear geographical pattern of response. By contrast, rural Shropshire had one of the lowest take-ups between 1857 and 1859.

Though typical of mid-nineteenth permissive legislation, Denison's Bill avoided religious controversy to become the only Education Act to in a decade of failed Bills. While there was some PLB support for the measure, many Boards were not prepared to provide education on the rates until compelled to do so. Not until 1873 were reluctant Guardians required by law to pay for the schooling of children on outrelief. Three years later some Guardians continued their resistance by refusing to pay for very poor non-pauper children under the Sandon Act.

The fate of large numbers of outdoor children demonstrates the position of pauper schooling as an integral part of the New Poor Law and subject to the interplay of the relations between central and local government. The Webbs were broadly correct that the Poor Law Commission was too preoccupied, as the first central authority, with establishing the new unions to be concerned with education, though due emphasis must be

given to difficulties of policy and personality between Chadwick and the Commissioners in the central Poor Law office in these years.

Nevertheless, despite tensions at the centre, or between centre and localities, Poor Law reformers generally agreed on the basic mental and industrial training needed to inculcate social discipline and work skills to avoid pauperisation in the future and curb dissatisfaction among the dangerous classes. In 1839 the President of the Privy Council, Lord Lansdowne, warned Parliament that popular education was urgently needed to prevent 'a rising generation of Chartists'.³ Influenced by continental ideas, Kay Shuttleworth's important policy writing during this period emphasised it was imperative to place children in separate establishments, away from the contamination of adult pauperism.

Within this pauper curriculum gender divisions were clearly visible and enforced in terms from subjects taught to school organisation. In particular, girls suffered a triple handicap of being working-class, girls and paupers. Expectations were low, training was limited to skills in domestic economy and most pauper girls were simply employed to help run the institutions in which they lived. Even the first woman Inspector, Jane Senior, envisaged a future for pauper girls solely in domestic employment, although by the end of the century there was some effort to provide more effective training and the development of more care and concern for all pauper children.

Continual supervision at all times was another distinct feature of the curriculum, which was a disincentive to the recruitment of Poor Law teachers who also had to suffer the gloom and tedium of institutional life in the workhouse with its hierarchies of salaried officers under the master and matron. A half-time system soon evolved dividing industrial training for future independent employment from basic schooling in mental skills. As it developed, the

³ Parliamentary Debates, July 5 1839, Third Series, Vol. XLVIII col. 1263.

subject content of the curriculum was not too dissimilar from that provided in elementary schools. Religious and moral emphases pervaded both strands of the curriculum.

Continuing misunderstandings over the concept of less eligibility meant that some Boards of Guardians were unwilling to provide adequate resources. The devaluing school experience of many Poor Law children has been graphically described in a handful of memoirs which contrast both with the contemporary administrative view and the view of pauper children quoted in official reports.

From 1847 the Poor Law Board had a series of statutory, adjudicatory and advisory roles which made the central authority more effective with directives on school organisation, the recruitment and employment of teachers, the role of the Guardians and school resources, but the authority was still limited by the lack of sufficient powers. Few District Schools were established and there was a continuing debate over the merits of these 'Barrack' Schools which lasted for the rest of the century.

The Poor Law Schools Inspectorate was, in effect, an extended arm of Somerset House. Recruited from the upper classes, Symons was representative of this new missionary group of social reformers. He was most notable for adapting the central concept of industrial training into a singular promotion of agricultural work, almost to the exclusion of all else. Symons felt hampered by his inability to insist on change, and his independent, aggressive character exacerbated the growing friction between the two government departments, the PLB and the CCE, who were both responsible for aspects of daily workhouse life. The nature of Symons the man interfered with his role as an inspector in the implementation of official central policy. In Shropshire Symons was critical of the quality of education provided by the unions throughout the 1850s, even at times at Atcham and Quatt, later the South East District School. Despite his failure to create any new District Schools, Symons achieved some success in improving the quality of teaching in his district.

The importance of a local study in examining central and local relations in Poor Law history reveals that the management of pauper education in the unions was dominated by local priorities. The county of Shropshire became renowned for its policies on outrelief and education. There was a broad measure of support for the New Poor Law which the landed interest wished to adopt with some haste in the mid 1830s. Large landowners continued to exercise power as *ex officio* Guardians after the 1834 Act. The development of one of the few District Schools outside London was largely due to the influence of William Wolryche Whitmore who had a close involvement in the establishment, management and running of the school. He was able to persuade his fellow farmer Guardians to support the project despite disagreements on the Board. The South East Shropshire District School became renowned both nationally and internationally as providing an ideal environment for the schooling of pauper children.

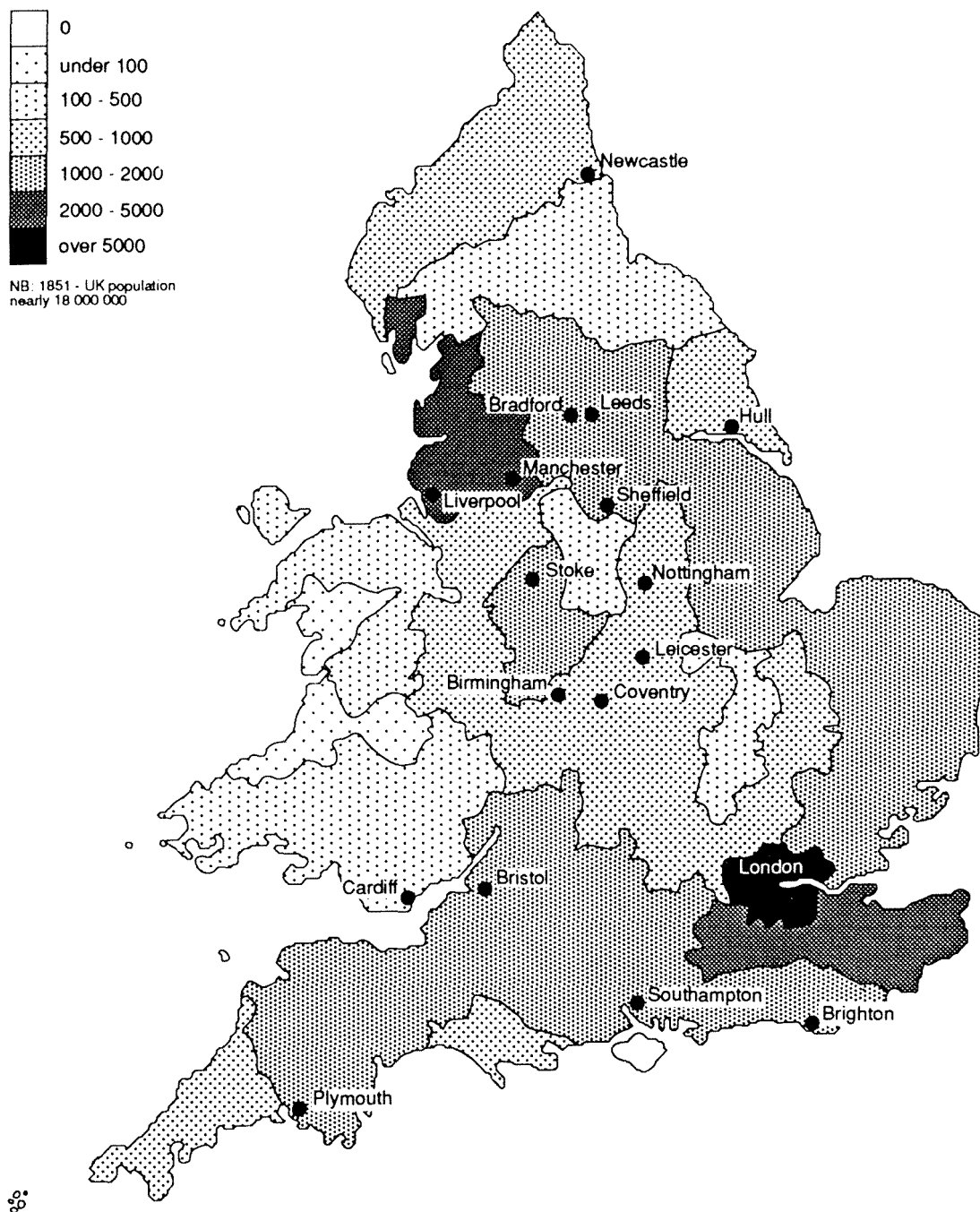
In neighbouring Atcham the national reputation of the workhouse school was directly the result of its association with the Leighton regime. Leighton and the Atcham Board managed education as part of an overall plan to achieve depauperisation, in strict accordance with the tenets of the PLAA. Education was an important part, but only *one* part of this policy. As a prime mover in the establishment of regional Poor Law Conferences, Leighton also became a successful self-publicist for the union's policies, advocating the Atcham regime to other Boards of Guardians in different parts of the country. The success of Leighton's influence is evident in that the Union continued to follow his policies for a full thirty years after his death and it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that criticisms were voiced publicly. There was considerable friction between the central and local authority in the management of pauper education at Atcham. Since in the case of Whitmore there was little evidence of this kind of wrangling, the disputes arising in the Atcham Union would appear to be a combination of personality clashes and disagreements over policy. At Ellesmere the firm hand of a strong local individual was not so evident. The union was not exceptional in its management of education, although Ellesmere was unusual in the mid-

century for the number of illegitimate children that were taken away from their mothers and educated at the workhouse school.

While the New Poor Law does not fit neatly into the concept of a revolution in nineteenth century government which, put simply, has been self generating bureaucracy versus Benthamite planning as an explanation for the growth of the Victorian administrative state, the study of pauper education provides some insight into the mechanics of central government in relation to local government and the different theories underpinning the development and implementation of social reform in the mid Victorian period . On the issue of structure, policy and personality as an explanation of where power and influence resided in the promotion of pauper schooling, a mono-causal answer is inadequate. All three elements were important. Government from the centre was significant throughout this period, particularly with the overlapping roles of the two inspectorates in inspecting and cajoling, but not enforcing, developments. Policy was clearly established in the form of the distinct pauper curriculum which had specific life skill objectives that all politicians, administrators and Poor Law reformers could identify with, even if they were unwilling to finance it. But policy could fail, most notably in the District School scheme. Above all, the history of pauper education reveals the important role of the individual, as administrator, reformer and, in particular, as local politician. Centralisation of the Poor Law post 1834 strengthened local administration, and in Shropshire, as in other rural shires, the landed interest never lost control. The rulers before 1834 were still the rulers of the union in 1880 and, in the case of Baldwin Leighton, people were still talking about him in 1910.

Appendix I(i)

Number of children in workhouses in England and Wales, 1850



Source: Return of the number of children in the workhouses of several unions and Parishes in England and Wales on Monday, 25th March 1850 ..., Accounts and Papers 19, P.P. 1851 XLIX.

Appendix I(ii)

County boundaries of England and Wales, 1850



Appendix II

District Schools established in England and Wales 1849-1880

Name of School	Site	Opening Date	Closed
Central London	Norwood (before 1857)	1849	1930
Farnham and Hartley Witney	Aldershott (before 1854) Crandall (after 1854)	1849	Still functioning 1890
Reading and Wokingham	Wokingham	1849	Still functioning 1890
North Surrey	Anerley	1850	1930
South East Shropshire	Quatt	1851	Still functioning 1890
South Metropolitan	Sutton	1855	1902
Forest Gate	Forest Gate	1868	1897
Lincoln and Nottingham	Dissolved just after formation		
Kensington and Finsbury	Dissolved just after formation		
Walsall and West Bromwich	Wigmore	1872	Still functioning 1890
Brentwood	Brentwood and Harold Court	1877	Dissolved 1885
Kensington and Chelsea	Banstead	1880	1930

Sources: *Index of Boards of Guardians, District Schools, GLRO.*
School Districts Correspondence, MH 27 PRO.

Appendix III

Poor Law Schools Inspectors, 1847-1904

Henry George Bowyer	1847-1881)	
Thomas Browne Browne	1847-1874)	
Joshua Festing Ruddock	1847-1862)	Appointed by the CCE
Edward Carleton Tufnell	1847-1874)	Transferred to the PLB in 1863
Jelinger Cookson Symons	1848-1860)	
John Rickards Mozeley	1871-1904)	
James Caspar Clutterbuck	1874-1891)	Appointed by the LGB
Wyndam Holgate	1874-1896)	
Martin Byam-Davies	1881-1904)	

N.B. E.H. Wodehouse, appointed as a Poor Law Inspector, had temporary responsibility for Poor Law Schools in the North of England after 1863 but was never made a Poor Law Schools Inspector.

Sources: *CCE Minutes and Correspondence*, ED 17 PRO.
Schools Inspectors Correspondence, MH 32 PRO.

Appendix IV

Districts allocated to the Inspectors for Poor Law Schools, with changes, 1847-1904

North Metropolis	East & Midlands	West & Wales	South
Browne (1847) Tufnell (1847)	Bowyer (1847)	Symons (1848)	Ruddock (1847)
1860: Symons died. Districts reduced to four			
North and Wales Metropolis	East & Midland	South & West	
Browne	Bowyer	Ruddock	Tufnell
1862: Ruddock died; not replaced			
1863: Responsibility for the inspection of Poor Law Schools transferred to PLB.			
North and Wales Metropolis	East & Midland	West	
Wodehouse (temporary) Mozeley	Bowyer	Browne	Tufnell
1871: Responsibility for the inspection of Poor Law Schools transferred to LGB			
1874: Browne died; Tufnell retired			
North and Wales Metropolis	East & Midland	West	
Mozeley	Bowyer	Clutterbuck	Tufnell
1881: Bowyer retired			
North and Wales Metropolis	East & Midland	West and South East	
Mozeley	Davies	Clutterbuck	Holgate
1891: Clutterbuck dismissed; not replaced. Districts reduced to three.			
North and Wales & South West	East, Midland & South East	Metropolis	
Mozeley	Davies	Holgate	
1896: Holgate retired. Districts reduced to two.			
North of England & Metropolis		South of England & Wales	
Mozeley		Davies	
1904: End of separate Poor Law Schools Inspectorate; Poor Law Schools transferred to the Board of Education			

Source: *Schools' Inspectors Correspondence* MH32 PRO.

Appendix V

The Inspection of Poor Law Schools, 1834-1904⁽¹⁾

CENTRAL AUTHORITY⁽²⁾

1834-47	POOR LAW COMMISSION (Assistant Poor Law Commissioners) ⁽³⁾	
1847-63	POOR LAW BOARD (Poor Law Inspectors) ⁽⁴⁾	COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Poor Law Schools Inspectors) ⁽⁵⁾
1863-71	POOR LAW BOARD ⁽⁶⁾	
1871-1904	LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD ⁽⁷⁾	
1904 onwards	BOARD OF EDUCATION ⁽⁸⁾ (established 1899)	

Explanatory Notes

- (1) *The inspection of Poor Law Schools* (in workhouses; outside and elsewhere) was the responsibility of the central authority for more than 60 years.
- (2) *The central authority was The Poor Law Commission* (1834-47) and its successive authorities – *The Poor Law Board* (1847-71), *Local Government Board* (1871-1904) and *Board of Education* (established in 1899, inspection from 1904).
- (3) *The Assistant Poor Law Commissioners* included the condition of Poor Law Schools in their inspection of workhouses.
- (4) Under the *Poor Law Board* (1847-71) Poor Law Inspectors continued to report on the state of pauper schools as part of their general Poor Law inspection.

- (5) *Committee of Council on Education* between 1847 and 1863 established a separate *Poor Law Inspectorate*. The first five Inspectors appointed (Henry Bowyer, Thomas Browne, Joshua Ruddock, Edward Tufnell, Jelinger Symons) were responsible for examining Poor Law teachers and schools; granting certificates to Boards of Guardians to reclaim part of teachers' salaries from central funds (Parliamentary Grant).
- (6) From 1863-71 responsibility for the separate *Poor Law Schools Inspectorate* was transferred from *The Committee of Council on Education* to *The Poor Law Board* which already had its *Poor Law Inspectors* with some responsibilities for pauper education. Both Inspectorates remained separate under the same central authority.
- (7) On its establishment in 1871 *The Local Government Board* took over and continued management of the two separate inspectorates responsible for pauper education.
- (8) *The Board of Education* became the new central authority for education in this country in 1899. In 1904 all responsibility for Poor Law Schools was transferred to the new body and incorporated within the inspection of elementary education. By this stage the separate provision of pauper education had greatly diminished. There were only 2 remaining Poor Law Schools Inspectors and this inspectorate was formally disbanded after 57 years.

Appendix VI

**Chief Works: Jelinger Cookson Symons, Inspector for
Poor Law Schools in the West and Wales, 1848-60.**

- A few thoughts on Volition and Agency* (1833).
*Arts and Artizans at Home and Abroad, with Sketches of the
Progress of Foreign Manufacturers* (1839).
Outlines of Popular Economy (1840).
*Light and Life for the People – an appeal to Lord Ashley against the
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Parish Settlements and the Practice of Appeal (1844).
*Railway Liabilities as they Affect Subscribers, Committees,
Allottees, and Scripholders, inter se, and Third Parties*
(1846).
*A Plea for Schools which sets forth the Dearth of Education and the
Growth of Crime* (1847).
*Tactics for the Times, as regards the condition and Treatment of the
Dangerous Classes* (1849).
School Economy (1852).
A Scheme of Direct Taxation (1853).
The Industrial Capacities of South Wales (1855).
On the Present Aspect of Education (1855).
*Lunar Motion, the whole Argument stated and illustrated by
Diagrams* (1856).
Sir Robert Peel as a Type of Statemanship (1856).
District Labour Schools (1856)
On Industrial Training as an Adjunct to School Teaching (1857).
Milford, Past Present and Future (1857).
Sir William Burke, the author of 'Junius' ... an essay on his era
(1859).
Rough Types of English Life (1860).

Appendix VII

GENERAL RULES FOR THE ATCHAM UNION

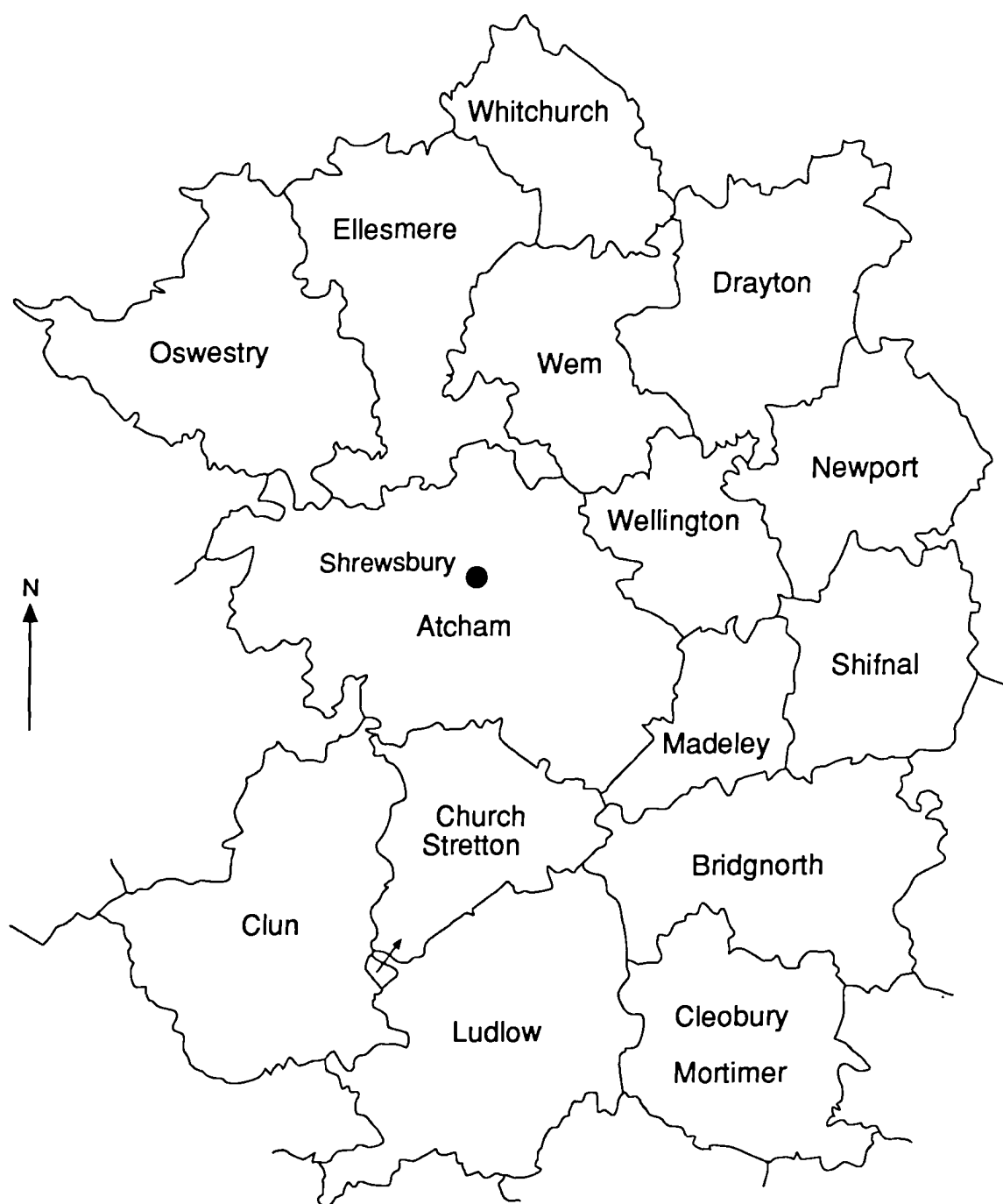
- I. RESOLVED - That the general Rules be referred to in all cases of general business, and in no case departed from; and that no standing Rule be rescinded without Notice given, at least one week previous, and a Copy of such Notice having first been transmitted to every Guardian who may not be present at the time of giving such Notice.
- II. RESOLVED - That the Meetings of the Board be held alternately at Shrewsbury, and the Cross Houses, on Mondays, at Eleven o'Clock, except when the Board of Guardians shall order to the contrary.
- III. RESOLVED - That persons be allowed to Hire any Child, in the Workhouse, as his or her Servant, at any time until the May day next ensuing, (with the consent of the Guardians) finding all things necessary for him, or her during the said period. The Committee to report what Articles of Clothing they consider desirable to be given with the Children on their going out to Service. One week's trial will be allowed with each Child.
- IV. RESOLVED - That the following Articles of Clothing be given with each Child going to Service out of the Workhouse,-
GIRLS ,- One Bonnet, Two Aprons or Brats, Two Frocks, Two Shifts, Two Flannel Coats, Two Upper Ditto, Two pairs of Stockings, One pair of Stays, Two pairs of Shoes.
BOYS,- One Hat, one Jacket and Waistcoat, One Smock Frock, Two Shirts, Two pair of Trowsers (*sic*), Two pair of Stockings, Two pair of Shoes.
- V. RESOLVED - That Divine Service, in the Workhouse, do commence at nine o'Clock.

- VI. RESOLVED - That Paupers be relieved, when thought necessary by the Board, within the Union only. This Resolution not to apply to Paupers receiving Permanent Relief prior to the formation of the Union.
- VII. RESOLVED - That the Board have a discretionary power of granting out-door Relief to any Pauper above sixty, until it is ascertained whether the Relations are able to Support them or not; and if able, until they are compelled to do so.
- VIII. RESOLVED - That this Union will not pay the expences of the funeral of any Pauper dying out the Union, except those dying in the Salop Infirmary.
- IX. RESOLVED - That no Bill for the funeral expences (*sic*) of any Pauper, exceeding Twenty-five Shillings be allowed.
- X. RESOLVED - That all Inmates of the Workhouse take their Meals in the Hall, unless the Surgeon orders to the Contrary, or the Governor have some special reason for a contrary course; which reason is to be reported to the Board at their next Meeting.
- XI. RESOLVED - That the Governor have power to diet any refractory Inmate of the Workhouse, on Bread and Water for any time (at his discretion) not exceeding two days, and to put such Inmates in the Dress to be provided for that purpose.
- XII. RESOLVED - That no out-door Relief be granted, by the Board of Guardians, to any Pauper who has refused to accept the offer of Admission into the Workhouse, unless it shall appear to the Board, that the evidence from which their conclusions were drawn, was incorrect.
- XIII. RESOLVED - That no Relief be granted to any relation of a Bastard Child, for keeping such a Child.

- XIV. RESOLVED - That no out-door Relief be granted for Bastard Children (except Orphans) born since the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act; and if Admission to the Workhouse be demanded, the Mother shall be admitted as well as the Child.
- XV. RESOLVED - That no Woman having had a Bastard Child since the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, to have any Relief out of the House, unless she is unable to be removed.
- XVI. RESOLVED - That no Relief be given to Children in service, either for board or clothing, unless the same shall be Orphans, or Bastards.
- XVII. RESOLVED - That no Relief be granted in future to any person occupying more than a Cottage and half an acre of Land.
- XVIII. RESOLVED - That every Parish shall be at the expence (*sic*) of burying the Paupers who may die in it, whose friends or relations are unable to bury them.
- XIX. RESOLVED - That no sum of money under ten shillings, nor above thirty, be advanced by way of loan, and that re-payment of the sum advanced be in every instance strictly enforced.
- XX. RESOLVED - That after the books have been passed, the Motions on Notice be discussed, and disposed of.
- XXI. RESOLVED - That after the Motions on Notice have been disposed of, Notices of fresh Motions, or any other business be brought on, and after this that the Meeting do adjourn.

Appendix VIII

Shropshire unions under the New Poor Law



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Classification Scheme

A. Primary Sources

1. Manuscript Material
2. Official Sources at Public Record Office
 - 2.1 Ministry of Health Papers
 - 2.2 Education Papers
3. Sources at the Shropshire Record Office
 - 3.1 Poor Law Unions
 - 3.2 Miscellaneous
4. Official Publications
 - 4.1 Parliamentary Debates
 - 4.2 Parliamentary Papers
 - 4.3 Printed Material
5. Contemporary Sources
 - 5.1 Books
 - 5.2 Articles
 - 5.3 Newspapers
 - 5.4 Journals
 - 5.5 Miscellaneous Printed Material

B. Secondary Sources

6. More Recent Sources - since 1900

- 6.1 Books
- 6.2 Articles
- 6.3 Unpublished
- 6.4 General Reference Works
- 6.5 Miscellaneous

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