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***Pauper Children and Poor Law Childhoods in
England and Wales
1834-1910***

by Lesley Hulonce

Proudly self-published with Kindle

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A brief note about self-publishing

A few months ago I gave a talk about Victorian prostitution to a local history group. I had a terrible cold but I talked to an audience of around 200 for an hour. It was well received with so many questions and comments that we were booted out by the next group. I had agreed a nominal fee of £35 but I was informed that as it was 'part of my working day', I should waive it. Yes, really, I think I'll pass a hat around next time...

This won't be news to many academics, particularly those in the early years of their career. However, it was a liberty too many taken with my time and labours. Since I finished my PhD in 2013 I've told my daughter excitedly that I'd been asked to write this and that, and her reaction is invariably 'how much are they paying you?' The answer is nearly always 'nothing'.

I had been considering self-publishing for a while, but I had submitted a book proposal to a major international publisher and was waiting for their comments and hopefully a contract. The publishers commissioned reviews from historians and they were very encouraging; Reviewer 1 said they had read my two sample chapters in one sitting, and even the rather picky Reviewer 2 recommended publication.

When the publisher offered me a contract I was excited and delighted, especially as it had taken me two years to finally submit the proposal. Then I asked how much the book would be, and I was told £65. If I wanted a particular cover image I would be expected to pay for the permissions myself. As it is the first book looking at all the diverse strategies of care for pauper children it was expected to sell well, probably around 300 copies in the first instance. That means that they will gross around £19,500 from my work and pay me £468, less image permissions.

I hope many historians will also self-publish their research, and maybe then the publishing industry will begin to change.

For readers who are unfamiliar with the poor laws please see the timeline and key dates at the back of the book.

Acknowledgements

This is a very long list, especially because of the sheer length of time I have taken to revise my PhD thesis into *Pauper Children*. It actually started as my MA thesis, 'Children who belong to the state' in 2008, where I began my fascinating journey into the history of children, and in particular the residents of Cockett Cottage Homes in Swansea.

I must first thank my children Joshua and Emma who have grown up alongside my academic adventure. They were just 13 and 12 respectively when I was studying for my MA and are now 21 and 19. They attended lectures with me when child care failed or when they were unable to go to school, and without their patience, support and love I could not have completed any of my degrees. Thank you, *Pauper Children* is for you.

When I first began my undergraduate degree in 2003, the eminent historian Professor David Howell encouraged me greatly; he was the first person to call me a 'historian' and I thank him for all his help over the years and hope I have done him proud.

Professor Chris Williams has been a source of inspiration, enablement and humour since I took his module 'The South Wales Coalfield' in 2007. As my PhD Supervisor he provided helpful (if a tad pedantic) feedback and taught me to never say 'due to', and always to insert a full stop at the end of footnotes. My students all know my horror when they refrain from doing this. Chris is a world renowned scholar and I thank him for everything he has done for me over the years.

I have been fortunate to know Professor David Turner since my undergraduate years, and remember especially our larks in his MA module 'the making of modern sexualities'. Five women and David attempted to navigate the complexities of sexual behaviour in the early modern period by competing to find the rudest primary sources to bring to class for discussion. David's examination of my PhD thesis was kind, insightful and helpful. Thank you David, your writing is always exquisite and you use beautiful words, I can only hope some of it has rubbed off on me.

I left the History Department after 10 years as a student and later as a lecturer. My colleagues there are some of the best teachers and researchers in the country. In particular I want to thank Huw Bowen, Martin Johnes, Evelien Bracke, Louise Miskell, Richard Hall, Mike Mantin, John Spurr, Deborah Youngs, Lucie Matthews Jones, and Stuart Clark.

Since August 2015 I have been lecturer in the history of medicine in the College of Human and Health Sciences at Swansea University. My new colleagues are supportive and generous and I want to thank particularly Chantal Patel (the most enabling boss anyone could have), Ceri Phillips, Head of College, for his financial support of my Children's Welfare History Workshop, Michelle Lee, a force of nature, and my departmental colleagues Alys Einion, Susanne Darra, Angela Smith, Julia Parkhouse, Andrew Bloodworth, and Mark Jones

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I have haunted many archives, libraries and museums in the past ten years. My thanks go to Marilyn Jones and Gwilym Games of Swansea Central Library. The staff of West Glamorgan Archives Service, especially Elizabeth Belcham and David Morris, put up with me in my year with the guardians minute books, and I was so often there that the café staff offered me

discount as they thought I was a member of staff. Swansea Museum is a treasure trove of artifacts and primary sources, and thanks to the staff and Gerald Gabb for their help.

Thanks to readers:

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Thanks to our cats Lola, Harry, Ziggy and The Kitten for cuddles and insightful commentary, and to the Wales football team for providing welcome distraction during the UEFA Cup 2016. Oggie, oggie, oggie.

Introduction:

'Children who belong to the state'¹

In 1838 the *London and Westminster Review* informed its readers that the New Poor Law had proved to be a very popular theme for 'grievance' songs. The lyrics to several broadside ballads were printed including *The English Poor Law in Force*, which railed against the refusal of relief to a destitute family, and the self-explanatory *Just Starve Us*. The *Review* thought the lyrics to *A Workhouse Boy* were too 'horrible for citation'; it told the story of how a pauper boy was killed and his body added to the Christmas soup.² The *Review* concluded that these songs contained the 'fiercest exaggerations' of the charges that were being laid against the new poor laws.³ Ballads such as these, together with reports about the neglect of paupers, shaped popular opinion of an iniquitous new law. *The Age* periodical claimed that if the measures proposed by the Poor Law Commission were enacted, their opinions about 'the united wisdom of the country' would turn into 'sentiments of indignation and horror', while *John Bull* declared that the Poor Law Commissioners had 'begun their reign of terror'.⁴ Between 1837 and 1842, *The Times* published more than two million words on the 'new' poor law's administration, and related nearly 300 alleged 'horror' stories.⁵ By far the most evocative and enduring representation of the alleged evils of the new poor was the character of Oliver Twist created by Charles Dickens.⁶ As the *London and Westminster Review* reported, most of the reports, songs and literary representations of this new law were exaggerated, but the cruel and harsh reputation of the poor laws have proved as long-lasting as Dickens' boy who dared to ask for more.

David Englander calls the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act 'the single most important piece of social legislation ever enacted'. Historians have engaged with its complexities since its inception and the resulting scholarship is diverse and substantial.⁷ While the legislation itself and the minutiae of its administration can encourage somewhat dry scholarship, *Pauper Children* is mindful to avoid 'stripping' people of 'their humanity', and focuses on the human drama of paupers' experiences within this hugely important Victorian law.⁸ The 'new' poor law was designed to deter paupers from

¹ Henrietta O. Barnett, 'The Home or the Barrack for the Children of the State', *The Contemporary Review* (August, 1894), 243-258, 243.

² *A Workhouse Boy*, British Library [hereafter BL], 1876.d.41, <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/broadside-the-workhouse-boy>.

³ *London and Westminster Review* 1838 April to July vols. 31-32, 121.

⁴ 'New Poor Law System', *The Age*, 23 February 1834, 61; *John Bull*, 1 September 1834.

⁵ David Roberts, 'How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law?' *The Historical Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1963), 97-107, 98.

⁶ Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: 1867, first published 1837-8).

⁷ David Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Nineteenth Century Britain, 1834-1914* (London: Longman, 1998), 1.

⁸ Margaret Crowther, *The Workhouse System, 1834-1929: The History of an English Social Institution* (London: Batsford Academic & Educational, 1981), 1; The difference between childhood as a concept and children as people is one that is also recognised in *Pauper Children*, see Harry Hendrick, 'The Child as a Social Actor in Historical Sources: Problems of Identification and Interpretation' in Pia Christensen and Allison James (eds.), *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices* (London: Falmer, 2000), 36-61, 36; For an in-depth exploration of scholarship about 'past children' rather than 'past childhoods',

applying for relief by including a ‘workhouse test’ whereby only the most necessitous and ‘deserving’ would accept the offer of the ‘House’ as the only relief available. In reality, many directives and recommendations issued by the central authorities were not always used by individual poor law unions. This is illustrated most starkly by the two main principles of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act proving unworkable in reality. The doctrine that all relief to able-bodied paupers and their families should only be given in workhouses was infeasible unless hundreds of new workhouses were constructed, and became impossible in times of high unemployment. The deterrent principle of ‘less eligibility’ intended that the standard of living in the workhouse was lower than that of the poorest independent labourer. In practice, diet and conditions in workhouses often exceeded those found in the homes of many poor families,⁹ but nonetheless a deterrent remained owing to the widely held punitive and humiliating reputation of the workhouse.

Nineteenth-century Britain was home to ‘great floods of children’ who throughout the course of the century constituted up to 40 per cent of the population.¹⁰ As children also made up between 30 and 40 per cent of recipients of poor law relief in nineteenth-century Britain, their impact on poor law resources and doctrine was substantial.¹¹ Charles Dickens’ compassion for pauper children and his input into the poor law system extended well beyond his novel *Oliver Twist*. On a visit to a poor law school in 1850 he described how the children were ‘with minds and bodies destitute of proper nutriment, they are caught, as it were, by the parish officers, like half wild creatures, roaming poverty-stricken amidst the wealth of our greatest city; and half-starved in a land where the law says no one shall be destitute of food and shelter’.¹² Similarly, schools inspector Jelinger Symons claimed that children had a ‘pure claim on public aid’ but while pauper children generated widespread pity for their condition, the solution for its amelioration was contested.¹³ The often publicised plight of pauper children also generated attention from philanthropists and child welfare campaigners.¹⁴ These intersections between state aid and private philanthropy revealed competing ideologies of care and cost, and fostered class and gender friction.

While few scholars of the poor laws have ignored pauper children, they have received only passing attention in many works on wider poor law themes. Despite the burgeoning of histories of children and childhood being a flourishing area of historical scholarship, Frank Crompton’s *Workhouse Children* is the only monograph concerning children and the poor laws, and is confined to exploring their treatment in

see Levene, ‘Family Breakdown and the Welfare Child in 19th and 20th Century Britain’, *History of the Family*, 11 (2006), 67-79,.

⁹ See for example Valerie Johnston, *Diet in Workhouses and Prisons, 1835-1895* (New York: Garland, 1985).

¹⁰ Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed, Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 161-2.

¹¹ Karel Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty* (London: Routledge, 1981), 197.

¹² Dickens, ‘London Pauper Children’, 551.

¹³ Jelinger Cookson Symons, *Tactics for the Times, As Regards the Condition and Treatment of the Dangerous Classes* (London, 1849). 183.

¹⁴ Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers, The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 275.

workhouses.¹⁵ The poor law central authorities in London along with many provincial poor law guardians saw the workhouse as unfit for the appropriate rearing of pauper children. The assessment of workhouses as 'promiscuous environments' was widespread, and the premise was reiterated by social purity activist Ellice Hopkins, who claimed that girls in the workhouse faced the especial threat of 'the deepest degradation of all'.¹⁶ Child welfare campaigner Florence Hill was convinced that the association between girls and mothers of illegitimate children in workhouses was 'polluting' and she cited the similar views of many other commentators, including Edward Tufnell, Edward Senior and Jelinger Symons, as corroboration.¹⁷ Because of their association with pauper adults, it was thought that children were not only being insufficiently trained, but were 'actually nurtured in vice'. It was thought inevitable that many workhouse children would grow up to be 'thieves, prostitutes or paupers'.¹⁸ Symons had claimed that even when the children were in separate rooms from the other workhouse inmates, they could hear continually the 'obscene conversation of the depraved portion of the adults'.¹⁹ This expectation continued into the twentieth century, and although the 1905-9 Poor Laws Royal Commission found little evidence, it was still assumed that workhouses contained a large number of prostitutes.²⁰

If children were not corrupted by the workhouse, they were thought to be in grave danger of being ground down by apathy and losing any work ethic. One Welsh guardian referred to his workhouse as 'that miserable hole'²¹, and Florence Hill lamented 'the inevitable consequences of ordinary workhouse life' which equated to a 'dulness [sic] of apprehension, ill-temper, a want of self-respect, and negligence as regards the care of property'.²² Charles Dickens thought that the 'monotonous semi-prison life' of the workhouse must 'degrade and depress' the minds of pauper children.²³ Consequently, strategies were devised to move children out of workhouses across England and Wales. The vast majority of children supported by the poor laws had never been inside a workhouse, and they remained with their parents despite alleged embargoes of outdoor relief, and the parents themselves were often active agents where the education and welfare of their children was concerned.²⁴ Children

¹⁵ Frank Crompton, *Workhouse Children, Infant and Child Paupers under the Worcestershire Poor Law, 1780-1871* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997).

¹⁶ Paula Bartley, *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000), 105.

Ellice Hopkins, *Preventative Work or the Care of our Girls* (London, 1881), 7, cited in Moore, 'Social Control or Protection of the Child?', 371.

¹⁷ Hill, *Children of the State*, 5.

¹⁸ *Reports to Poor Law Board on Education of Pauper Children by Poor Law Inspectors*, 1862, c. no. 510, 3.

¹⁹ Committee of Council on Education. Minutes, Appendices, 1847-49, England and Wales (Schools of Parochial Unions), 1849, paper no. 1111, 232.

²⁰ Pat Thane, 'Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England', *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 6 (1978), 29-51, 39.

²¹ *The Cambrian*, 5 February 1858.

²² Florence Davenport Hill, *The Children of the State* (London: MacMillan, 1868), 89.

²³ Charles Dickens, 'Little Pauper Boarders,' *All The Year Round, A Weekly Journal. Conducted by Charles Dickens. With Which is Incorporated Household Words*, 28 August 1869, 301-05, 301.

²⁴ Joanne Bailey, 'The History of Mum and Dad: Recent Historical Research on Parenting in England from the 16th to 20th centuries', *History Compass*, 12:6 (2014), 489-507, 499.

were boarded out with foster parents, some of whom were members of their extended families; many were sent to separate district schools or 'cottage' homes, and others spent whole or part of their childhoods in philanthropic and religious orphanages. The more 'refractory' pauper boys were sent to training ships; disabled children were often educated in specialist establishments such as institutions for the blind or deaf, and some poor law unions emigrated their children to Britain's colonies.²⁵

In essence *Pauper Children* supports the notion that most pauper children were not abandoned to beg for more food in workhouses, but that their upbringing; their *reformation* was carefully planned, managed and debated. It questions to what extent these varied strategies were a result of anxiety for the future economy in the production of 'able labourers', or care for the children themselves, although strategies of control and policies of goodwill were often interrelated. Perceptions of pity were used to justify more rate-payers' money being spent on pauper children, and also to counter criticism that pauper children received advantages that were unavailable to the children of the independent poor. Although many conflicts concerning the care and education of these children who 'belonged to state' were unresolved, their proposed childhood was imagined as being 'normal', and was subsequently imposed upon them. In common with many fragile kin structures of the nineteenth century, the family networks of paupers were complicated and volatile.²⁶

Pauper Children covers a long period, and as Hopkins claims poor children were generally better off in 1900 than in 1800, but this was by no means a smooth progression. Some historians of the 1960s and 1970s, in their confidence of an unshakeable welfare state, analysed poor law provision as a weak precursor to the 'cradle to the grave' policies of the post-war Attlee Government and many works about social welfare provision prior to the 1990s invariably linked the word 'welfare' to the word 'state'.²⁷ As Daunton argues, assumptions that welfare history was 'marching to a preordained end' are problematic given the challenges to welfare provision in the 1980s and 1990s.²⁸ Similarly, paradigms of 'modernization' and 'unilinear' explorations collapse when variations between poor law unions and sites of conflict between national policy and regional reactions to the relief of poverty are questioned, as they are in *Pauper Children*.²⁹ This was a paradoxical era which saw

²⁵ Although Steven King claims that disabled children rarely received institutional care prior to then late nineteenth century. My findings in chapter six show several examples, see S.A.King, 'Charity, health and welfare in the English provinces: some reflections' *Family and Community History*, 7 (2004), 33-43.

²⁶ See Levene, 'Family Breakdown and the "Welfare Child"', 68.

²⁷ Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 1; see also Robert Humphreys, *Sin, Organised Charity and the Poor Law in Victorian England* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1995); Historians such as Martin Daunton and Lynn Hollen Lees have distanced themselves from 'Whiggish' works such as those written by David Roberts and Derek Fraser David Roberts, see *Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960); Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution* (London: MacMillan, 1973).

²⁸ Martin Daunton, 'Introduction', in Martin Daunton, ed., *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: University College London Press, 1996), 1.

²⁹ Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers*, 3; Felix Driver, *Power and Pauperism, The Workhouse System, 1834-1884* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For general texts about the poor laws, see also

laissez-faire competing with markedly increased intervention by the state.³⁰ Poor law services were diverse, ambiguous and frequently patchy, and King, with the bemused fondness only a poor law devotee could display calls them 'endearingly riven with intra- and inter-regional differences'.³¹ The sheer enormity of contradictory decision making and behaviour is perhaps the reason why some scholarship of the poor laws has been opaque and indecipherable; the scale of figures, correspondence and bureaucratic paraphernalia that is available for the historian to consult still offers incompleteness, but in volume amounts to much more than could be done one lifetime.

Pauper Children builds on Alysa Levene's brilliant study of the childhoods of the poor in eighteenth-century London.³² Similarly, Jane Humphries' insightful and moving glimpses into the lives of pauper children as part of her study on child labour is a reminder of the power of working-class writing as a valuable source for the histories of children, and similar sources have been used in this study as much as possible.³³ However, *Pauper Childhoods* takes care to foreground the *child*, rather than policies for his or her care, housing and education. In doing so I ask and answer questions concerning the children's lives and hopes for their future, and memories of their past. I am also indebted to Lydia Murdoch's arguments in *Imagined Orphans* which offers valuable comparisons between Dr. Barnardo and poor law care. Murdoch's analysis of the 'organisation of space' within institutions, and her arguments concerning doctrines of middle-class domesticity embraced by poor law establishments which was envisaged as the polar opposite to the alleged chaotic and undomesticated homes of the poor echo my findings, and offer a framework for analysis.³⁴

Although the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 applied to both Wales and England, its implementation and impact in the Welsh context has not been studied as exhaustively.³⁵ *Pauper Children* will begin to redress this situation as it will explore the

Derek Fraser, ed., *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1976), which also includes analysis of the poor law in Scotland, as does Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Nineteenth Century Britain*, and Anthony Brundage, *The English Poor Laws, 1700-1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); for a recent comprehensive analysis of the poor laws in London, see David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010).

³⁰ Driver, *Power and Pauperism*.

³¹ Steven King, *Poverty and Welfare in England 1700-1850: A Regional Perspective* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), 38-40, 67; Digby also explores the poor laws from a regional perspective in her study of Norfolk, Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); see also Janet Hudson, Vanessa Ann Chambers, 'The New Poor Law 1834-1980: Regional and Local Perspectives', *Local Population Studies*, vol. 78 (2007), 11-16.

³² Alysa Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³³ Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³⁴ Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare and Contested Citizenship in London* (New Brunswick & London: Rutgers University Press, 2006). The Irish and Scottish poor law amendment acts were introduced in 1838 and 1845 respectively.

³⁵ See Steven King, John Stewart, 'The History of the Poor Law in Wales: Under-Researched, Full of Potential', *Archives*, vol. 36 (2001), 134-48; In a review of Hollen Lees', *Solidarities of Strangers*, David Eastwood claims that the historiography of poverty in Wales lags behind that of England, *Welsh History Review*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2000), 381-2.

experiences of pauper children in both Wales and England. There are many fine works about poverty and childhood in London, and this book neither ignores nor foregrounds the capital. Although London has been called ‘a nation in itself’ in relation to poverty and the poor laws and many strategies for the care of pauper children originated in, or were inspired by trends in London’s ‘hotbed of innovation’, and are explored for this, and many other important strategic developments.³⁶

Opinion among historians concerning the treatment of ‘looked after’ children in this period can vary widely. Hendrick claims that the pervasiveness of ‘legal violence’ in children’s institutions ‘nearly always’ resulted in not only corporal punishment, but also in sexual abuse.³⁷ At the opposing end of the spectrum, Marianne Moore contends that the debates concerning industrial school and cottage homes systems were motivated not by social control but by benevolence, and as such presaged modern child protection services.³⁸ Whilst agreeing with many of Moore’s findings, it is disingenuous to dismiss the subtle forms of social control inherent in the care of pauper children and *Pauper Children* questions the stability of homogeneous readings of the competing ideologies at work in poor law and child care systems of the time. Similarly, although Hendrick provides little evidence for his confident assertion above, the prevalence of sexual abuse in children’s homes uncovered by historical abuse enquiries begun in the 1990s and continuing at the time of writing in 2016, suggests that sexual abuse in children’s homes during the twentieth century was ubiquitous.³⁹ This may indeed be so but nonetheless research conducted for *Pauper Children* has not revealed any evidence of institutionalised sexual abuse in the establishments under review, whether this is because vulnerable children were better protected by the Victorian system, or the evidence is too well hidden is difficult to establish.⁴⁰

Pauper Children demonstrates how poor law guardians and managers of philanthropic institutions garnered support and funds by utilising the general sympathy that poor, orphaned and disabled children generated within the majority of the population. As Levene claims, the study of poor children is an activity ‘freighted with emotional overtones’.⁴¹ I do not subscribe to the views of historians such as Aries, Shorter and Stone who claimed for a lack of affection towards children prior to the modern period,

³⁶ King, *Poverty and Welfare in England*, 13; Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor*, 16.

³⁷ Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare, Historical Dimensions, Contemporary Debate* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2003);

³⁸ Marianne Moore, ‘Social Control or Protection of the Child? The Debates on the Industrial Schools Acts, 1857-1894’, *Journal of Family History*, vol. 33, no. 4 (2008).

³⁹ For physical abuses see Barry Coldrey, ‘“The Extreme End of the Spectrum of Violence”: Physical Abuse, Hegemony and Resistance in British Residential Care’, *Children & Society*, vol. 15, (2003), 95-106 and Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981). For child sex abuse in Victorian Britain, albeit not in an institutional context, see George, K. Behlmer, *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England, 1870-1908* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Louise Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁴⁰ See Lesley Hulonce, ‘Sexual abuse, silences and sources: Did the Victorians better protect their vulnerable children? *Workhouse Tales*, 2014 <https://lesleyhulonce.wordpress.com/2014/08/31/sexual-abuse-silences-and-sources-did-the-victorians-better-protect-their-vulnerable-children/>

⁴¹ Levene, *Children of the Poor*, 1.

although by the period covered by *Pauper Children* they argue that parental affection was well established, at least within the middle-class family.⁴² As Fletcher and Hussey argue, these historians' 'itch' to argue linear change, and 'progression' has been misplaced.⁴³ During this time 'sentimentality' flourished, especially when directed at 'pathetic' children; guardians were acutely aware of its power, as were the fund-raisers of philanthropic causes. It is also difficult and probably futile for historians of children to distance themselves completely from emotion concerning the children we research. Although, as Bown says, it has 'rarely been respectable to stand up for sentimentality', as we can still 'fall prey to its lures'.⁴⁴ *Pauper Children* claims that emotional investment, albeit accompanied by scholarly rigour, is unavoidable in the researching and interpretation of children's histories. A project of this kind cannot be undertaken successfully without empathetic engagement with the children whose lives we seek to illuminate.⁴⁵ Roper has also criticised detachment within scholarship relating to the First World War, where he claims that 'the intensity of emotional experience' might tempt historians 'beyond linguistic codes'. However, as Roper claims, 'empathetic connections' between historian and subjects are problematic and must be wary of projecting 'the historian's own unexamined projections onto the past'.⁴⁶

Consequently, emotional affect will not be sidestepped as it is necessary to engage with the feelings of children. I am inspired by the words of Ellen Ross in *Love and Toil*, whose seven year old son Zachary Glendon-Ross died in 1989 while she was researching her book. Ross claims that a historian can retain scholarly convention while experiencing emotional involvement with her historical subjects.⁴⁷ While I argue that emotional engagement enhances histories of children, I take care to channel this emotion with academic detachment and not heroicise them nor construct for them 'a mythical past'.⁴⁸ The children will also be memorialised by naming as many as possible. In this it is informed and influenced by Ian Grosvenor's argument that by being able to name children 'we reclaim them as individuals' and allow a voice to those 'who remain largely silent'.⁴⁹ The naming of children in print also confirms their

⁴² Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (London: Fontana, 1977); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977). For an opposing argument, see Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁴³ Anthony Fletcher, Stephen Hussey, 'Introduction', in Fletcher, Hussey, eds., *Childhood in Question*, 96-114.

⁴⁴ Nicola Bown, 'Crying Over Little Nell', *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, vol. 4 (2007), 1-2.

⁴⁵ On a different topic, but one which induces emotional responses from the historian, the sources and the subject, see V.A.C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree, Execution and the English People 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁴⁶ Michael Roper, 'Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2005), 57-72, 65-9.

⁴⁷ Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. vii.

⁴⁸ Ludmilla Jordanova, 'Children in History: Concepts of Nature and Society' in Geoffrey Scarre, ed., *Children, Parents and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 15.

⁴⁹ Ian Grosvenor, 'Seen but not Heard': City Childhoods from the Past into the Present', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, Vol.43, No. 3 (2007), 405-29.

existence in the same way as Roland Barthes' claims that images demonstrates that a person had 'indeed been'.⁵⁰

It is unlikely that any of the extensive source base consulted for *Pauper Children* has not been mediated by those in authority. Jordanova warns us how historians 'persist in searching for the voice of children themselves, in their diaries and autobiographies' when there can be 'no authentic voice of childhood speaking to us from the past because the adult world dominates that of the child'.⁵¹ We can however attempt to unravel children's own experiences from multiple clusters of sources, undeniably mediated by the 'adult world', and, as Davis claims, 'step forward from the margins' to attempt readings of what has been revealed.⁵²

The book is organised into three sections. Part one explores the experiences of pauper children in poor law institutions such as workhouses, district schools and later, cottage homes. Part two looks at the most used strategies for the care of pauper children in local communities including outdoor relief and boarding-out. Part three analyses how pauper children fared when they were sent by the guardians to privately run charitable establishments, and also examines the lives and future prospects of disabled children.

The treatment of children in workhouses is explored in the first chapter. The family circumstances of the children are analysed and their education compared with children of independent labourers. The workhouse was perceived as a site of moral contagion from which many unions sought either to remove them or attempt to nullify its effects by education, segregation and monitoring, and arguments and debates concerning separate establishments for pauper children took place over many years. Chapter Two analyses these debates and the lives pauper children could expect in these seemingly more child-friendly homes. This chapter claims that although family type institutions were perceived as leading the way in child welfare, by the early twentieth century these homes had equally fallen out of favour.

Chapter Three explores the much discussed and prevalent strategy of boarding-out pauper children. This policy is very familiar to today's carers of looked after children, but was contested throughout the nineteenth century. This chapter sheds light onto how pauper children were perceived in local communities and whether affection or monetary gain was the motivation of foster parents. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that poor law central authorities began to favour boarding-out, primarily because of the loss of control over the children, and the often lax supervision by local boards of guardians. Chapter Four highlights what the 1834 poor law amendment act chiefly sought to change, the practice of allowing paupers a 'dole' in their own homes. Contrary to poor law propaganda, outdoor relief was never completely curtailed and was the principal strategy to relieve the majority of paupers outside London and certain 'hard-line' unions. Fewer sources exist to seek the lives of outdoor pauper children but I endeavour to read against the grain of sources about

⁵⁰ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981), 115.

⁵¹ Jordanova, 'Children in History', 5.

⁵² Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins. Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 2; Grosvenor, 'Seen but not Heard', 427-8.

poverty in nineteenth-century England and Wales to uncover the children's experiences. Although these policies were the most extensively used by many guardians, they are often neglected by historians because of the paucity of sources relating to them.

The final part of *Pauper Children* is devoted to the children who were sent to privately-run charitable institutions. Chapter Five explores diverse establishments, 'orphan' homes for Roman Catholic girls, many of which looked after physically or mentally disabled children. Unions also sent some boys to training ships to learn discipline and a trade, and these are the only institutions in the study to which a punitive label can be attached. Although disparate institutions, all were motivated by the making of respectable responsible subjects. The final chapter also examines disabled children, in this case those who were blind or deaf. It explores attitudes to the education of blind and deaf children and analyses the children's lives and expectations and questions whether these institutions enabled or disabled the children in their care.

Davin claims that historians need 'both zoom and wide angled lens' to capture the particular as well as the general.⁵³ *Pauper Children* offers a wide-ranging and multi-layered analysis of pauper children and their relationships with poverty, their parents and each other, the poor laws and philanthropy in England and Wales. The histories of pauper children are complicated by conflicting attitudes of (and within) regional poor law unions, competing strategies of child welfare activists and fluctuations in policy by central authorities.⁵⁴ Although the 'new' poor law sought to bring uniformity to welfare provision, the treatment and care of pauper children was largely dependent on chance; where and with whom they lived. As Henriques claimed, many of the harsher elements of the poor laws were mitigated by the 'goodwill' of individual guardians, and this insight can also be ascribed to the behaviour of masters and matrons, house-mothers, teachers, and indeed the children's own family, or to whom they were fostered.⁵⁵ It is problematic to attempt to homogenise and pigeonhole the lives of pauper children, and the purpose of *Pauper Children* is not to offer generalised arguments. Their varied experiences are what matters. The lack of an overarching argument and conclusion need not be seen as an academic failure because they are elusive, but as an opportunity to explore in one book how the poor laws and philanthropy interacted with their dependent children, and how the children fared in a multiplicity of circumstances. The result is a more nuanced analysis that moves beyond Dickensian clichés of Victorian history to consider the multiple experiences of poor law children.

⁵³ Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor, Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996), 11.

⁵⁴ See Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2008.

⁵⁵ Ursula Henriques, 'How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law?' *The Historical Journal*, vol. XI, no. 2 (1968), 365-71.

PART ONE :

PAUPER CHILDREN AND POOR LAW INSTITUTIONS

‘As for exercise, it was nice cold weather, and he was allowed to perform his ablutions, every morning under the pump, in a stone yard, in the presence of Mr. Bumble, who prevented his catching cold, and caused a tingling sensation to pervade his frame, by repeated applications of the cane’.

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, Chapter three, 15.

The Workhouse

Early one morning in 1840s Staffordshire, a family left their cold and food-less home and walked a roundabout way, so as to avoid being seen, to Chell Workhouse in Stoke-on-Trent. Arriving at the 'bastile' they were assaulted by the sounds of doors banging, keys rattling, and the 'metallic' voices of workhouse staff who appeared to be 'worked from within by hidden machinery'.⁵⁷ Mother and father were separated from their children and each other, and the children were divided up according to gender and age, only to be reunited with their mother for an hour on Sundays.⁵⁸ This would have been a familiar scenario to the thousands of men, women and children whose lives had reached the point where their parish workhouse was the only option left for them.

The word 'workhouse' still resonates with negative and uncomfortable meanings of a callous pre-welfare state past. Although few former workhouse inmates are still alive, their descendants (and their descendants) remember and disseminate their stories of revulsion. The hundred or so years of the operation of the 'new' poor laws was, and still largely is, embedded in popular imaginings as the system that spawned the workhouse. Contemporary critics and inmates likened the workhouse to a 'Bastile', a site devoid of pity and hope which generated an 'unparalleled dread'.⁵⁹ Defined as 'poor-law prisons' akin to 'Dante's Hell'⁶⁰, workhouses were emblems of grinding human manufactories loaded with gothic horror and homogeneity.

Perceptions of children and the workhouse have been further influenced by the enduring and poignant imagery of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. Oliver, although a small fragile lad stepped forward from his place with other boys and dared to ask for more food. The boys of Dickens' imaginings were held responsible for their poverty and dependence. However, in 1837 Assistant Poor Law Commissioner James Phillips Kay had claimed that pauper children maintained in workhouses were dependent 'not as a consequence of their errors, but of their misfortunes', subsequently children were one of the few groups of paupers to warrant widespread pity for their condition.⁶¹ Because of their association with pauper adults, it was felt that these children were not only 'inefficiently trained' but were 'actually nurtured in vice', and many of them would inevitably grow up to be 'thieves or prostitutes or paupers'.⁶²

⁵⁶ Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (London: Caliban, 1980, first published 1908), 100.

⁵⁷ As above, 96-7.

⁵⁸ As above, 101.

⁵⁹ George Robert Wythen Baxter, *The Book of the Bastiles or the History of the working of the New Poor Law* (London: J Stephens, 1841); Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 2.

⁶⁰ Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (London: Henry Frowde, 1909, first published 1843).

⁶¹ Poor Law Commission, *Fourth Annual Report, 1837-38*, paper no. 147, 140.

⁶² *Reports to Poor Law Board on Education of Pauper Children by Poor Law Inspectors*, 1862, c. no. 510, 3.

As such, the workhouse was rarely imagined as a locus of normality for pauper children, and multiple alternative strategies were mooted by the central authorities.⁶³ Many options were put forward to remove them from workhouses, and for those who remained, measures were put into place to counteract the perceived miasma of vice and idleness infiltrating the institutions. This was to be achieved via judiciously targeted education, discipline and training to negate the perceived moral contagion and hereditary pauperism within the workhouse. However, the rules laid down which were intended to avoid impulsive beatings of children and to protect them from contact with adults whom the authorities considered bad influences were perceived very differently by the children themselves. Delayed punishment in public was largely seen as a spectacle of cruelty and humiliation and classification as isolation and separation from family and friends. Initiatives such as these which sought to protect children and produce independent citizens were seen as harsh, but as Henriques claims the intentions were not 'sadistic cruelty' but they could be seen as insensitive.⁶⁴

For those pauper children who were not boarded out, sent to other institutions or relieved at home with their families, the workhouse was their home, and before the 1870s, generally also their place of education. For these children their workhouse experience depended greatly upon luck; when they were in a workhouse, the characters of those in charge of them, and the vigilance and benevolence of local poor law guardians. Many, if not all children who found themselves in a workhouse had already experienced considerable trauma in their lives. Some were orphans whose both, or last surviving parent had recently died. As Murdoch has demonstrated, the categorisation of 'orphan' often obscured complex and fluid family frameworks in which a child could be left destitute by the death or desertion of one or both parents.⁶⁵ 'Orphans', however their status was constructed, were always thought more malleable to reform and, because they were detached from stigmatised parents, they often generated more pity.⁶⁶ However this pity did not always originate from the extended families of orphan children. Henry Morton Stanley's two uncles refused to increase payment to the couple to whom he was fostered, so they left him at St Asaph workhouse in North Wales.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the future respectability and financial independence of the children was a huge motivating factor, so just because these policies also emulated what we today would recognise as 'child-friendly' principles

⁶³ I follow Beatrice and Sydney Webb in their use of the term 'Central authorities' to simplify the various names of the Government organisation which administered the poor laws. First called the Poor Law Commission, the the Poor Law Board, and finally the Local Government Board.

⁶⁴ Henriques, 'How cruel', 365.

⁶⁵ Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 3. See also Peters, *Orphan Texts*.

⁶⁶ Although Peters claims that orphans were perceived as scapegoats; as 'a promise and a threat, and a poison and a cure', Laura Peters, *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 2. For how pity was deployed by Dr Barnardo, see, Seth Koven, 'Dr Barnardo's "Artistic Fictions": Photography, Sexuality and the Ragged Child in Victorian London', *Radical History Review*, vol. 69 (1997), 6–45.

⁶⁷ Henry M. Stanley, *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley Edited by His Wife, Dorothy Stanley* (London: S. Low, Marston, 1909), 18-9.

which we equate with benevolence, it must not be forgotten that policies of goodwill and strategies of control were, and still often are, interrelated.⁶⁸

Separation

Classification was central to the premise of the workhouse system.⁶⁹ This meant separation of families because of what the central authorities perceived as the moral dangers endemic in unsegregated accommodation where children were forced to live with ‘the very refuse of the population’.⁷⁰ Allusions to the amoral behaviour of animals accompanied rhetoric concerning the chaotic living conditions of the poor, described by a London Medical Officer as ‘swarms by whom delicacy and decency in their social relations are quite unconceived’.⁷¹ Thus, juvenile delinquency was perceived as a natural consequence of overcrowded poverty and ‘street life’.⁷² However, some of the most strident criticism of the ‘new’ poor law has been levied at the forced separation and subsequent compartmentalisation of pauper families in workhouses.

James Kay had claimed that separation of children from adult paupers was essential, but ‘no objection’ was made to parents seeing their children during the day and at meals.⁷³ However, it is unclear how much conversation or physical interaction took place between parent and child. There are records of mothers looking after their sick children in the workhouse, and contact can also be demonstrated by the actions of women like Mary Richards who was punished for insubordination regarding her comments when her children were disciplined for damaging the workhouse. Although power to punish remained with the workhouse management, Richards’ vocal resistance diminished the effects of segregation by confirming her maternal protection.⁷⁴ As Hopkins claims, families were no more broken up by the ‘new’ poor law than the ‘old’, given that the average stay in the workhouse was less than three months for the majority of children.⁷⁵

The Cambrian newspaper had regarded the ‘clamour’ concerning forced separation raised by ‘pseudo-philanthropists’ as misdirected. It took the view that poverty and overcrowding were inevitable triggers of corruption, and when these poor families

⁶⁸ See Heather Shore, ‘Punishment, Reformation, or Welfare: Responses to “The Problem” of Juvenile Crime in Victorian and Edwardian Britain’, in Helen Johnston, ed., *Punishment and Control in Historical Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 158-76.

⁶⁹ TNA, MH12/16437, 14 April 1842.

⁷⁰ As above.

⁷¹ John Simon, Medical Officer of Health, City of London 1854, cited in Felix Driver, ‘Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 13, no.3 (1988), 275-287, 281.

⁷² Driver, ‘Moral Geographies’, 284; for the perceived connections between ‘delinquency’ and ‘street life’, see Heather Shore, ‘Home, play and street life: Causes of, and explanations for juvenile crime in the early nineteenth century’, in Fletcher and Hussey, eds., *Childhood in Question: Children*, 96-114.

⁷³ Select Committee on Poor Law Amendment Act: Fourteenth Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, 1837-38, paper no. 202, 10.

⁷⁴ WGAS, U/S 24, Swansea Workhouse Punishment Book, 10 January 1855.

⁷⁵ Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed*, 176. The prevalence of what was called ‘ins and outs’ will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Two.

occupied the same room the result was 'the most disgusting indecency and vice'. Although the newspaper also reiterated the Poor Law Commissioners that temporary separation was a condition endured in many households, such as army and navy families, it failed to recognise that children of military families were not always parted from their mothers as well as their fathers.⁷⁶ However, many children of the middle and upper classes were routinely separated from their parents in boarding-schools for long periods of time. Thus the middle-class pattern of child-parent educational separation was transferred to the pauper class. Confirming the benefits of this regime, James Kay claimed for 'temporary separation for the permanent advantage of the children, similar to that which occurs in all ranks'.⁷⁷

Some families also separated themselves. One mother 'willingly assented to the separation for the benefit of her children learning they received' in the workhouse.⁷⁸ Nora Adnam's father left them, with the collusion of her mother, when he was unable to work after injuring his arm and wrist so mother and children would be accepted in the workhouse. Joseph Bell's sister took him to Bedford Workhouse, where she left him 'looking fondly on me as a mother looking at their child for the last time'.⁷⁹ In the multiple questionnaires poor law unions completed for the central authorities, the term 'orphan' was often explained as 'having lost one or both parents', and indeed some parents left one or more children in the workhouse while they attempted to establish a stable occupation and home. This could involve negotiating with the union and illustrates again how adult workhouse inmates were not always powerless to control their own lives. Such was the case of Sarah Williams who, in 1837, was described as a workhouse inmate with 'twin bastard children'. She wanted to leave the workhouse with one of her children who she would maintain herself, if the parish looked after the other child.⁸⁰

While poor law ideology may have separated the children from morally infectious adults, children were bundled together themselves, albeit separated by gender and sometimes age. Boys especially were subjected to abuse and bullying from their peers who had likely been poorly treated themselves. Bell talks about the 'nicer' boys being willing to make friends while the 'courser' boys, who made up the majority, made things 'uncomfortable' for him. Bell later countered one 'great hulk of a boy' by successfully beating him in a fight, which made him a favourite with the other boys, and they chose him as 'captain' in games of football.⁸¹ There exists many stories of 'timid' boys who 'shrank from the bestialities and obscenities' of their peers were forced to share bedrooms with those who Shaw called the 'children of the devil'.⁸²

Education

⁷⁶ *The Cambrian*, 3 October 1835.

⁷⁷ Select Committee on Poor Law Amendment Act: Fourteenth Report, 1837-38, 10.

⁷⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, 23 January 1837.

⁷⁹ Joseph Bell, *Autobiography of a Village Lad*, 1846-1858, 1929.

⁸⁰ TNA, MH12/16436, 13 November 1837.

⁸¹ Bell, *Village Lad*, 13, 15-16.

⁸² Shaw, *When I was a Child*, 103-4.

In his 1836 report to the Poor Law Commission, Edward Tufnell had felt that the improvements in the care of pauper children following the 1834 act was one of the 'most pleasing and popular' results of the new legislation. In his opinion, workhouse children now enjoyed 'advantages of instruction' that were unlikely to be provided by 'improvident parents'.⁸³ Although many workhouse children, especially in the decades prior to the 1870s, probably received a better education than many children living at home in poor families, this can also be attributed to some parents finding even 'the school pence' beyond their means rather than a lack of care and prudence, although there is evidence of outdoor pauper families paying for their children to attend schools.⁸⁴

In a later report, Tufnell reiterated his unequivocal view that it was 'impossible to over-estimate the importance' of the education of pauper children.⁸⁵ Of specific significance was the value of education as a tool for checking future welfare dependency and ingrained immoral tendencies which were thought to be consequential of pauperism. This was also thought by James Phillips Kay, who as Poor Law Commissioner since 1835 and Secretary to the Committee of Council on Education until 1849, was a leading authority on both pauperism and education and was credited with initiating a 'social revolution' in the field of education.⁸⁶ Kay felt that education was one of the most important ways of 'eradicating the germs of pauperism from the rising generation'; however, it must be remembered that Kay's ideas were considered extremely radical by many, and Digby and Searby claim that he also showed a tendency to 'sentimentalise' children.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, in 1861, the exhaustive Newcastle Commission inquiry into popular education spoke about 'educating children out of their vicious propensities'.⁸⁸ Similarly, in 1844 J. H. Vivian, Member of Parliament for Swansea, thought that pauper children should not only be 'sufficiently instructed', but proper attention ought to be paid to their 'morals and conduct', so they would become 'independent and respectable members of society'.⁸⁹ Joseph Bell appears to have a bright boy who answered his teachers' queries with ease, unlike the other boys in the class who looked 'simple and perplexed' at what Bell saw as a very easy question. He was later made senior head boy of the institution.⁹⁰

⁸³ Edward Tufnell, Poor Law Commission, Second Annual Report, 1836, 201.

⁸⁴ Anne Digby and Peter Searby, *Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1981), 5; David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom. A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1981), 100; Reports to Poor Law Board on Education of Pauper Children by Poor Law Inspectors, 1862, c. 510, 99, this evidence will be analysed in more depth in Chapter Three.

⁸⁵ Report on the training of pauper children, 1841, 343.

⁸⁶ Alexander M. Ross, 'Kay-Shuttleworth and the Training of Teachers for Pauper Schools', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3 (1967), 275-283.

⁸⁷ James Phillips Kay, Poor Law Commission, *Fourth Annual Report*, 1837-38, 140; Crowther, *The Workhouse System*, 202; Digby, Searby, *Children, School and Society*, 7.

⁸⁸ *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of popular education in England*, vols. 1-6, 1861, paper no. 2794-I, 377 [hereafter Newcastle Commission].

⁸⁹ Vivian, *Letters addressed to the Ratepayers in the Swansea Union*, 5.

⁹⁰ Bell, *Village Lad*, 20-1, 47.

Crowther claims that workhouse officers were 'selected at worst through nepotism, at best because they were honest'.⁹¹ She calculated from figures taken from a Poor Law Return that the average salary paid to workhouse school mistresses in 1849 was £16 a year. Some unions, such as those in East Anglia, paid up to £20 a year.⁹² From 1846 unions could claim monetary grants for education from the central authorities. The amount depended upon the skill level of the teacher and the numbers of children being taught.⁹³ On average, in 1852, first-class masters in common elementary schools earned £133 a year while the equivalent workhouse master was earning £65.⁹⁴

However, economic pragmatism also came to the fore at times. Pauper inmates were often used for teaching, such as at Tenbury wells in Worcestershire.⁹⁵ In Swansea workhouse, when the school mistress was dismissed because of low numbers, six older girls were taught by the school master, and the younger girls were in the charge of an inmate, Ellen Crone.⁹⁶ Jelinger Symons did not appear too unhappy by this makeshift strategy as three months earlier he had recommended that Crone should be given 'a small sum' for teaching the girls reading and needlework, although he took the opportunity again to recommend the formation of a district school with neighbouring unions.⁹⁷ In 1847 the infamous inquiry known in Wales as the *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* or the 'treachery of the Blue Books' was published and later described by one historian as 'the Glencoe and Amritsar of Welsh history'.⁹⁸ The inquiry concluded that the Welsh were badly educated, poor, dirty and unchaste. Use of the Welsh language was blamed for the alleged 'backwardness' of the Welsh, and one of the consequences of the report was the imposition of a wholly English system of education in Wales.⁹⁹

Punishments

In 1841 James Phillip Kay had recommended that 'once the children had been trained into docility' corporal punishment should 'fall into disuse' as soon as possible.¹⁰⁰ Later in the century the Reverend Rudge, chaplain of the North Surrey District School, claimed that because of 'gentle persuasion' and 'the practice of private prayer',

⁹¹ Crowther, *The Workhouse System*, 113; Parker claims that the daughter of the workhouse master was employed as schoolmistress in Kington workhouse in Radnorshire, see, Parker, 'Radnorshire and the New Poor Law', 189.

⁹² Crowther, *The Workhouse System*, 127; Return of Officers employed in Unions under the Poor Law Board in England and Wales, 1846-48, paper no. 306, 1849; Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, 187.

⁹³ Ray Pallister, 'Workhouse Education in County Durham: 1834-1870', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 16:3 (1968), 279-91, 280-1; Crompton, *Workhouse Children*, 107.

⁹⁴ Pallister, 'Workhouse Education', 290.

⁹⁵ Crompton, *Workhouse Children*, 130.

⁹⁶ WGAS, U/S 4/1, Visiting Committee Report Books, 3 November 1857.

⁹⁷ As above., 26 August 1857. For several weeks again in 1870 a pauper, Charles Austin, taught the children, U/S 4/4, Visiting Committee Report Books, 21 November 1870, 22 December 1870.

⁹⁸ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980), 16-17.

⁹⁹ For a contemporary rebuttal of the Inquiry see E. Jones, *A Vindication of the Educational and Moral Condition of Wales* (Llandovery, 1848).

¹⁰⁰ Report on the training of pauper children 1841, 117.

corporal punishment was becoming 'almost unknown' in the school.¹⁰¹ However, a Poor Law Report of 1873 had detailed the corporal punishment of boys in workhouse across Britain during a six month period.¹⁰² The vast majority of unions across Britain recorded little or no corporal punishment during this period, however there were some exceptions. In Birmingham, 19 children were beaten; the Isle of Wight and Oswestry recorded 12 and 10 punishments respectively. Unions within London recorded some of the highest figures with 15 in St. Pancras, 16 in Marylebone and 38 in Shoreditch. In Wales, only the Anglesey Union had inflicted a substantial number of corporal punishments at eight. Every other union had reported no corporal punishment except one by either the Merthyr or Neath Union.¹⁰³ The large district schools of Walsall and West Bromwich recorded the highest overall number of punishments at 69.¹⁰⁴ However, former inmates' memories show that corporal punishment was always remembered and happened more frequently than the 'official' records suggest. Shaw talks about how boys' reactions to beating varied considerably. Some boys would 'writhe and sob', while others maintained a 'stolid silence'. One beating appears to be lodged firm in Shaw's memory; he reported that it was a 'living horror', and during the beating he witnessed, 'thin red stripes' appeared over the boy's back, with the 'screaming' dying down as the boy lost consciousness.¹⁰⁵

Whilst the 'new' poor law generated a vast bureaucratic record-keeping machine it is prudent to assume incompleteness within most poor law records, and the incidence of corporal punishment is one area where interrogation of the available sources is particularly advisable. It is, however, unlikely that any firm conclusions can be made regarding the over or under reporting of corporal punishment. Neither is it prudent to forward unsubstantiated generalisations such as Hendrick's argument that the prevalence of 'legal violence' in institutions 'nearly always' resulted in not only corporal punishment, but also sexual abuse.¹⁰⁶ It is therefore problematic to attempt firm assumptions concerning the punishment of pauper children because, as Crowther claims, 'amongst all classes of society, treatment of children ranged from the utmost severity to total refusal to inflict punishment'.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Symons recorded that in workhouse schools he had encountered 'every diversity of schoolteacher from very nearly the best, to decidedly the worst'.¹⁰⁸ Although a lack of uniformity existed regarding the disciplining of pauper children prior to an order of 1841, the pulling or 'clipping' of ears as a punishment survived long into the twentieth century, if largely

¹⁰¹ Observations on Report of Mrs. Senior to Local Government Board, as to Effect on Girls of System of Education at Pauper Schools, by E.C. Tufnell, late Inspector of Poor Law Schools in Metropolitan District, 1875, paper no. 10, 2.

¹⁰² Poor Law (children in workhouses). Returns of the age of the youngest boy and the youngest girl in each workhouse in England and Wales, who may be under industrial training on the 25th day of March 1873: and, of the number of boys in the workhouses who, during the half-year ended at the said date, were subjected to corporal punishment. 1873, c. 363, 13 [hereafter Returns, 1873].

¹⁰³ Returns, 1873, 13, it is difficult to glean whether the Neath or Merthyr Union inflicted this punishment as there appears to be a mistake in printing.

¹⁰⁵ Shaw, *When I was a Child*, 109.

¹⁰⁶ Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 77.

¹⁰⁷ Crowther, *The Workhouse System*, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Committee of Council on Education, 1847-9, 243.

anecdotally.¹⁰⁹ Although it is likely that a degree of under-reporting of punishment abuses occurred, Crompton's assertion that cases of over-punishment 'almost always' went unrecorded is impossible to substantiate and, as Murdoch demonstrates, complaints were initiated from within institutions and also from parents.¹¹⁰

However, memories of corporal punishment always stay with former pauper children. Joseph Bell remembers the day when he was punished for writing and delivering a letter to his friend Mary, who was also in the institution. While she suffered the humiliation and distress of having her hair cut off as older girls were allowed to have their hair long, and Mary was very proud of hers, Joseph suffered pain as well as humiliation.¹¹¹ He was taken into a public room, and as he had been on short rations for a fortnight was 'skin and bones' when he was told to remove all his clothes ready for his punishment. Then he recalled 'five burly, red faced, jolly looking farmers' entered the room', they were 'laughing as though they were about to enjoy the fun, as if they were going to witness a prize fight or a Spanish bull fight'.¹¹² Once the beating began he recalled that 'as each stroke descended the pain grew more intense, the weals started quivering and running into each other, and felt like a dreadful burning sensation'. After the twelfth blow he fell on the floor 'like a dead thing'. Physical pain and injury was not the only result of the beating, he later became 'very depressed and lost interest in everything'.¹¹³ Joseph bell had previously thought of his masters with respect and sometimes affection, and it must have come as a huge shock to be treated so by them, even if some had tried to reduce the punishment he received. That the central authorities did not necessarily equate authority with cruelty had been confirmed in an 1841 report which advised that care should be taken in the selection of school master 'lest we introduce a tyrannical despot rather than a father'.¹¹⁴ Jelinger Symons did not believe that 'cruelty or severity of discipline' was common in workhouse schools, although he did feel they existed in some unions.¹¹⁵

Health

In Cardiff Workhouse, an enquiry into infant mortality in 1854 showed that out of 114 babies born in the workhouse in the three years prior to June 1854, 39 had died before their second birthday, however, the medical officer blamed these high figures on a measles epidemic.¹¹⁶ Contagious skin and eye diseases appeared to be prevalent among the workhouse children. Instances of the itch (scabies) especially and scald head (ringworm) were mentioned repeatedly in the sources, as were general eye complaints and the more serious ophthalmia, which was a major cause of childhood

¹⁰⁹ General Order - Workhouse Rules, Poor Law Commission, *Eighth Annual Report*, 1842, 47-61.

¹¹⁰ Crompton, *Workhouse Children*, 61; Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, although not all complaints were upheld, 108.

¹¹¹ Bell, *Village Lad*, 86.

¹¹² As above, 97-9.

¹¹³ As above, 91, 99

¹¹⁴ Report on the training of pauper children, 1841, 345-7.

¹¹⁵ Committee of Council on Education, 233.

¹¹⁶ Marian Williams 'Some aspects of the history of poor law provision in Cardiff during the nineteenth century (Cardiff: unpublished M.Phil thesis, 2003), 102, the medical officer blamed these high figures on a measles epidemic.

blindness in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ It was agreed by guardians in the 1850s that the appearance of the children was one of pallor and sickliness. One Swansea guardian, Matthew Moggridge, was particularly anxious about this and remarked that a workhouse boy could always be picked out of a crowd because of his 'sickly appearance', which was at odds with the 'erect and manly gait' which had been expected by the Poor Law Commission in 1841.¹¹⁸ However, contemporary commentators frequently bemoaned what Florence Hill termed 'the inevitable consequences of ordinary workhouse life'. For Hill, this equated to a 'dulness [sic] of apprehension, ill-temper, a want of self-respect, and negligence as regards the care of property'.¹¹⁹ Charles Dickens claimed that the 'monotonous semi-prison life' of the workhouse must 'degrade and depress' the minds of pauper children.¹²⁰ In Swansea John Dillwyn Llewelyn described the workhouse children thus:

They rise in the morning, are dressed by the nurse in the livery of pauperism - the grey jacket and hood, that marks them as a peculiar and inferior class; the bell rings, and the breakfast appears; dinner comes round for them with equal regularity; then there is the weary round of lessons to be learnt; a poor attempt to play in a court-yard, not so good as the airing yards in a gaol; a life of listless idleness; a depressing routine not calculated to elevate the moral or physical condition of a boy or girl; a system of continual dependence upon the help and assistance of others, which must tend to perpetuate a race of paupers.¹²¹

Nonetheless, many of these assertions were preludes to pushing for personal agendas in the care of pauper children. In the case of Hill, Dickens and Dillwyn Llewelyn above, it was their championing of the boarding-out system.¹²² Philanthropist Francis Peek vocalised Dillwyn Llewelyn's concerns more directly when he contended that workhouse children were 'lamentably deficient in that spirit of independence which is the greatest stimulus to exertion'.¹²³ In 1855 guardians had discussed the 'evils resulting' from the system of sick children sharing a ward with prostitutes suffering from venereal and other 'loathsome diseases'. One visitor was shocked to find a sick female child in the same bed as a 'well known prostitute'. It was considered that this state of affairs could only lead to the girls in the workhouse becoming prostitutes themselves and is emblematic of the perception that 'vicious' characteristics such as immorality were contagious.¹²⁴ This assessment of workhouses

¹¹⁷ These were common complaints among workhouse children, along with scrofula (tuberculosis of the lymph nodes), Angela Negrine, 'The Treatment of Sick Children in the Workhouse by the Leicester Poor Law Union, 1867-1914', *Family and Community History*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2010), 34-44, 35-6.

¹¹⁸ *The Cambrian*, 7 December 1855; Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 96.

¹¹⁹ Davenport Hill, *Children of the State*, 89.

¹²⁰ Charles Dickens, 'Little Pauper Boarders,' *All The Year Round, A Weekly Journal. Conducted by Charles Dickens. With Which is Incorporated Household Words*, 28 August 1869, 301-05, 301.

¹²¹ John, K. Ingram 'Additional Facts and Arguments on the Boarding-Out of Pauper Children', *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, part XLIX (February 1876), 504-23, 512.

¹²² This will be analysed fully in Chapter Four.

¹²³ Francis Peek, 'Hereditary pauperism and pauper education', *The Contemporary Review*, December 1877, 133-43, 135.

¹²⁴ As above, 25 May 1855.

as ‘promiscuous environments’ was widespread, and the premise was reiterated by social purity campaigner Ellice Hopkins, who claimed that girls in the workhouse faced the threat of ‘the deepest degradation of all’.¹²⁵ It is likely that the workhouse infirmary was the only treatment centre available for poor women with venereal disease and their presence was thought liable to contaminate the vulnerable morals of young girls. Certain voluntary hospitals served the non-pauper working-class while, as Walkowitz claims, the ‘less desirable patients’ used the workhouse infirmary.¹²⁶

Although it is of course appropriate that the guardians should want to protect young female inmates from the perceived dangers of moral contagion, were they manipulated by what Driver calls the ‘discourse of moral regulation’ and, were young girls so influenced by their association with the alleged ‘vicious’ characteristics of some inmates that complete separation was imperative?¹²⁷ Florence Hill was ‘convinced’ that the inevitable association between girls and mothers of illegitimate children in workhouses was ‘polluting’ and she cited the similar views of many others, including Edward Tufnell, Edward Senior and Jelinger Symons, as corroboration.¹²⁸ Symons had claimed that even when the children were in separate rooms from the other workhouse inmates, they could hear continually the ‘obscene conversation of the depraved portion of the adults’.¹²⁹ This expectation continued into the twentieth century. As Thane points out, although the 1905-9 Poor Laws Royal Commission found little evidence, it was still assumed that workhouses contained a large number of prostitutes.¹³⁰ However, although Andrew Doyle was a long-standing advocate of separate district schools for pauper children, he derided the argument that a child would become ‘contaminated’ by their occasional association with adults in the workhouse ‘as it would contract disease if it entered a plague-stricken city’.¹³¹ Similarly in London, arguably containing the most overcrowded workhouses, a direct correlation between a workhouse childhood and adult criminality was not borne out. The vast majority of women under 40 years of age who were incarcerated in Metropolitan prisons on 9 April 1873 had not been educated in workhouse schools.¹³²

¹²⁵ Paula Bartley, *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000), 105.

Ellice Hopkins, *Preventative Work or the Care of our Girls* (London, 1881), 7, cited in Moore, ‘Social Control or Protection of the Child?’, 371.

¹²⁶ Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society, Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 57.

¹²⁷ Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 99.

¹²⁸ Hill, *Children of the State*, 5.

¹²⁹ Committee of Council on Education, 1847-49, 232.

¹³⁰ Thane, ‘Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England’, 39.

¹³¹ Second Report from the Select Committee on Poor Relief, 1862, paper no. 321, 83. In the Mouat Report of 1878, J. R. Mozley also spoke out against the indiscriminate ‘casting of a general stigma’ upon workhouse children, Report of F.J. Mouat and Captain J.D. Bowly, on Home and Cottage System of training and educating Children of Poor, 1878, paper no. 285, 22 [hereafter Mouat Report].

¹³² Out of 685 women, only 13 had been educated in a workhouse school, Local Government Board, Third Annual Report, 1874, c. 1071, 348; However, three-quarters of births in 634 Welsh and English workhouses during 1871-80, were to unmarried women, see Lara Marks, ‘Medical Care for Pauper Mothers and their Infants: Poor Law Provision and Local Demand in East London, 1870-1929’, *Economic History Review*, vol. 46, no. 3 (1993), 518-42, 518.

Diet

One of the more enduring images in *Oliver Twist*, which was probably confirmed and disseminated more widely by the 1968 film *Oliver!*, is the apparent near-starvation suffered by workhouse children. Dickens wrote that ‘boys have generally excellent appetites’ which the workhouse failed to satisfy with ‘three meals of thin gruel a-day, with an onion twice a week, and half a roll on Sundays.’¹³³ This potent imagery appears to have coloured some historians’ view of workhouse diets. Crompton’s assertion that an already ‘inadequate’ diet was aggravated by ‘institutionalised starving’ as punishment, is one example.¹³⁴ In her extensive analysis of 3,000 workhouse and prison diets, Johnston claims that ‘starvation had no role in the policies of either institution’.¹³⁵ It is very likely that workhouse children were better fed than their contemporaries living at home with poor parents. Of course, it could be claimed that the diet was still ‘inadequate’ by today’s benchmarks, but similar anachronistic comparisons could be made concerning most social conditions of the nineteenth century and is not helpful to our understanding of the period.¹³⁶

In the workhouse, children were assured of receiving a fixed amount of food and did not have to compete for food with the adults and siblings in their family.¹³⁷ As Ross claims, death by starvation was still a ‘regular occurrence’ up to and after 1870.¹³⁸ Food was also used as a means of control and punishments often took the form of a modification of rations. This appears to be generally the substitution of one meal for bread and water or in the case of many girls, a dinner of potatoes instead of the day’s predetermined food.¹³⁹ Four young girls who had damaged a partition in the workhouse were punished by their dinner allowance being halved and their treacle ration withdrawn.¹⁴⁰ Workhouse food was monotonous, under-seasoned and probably badly cooked, but the quantities were sufficient and it was designed to deter rather than starve.¹⁴¹ As Edward Ostler, one time medical officer to Swansea House of Industry, reported to the 1834 Royal Commission, ‘humanity dictates that the inmates of a workhouse should be fed quite as well as a labourer’s family’, and the food, whilst wholesome, should be ‘of the plainest description’. Ostler described the pre-1834 diet in Swansea workhouse as meat, broth and pea soup, each for two days, with fish on

¹³³ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 24-28.

¹³⁴ Crompton, *Workhouse Children*, 67.

¹³⁵ Valerie Johnston, *Diet in Workhouses and Prisons, 1835-1895* (New York: Garland, 1985), 5.

¹³⁶ Crompton cites software ‘Super Diet’ written by the University of Surrey, which was used to determine that the workhouse diets revealed up to a 56 per cent deficiency in energy content, 50 per cent shortfall in vitamin C, hardly any vitamin D and a ‘serious’ deficiency in calcium. The diets were compared with ‘what would be regarded today as a balanced diet’, Crompton, *Workhouse Children*, 67, notes 200 and 201, 244.

¹³⁷ Crowther, *The Workhouse System*, 215.

¹³⁸ Ross, *Love and Toil*, 27.

¹³⁹ WGAS, U/S 24, Workhouse Punishment Book, 27 March 1867

¹⁴⁰ As above., 10 January 1855, the girls were Mary Richards, 9; Georgina Shipters, 9; Eleanor Murphy, 8 and Margaret Casey, 8. See above for the actions of Mary Richards’ mother, also named Mary, for her vocal opposition to her daughter’s punishment.

¹⁴¹ Although in 1845 it was recorded that salt was allowed at meals ‘*ad libitum*’ in Swansea workhouse, TNA, MH12/16438, 14 August 1845.

the seventh day. No amounts were given, but Ostler also reported that the diet should be 'sufficient'.¹⁴²

Food was also used as reward as well as punishment. Various treats were given to the children throughout the year and most included food that could be considered an indulgence. These treats were promoted as being obtained by good behaviour and by conforming to the projected ethos of work, independence and thrift as adults. One annual trip to a local beach also saw the children 'plentifully regaled with tea and plumcake' and special teas were often arranged.¹⁴³ Christmas was a time that appears to be most associated with 'luxury' food for workhouse children. Entertainment too was always a feature in workhouse Christmas celebrations. Festivities in 1882 were referred to as 'a right merrie day' and a newspaper reported that 'the remarkable feature in the programme was the difference in the ages of the musicians. The youngest being 3, sang 'a little cock sparrow who sat in a tree', the oldest was 'a sprightly young fellow of 83', the day ended with the 'grateful' inmates going to their wards 'feeling thankful that in the general joy they were not forgotten'.¹⁴⁴ Joseph Bell remembered Christmas with fondness, and he too enjoyed the beef and plum pudding served to the children who were also allowed second helpings. The men of the workhouse were given beer and tobacco, while the women enjoyed snuff and tea. Before the children were sent to bed to dream about the Christmas tree celebrations the following day, they were all given a 'little present' from the visitors.¹⁴⁵

In some unions however, poor diets generated widely reported scandals. At Andover workhouse the diet was found to be extremely meagre in quantity, resulting partly from the 'dishonesty' of the workhouse master. In consequence, inmates who were employed in bone crushing 'ate the gristle and marrow of the bones they were set to break'. The subsequent inquiry also found that if the workhouse visiting committee had 'acted regularly and duly in the discharge of their important duties', the scandals could not have occurred.¹⁴⁶

Conclusions

A weary statement by schools inspector, J. L. Clutterbuck paints a rather jaded and monotonous picture of workhouse education:

The annals of workhouse schools, as a rule, are uneventful. Teachers come and go, and boards of guardians introduce, from time to time, certain changes of detail or administration; but the same general features are observable from year to year.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Royal Commission of Inquiry into Administration and Practical Operation of Poor Laws, 1834, appendix C, 173. It is likely that bread, potatoes and gruel were also on the menu.

¹⁴³ *The Cambrian*, 15 June 1860.

¹⁴⁴ *The Cambrian*, 28 December 1882.

¹⁴⁵ Bell, *Village Lad*, 73-4.

¹⁴⁶ Report from the Select Committee on Andover Union, 1846, paper nos. 663-I; 663-II, iv-v.

¹⁴⁷ Local Government Board, *Sixth Annual Report*, 1877, c. 1865, 79.

This description of the workhouse school can be extended to the life of a workhouse child, dreary, monotonous and probably lacking stimulus. However, for all its reputation as a locus of discipline and disgrace, the workhouse was also a site of future redemption.¹⁴⁸ Workhouses may have been regarded with horror by some, but it was nearly always imagined by the poor law guardians as a place of reclamation for the children in their care. Combined strategies of moral and intellectual education and religious and vocational training of workhouse children were intended to inculcate respectability, responsibility and independence. Children were trained to conform to notions of what was imagined as normal working-class uprightness and industry. Their education would lift them out of pauperism and their proscribed leisure time and 'treats' would generate expectations which could be achieved by their hard work and decency. However, the children's proximity to the more 'vicious' inmates of the workhouse was imagined to instil beliefs that a similar lifestyle could be acquired by means of prostitution or criminality. Poor law guardians believed that their objective for fashioning pauper children into industrious citizens of the future would not be achieved in the workhouse. Consequently, the following chapters analyse the multiple strategies used by guardians and central authorities to realise their aims.

¹⁴⁸ Hollen Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, 261.

Beyond the workhouse

James Andrews was seven years old when he died of cholera in January 1849. On his final journey to hospital he sat on the knee of a 14 year old classmate and took some comfort from laying his head on the older boy's shoulder. His body was so thin that the doctor who performed his autopsy remarked on its startling emaciation.¹⁵⁰ James was survived by his older brother who had also lived in the same pauper 'farm' in Tooting which was owned by George Drouet. James Andrews was one of around 180 children to die of cholera in Drouet's school that January, and one of the 1,400 pauper children Drouet had reportedly underfed and mistreated. Twelve year old Thomas Mills had run away twice from the school because of hunger and beatings; the children were often thirsty and the boys took to drinking water that ran down a gutter from the girls' bathroom. Punishments other than severe beatings included head shaving, having clothes taken away, and boys being made to wear girls' clothes in school.¹⁵¹

The conditions in Drouet's school were reported across Britain at the time, and were often cited many years later as a cautionary tale regarding the care of their pauper children. An article in the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* reprinted from the *Cheltenham Journal* was similar to many others across Britain when it asked how the poor law and the people of London could 'coop up and starve 1,400 children'.¹⁵² *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* called Drouet's a 'pest house' and blamed guardians for 'atrocities that can never be perpetrated again'.¹⁵³ Charles Dickens wrote several articles anonymously in *The Examiner* about the tragedy, and his anger is palpable. He claimed that cholera was present in Drouet's establishment because 'it was brutally conducted, vilely kept, preposterously inspected, dishonestly defended, a disgrace to a Christian community, and a stain upon a civilised land'.¹⁵⁴ Scandals and crises often drove change in both local and central poor law strategy throughout the nineteenth century; the tragedy at Drouet's had a profound and long-term impact on future policies and perceptions of separate establishments for pauper children.

This chapter argues that strategies concerning institutions and homes for pauper children away from the workhouse shifted considerably during the second half of the nineteenth century and into the Edwardian period. Most changes were contested, and they generated fierce debate and argument among poor law officials, the press and child welfare campaigners.¹⁵⁵ Analysis of these debates and policies allows us glimpses

¹⁴⁹ Charles Dickens, 'Boys to mend', *Household Words*, 11 September 1852, 129.

¹⁵⁰ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org, 14 October 2014), April 1849, trial of Drouet (t18490409-919).

¹⁵¹ *The Times*, 31 January, 1849. For the conditions and treatment of farmed out and 'put to nurse' children in London, see Green, *Pauper Capital*, 138-43.

¹⁵² *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, 20 January, 1849.

¹⁵³ *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 22 April 1849.

¹⁵⁴ *The Examiner*, 'The Paradise at Tooting', 20 January 1849, other articles were 'The Tooting Farm', 27 January 1849; 'A Recorder's Charge', 3 March 1849; 'The Verdict for Drouet', 21 April 1849.

¹⁵⁵ See Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*; Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 52-61.

into the lived experiences of pauper children, and enhances our understanding of how the well-being and future prospects of poor children in England and Wales were perceived. Pauper children were seen as being damaged by their parentage, surroundings or time spent in the workhouse. They were broken children who, as Dickens claimed, needed to be mended.¹⁵⁶ Solutions and motives for the children's restoration were driven by overlapping and competing factors of concern, duty and anxiety. The intentions and ideologies of many poor law officials and commentators were altruistic and driven by notions of pity, compassion and Christian duty for vulnerable children. However, fear of the children's possible lifelong dependency on the poor laws powered campaigns for costly education and training that could only be provided away from the workhouse at separate establishments.

Depending on the fashions of the time, geographical location or guardians' will a pauper child could find themselves living in a 'farm' school like that at Quatt in Shropshire or in vast buildings such as the district schools built for the Manchester and Liverpool poor law unions; the establishment of the equally large North Surrey District School was an explicit response to the tragedy at Drouet's school. Other separate establishments also sought to remove children away from urban centres but were based on a 'village' concept containing houses, shops, schools and training facilities. Later in the nineteenth century smaller 'cottage homes' were established which were not so insular and where children attended the local village schools. By the beginning of the twentieth century many unions had followed Sheffield Union's 'scattered homes' system where small groups of children lived in ordinary houses in the community with a foster mother. While at first glance this appears to be a rather whiggish progression from 'barrack schools' to the localised foster care favoured for looked-after children today, many of these strategies overlapped and, like today, policies dipped in and out of favour and fashion and were keenly promoted by their supporters, and criticised by their detractors.

District Schools

No one strategy was fully embraced by all stakeholders and poor law officials. However, the close geographical proximity between London poor law unions, and the shadow cast by Drouet meant there was little difficulty to their joining forces and over 3,000 places for London children were created in the subsequent district schools in the ten years to 1857.¹⁵⁷ While legislation in 1844 and 1848 had enabled poor law unions to join forces in order to form large school districts as a means of removing children from workhouses, many London unions had 'farmed out' children prior to this because of severe workhouse overcrowding in London.¹⁵⁸ While several smaller

¹⁵⁶ Dickens, 'Boys to mend', 129; on Dickens' 'imaginative rendering of real situations' see Jessica Valdez, 'Dickens's "Pious Fraud": The Popular Press and the Moral Suasion of Fictional Narrative', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 44:4 (2011), 377-400, 381.

¹⁵⁷ Green, *Pauper Capital*, 147.

¹⁵⁸ Poor Law Amendment Act, 1844 and District Schools Act, 1848. The Industrial Schools Acts of 1857 and 1861 also empowered the state to send certain children to certified industrial schools which included children under 14 who had been found begging, wandering, destitute, homeless or frequenting 'the company of thieves'. Also eligible were children under 12 who had committed an offence punishable by prison and children under 14 whose parents were unable to control. Following

private providers had offered places for children from London unions in Edmonton and Enfield, the child 'farming' business had been dominated by the aforementioned George Drouet in Brixton and later in Tooting, and another large scale contractor Frederick Aubin in Norwood.¹⁵⁹ While Drouet's farm became an allegory for the neglect of pauper children, improvements brought about as a result of critical reports in the 1840s had culminated in the poor law authority buying Frederick Aubin's school in Norwood, rebranding it the Central London District School and retaining him as manager.¹⁶⁰

The publicity given to the opening of the first purpose-built poor law district school, the North Surrey District School, demonstrates that pauper children remained in the public domain, and their treatment was subjected to scrutiny from many quarters. The establishment of large district and separate schools was celebrated as an innovation in child welfare. Among the guests at the opening ceremony were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London and Winchester, the High Sheriff of Surrey, two local members of Parliament and a 'large assemblage' of magistrates. While around 200 eminent guests enjoyed a meal provided by a local tavern, over 400 children were 'regaled with roast beef and plum pudding'.¹⁶¹ Nonetheless, more simple fare was also popular with the children such as bread and milk cooked until crisp in the oven.¹⁶²

The significant sums of public money spent building and equipping district schools also suggests that the care and education of pauper children was of considerable importance to poor law policy-makers. Just under £50,000 was spent purchasing the Norwood school from Frederick Aubin, furnishing it and later relocating the establishment to new premises at Hanwell.¹⁶³ Similarly, the North Surrey School cost over £31,000 and the South Metropolitan over £43,000.¹⁶⁴ This expenditure did not go unremarked and led to the district school for the Manchester union at Swinton being dubbed a 'pauper palace' because of its architecture and facilities.¹⁶⁵ Dickens described Swinton as easily mistaken for a 'wealthy nobleman's residence' with a frontage of 450 feet, surrounded by 'pleasure-gardens and play-grounds', along with cultivated land totalling around 22 acres. It must have presented an awe-inspiring sight to boys and girls from the streets or lodging houses of Manchester and the overcrowded workhouses of Liverpool.¹⁶⁶

While many of the children would have been used to the size and forbidding nature of the 'bastille' type workhouses of urban England, they must have been astonished by

the late nineteenth-century education acts, children who did not attend school regularly could also be admitted to industrial schools.

¹⁵⁹ Green, *Pauper Capital*, 142.

¹⁶⁰ Dickens, 'London Pauper Children', 550.

¹⁶¹ *The Times*, 21 November 1850.

¹⁶² Martin Ramsbottom, *The Cottage Homes, Moor St, Kirkham*, Hedgehog Publications, 2008.

¹⁶³ 1857-58 (395) Poor Law (district schools). Return relating to district schools established under orders of the Poor Law Board, 2.

¹⁶⁴ As above.

¹⁶⁵ See *Manchester Times*, 30 July 1853; *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* 17 February 1849.

¹⁶⁶ Dickens, 'Visit to a Pauper Palace', *Household Words*, 13 July 1850, 361; as Driver claims, after 1870 the building of such large institutions was confined to London, Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 92.

the buildings and expanse of land in which the schools were set. On his first day at The South Metropolitan School at Sutton, 'WHR' remembered his first train journey to the schools, and how he had walked up the hill from the railway station hand in hand with a friend gazing up at the 'magnificent place'.¹⁶⁷ He was 'fairly wild with delight, the place seemed so *big*' and the playground a 'fine *large* yard'. Edward Balne attended the Central London District Schools in Hanwell, Middlesex and he also spoke rather longingly about the space and situation at Hanwell which included 'a wonderful view of spacious playing fields, country lanes, extensive farmlands [...] fruit trees, a well-kept cricket ground and a football pitch'.¹⁶⁸

While for the children the space signified a perceived release from cramped conditions of workhouse or home, the authorities saw the space and facilities offered by schools away from the workhouse as a means to compartmentalise and classify the children and their lives. As Murdoch claims, the 'organisation of space' within institutions followed doctrines of middle-class domesticity which were embraced by poor law establishments, and was seen as the polar opposite to what were perceived as the chaotic and undomesticated homes of the poor.¹⁶⁹ Districts schools offered the space to provide segregation of work and recreation as well as gender and age compartmentalisations; they appeared a world away from the cramped and morally confused workhouses. Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Edward Tufnell remarked on the importance of siting schools at a distance from a town for the physical and moral health of the children.¹⁷⁰ Many commentators perceived the rural space as a domestic ideal, Dickens talked of schools being 'far away' from 'the cloud of smoke' with a 'succession of charming views'.¹⁷¹ Writers of domesticity often perceived children metaphorically as gardens, because of the need to sow and cultivate morality, while guarding against 'the winds of adversity and the weeds of vice'.¹⁷² While children spoke of spaces in which to 'romp'; stakeholders regarded rural space as free of miasma, with fresh wind to blow the 'bad' air away.¹⁷³ One Welsh poor law guardian differentiated the urban centre of Swansea and its rural outskirts as respectively the 'black country' and the 'green country'.¹⁷⁴

The education offered children in district schools was superior to that which most independent labourers could afford for their own children. An 1845 report by Seymour Tremenheere and Edward Tufnell gives us some insight into the education and daily lives of the children in Aubin's establishment at Norwood which housed

¹⁶⁷ Local Government Board's Third Annual Report, 1874, 256.

¹⁶⁸ As above.

¹⁶⁹ Brunel University Archives, Burnett Collection, Edward Balne, 'Autobiography of ex-workhouse and Poor Law school boy'.

¹⁶⁹ Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 27.

¹⁷⁰ 1852-53 (674) (674-I) Report from the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children; together with the proceedings of the committee, minutes of evidence, and appendix, 217.

¹⁷¹ Charles Dickens, 'London Pauper Children', *Household Words*, 31 August 1850, 549.

¹⁷² Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 373.

¹⁷³ Local Government Board Third Annual Report, 1874, 256, Dickens, 'Visit to a Pauper Palace', *Household Words*, 13 July 1850, 363.

¹⁷⁴ J. D. Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union, or How to turn a Drone into a Working Bee* (Swansea, 1876).

between 800 and 1,100 children under 15.¹⁷⁵ The curriculum was designed to produce able and employable citizens, and, apart from a lack of the classics, the establishment appears not dissimilar to a middle-class boarding school. Subjects studied here were common to most district schools and included the Bible and scripture history, tables, geography, reading and writing, arithmetic and dictation. Cultural pursuits such as drawing and music were also offered and taken up. The facilities for vocational training offered the boys was purely artisanal and included a tailors shop and cobblers as well as a blacksmith's forge. Marching drill and a naval class included climbing ships' rigging over which, Dickens related, the boys swarmed 'with great delight'.¹⁷⁶

The popularity of a lending library with the older boys at Norwood demonstrates that reading for pleasure was an acceptable activity, although doubtless the content would have been monitored closely. The inspectors reported that the 'discipline and moral tone' of the school had been raised after masters gave more of their time 'during the hours of relaxation'. This included evening walks, and on winter and spring evenings an 'evening school' was established, and boys were also responsible for their own garden plots in the summer months.¹⁷⁷ These activities followed patterns of class-appropriate and 'civilising' activities which were perceived as crucial to the future respectability and employability of undomesticated and abandoned children.¹⁷⁸ Some children like Olive Jewry and Alfred City had backgrounds so unknowable they were named after the only features that could be discerned about them.¹⁷⁹

These huge district schools, often with over a thousand children in one establishment, justified the expense involved in providing the wide range of educational and vocational activities for the children. At Norwood, the educational progress of the 430 boys appears to be generally satisfactory with some achievements and some failures in the tests they were set. Their day was organised into lessons between 8.30 and 11.30, and 1.30 and 4.30 as well as a 15 minute break morning and afternoon. The boys (like the girls) had supper at 6.00pm and went to bed at 9.00pm.¹⁸⁰ In the North Surrey school many different skills were taught. 84 children learned about agriculture, 4 baking, 40 shoemaking, 26 tailoring, 8 carpentry, 6 painting, and 26 were taught general household duties. Some boys were taught engineering and plumbing as there were two steam engines on the premises.¹⁸¹

Household duties were routinely taught to the girls, with the gendered expectations of the day determining how pauper children were educated and trained at district schools, although Jane Senior felt that 'more mothering' was lacking from most girls'

¹⁷⁵ 1845 [622] Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, with appendices. 1843-4, 179-200, [hereafter Tremeneheere, Tufnell Report], 1845; Fifth annual report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1839, c.239, 92.

¹⁷⁶ Charles Dickens, 'London Pauper Children', *Household Words*, 1:23 (1850), 552.

¹⁷⁷ Tremeneheere, Tufnell Report, 1845, 181.

¹⁷⁸ Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, 275, and see, for example Local Government Board: Fourth Annual Report, 172.

¹⁷⁹ Dickens, 'London Pauper Children', 550.

¹⁸⁰ Tremeneheere, Tufnell Report, 1845, 182.

¹⁸¹ 1852-53 (674) (674-I) Report from the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children; together with the proceedings of the committee, minutes of evidence, and appendix, 221.

educations.¹⁸² While girls generally studied similar academic subjects as boys, it was thought that 'the same amount of intellectual development' was not as necessary for the 'female sex as to the male sex'. Girls' educational abilities were also not praised as much as boys although failures in girls' understanding was often pointed out.¹⁸³ Tufnell reported that girls benefitted from the district schools but apart from a few who trained as pupil teachers, most invariably became domestic servants. Tufnell felt that 'the inevitably dull routine of such a life' deprived 'their histories of that varied romantic character which often distinguishes the life of a boy pushing his way in the word, and hence their biographies are never so interesting or quotable'.¹⁸⁴

Commentators such as Dickens also wrote far less about the girls in Norwood, saying only that they had three days of schooling and three days of training in 'household' occupations' such as cleaning, washing ironing, mangling and needlework'.¹⁸⁵ Although these tasks were thought appropriate and 'natural' for girls, many hated sewing and darning. The Kirkham home had 'darning nights', and one girl related 'how we hated this'. When clothes were returned clean from the laundry buttons had to be sewed on and stockings mended, if the house mother wasn't satisfied she would put a scissors through the the darn and it had to be done again.¹⁸⁶

This training was designed to produce literate and numerate wives and servants, and girls from Norwood apparently found and kept places in domestic service and were generally reported as giving satisfaction to their employers.¹⁸⁷ As in the workhouse, there was strict segregation of the sexes. In Hanwell, Edward Balne remembered that in 12 years he never entered the girls' grounds and never spoke at meals to them apart from the annual summer fete.¹⁸⁸ In the Ely Industrial Schools of the Cardiff Union, children were segregated during school hours but at meal times met 'in one common room as a family should do'.¹⁸⁹

As district schools contained huge numbers of children, discipline would have been vital to the school's curriculum, and while undeniably essential in such a large establishment, some of the methods seem uncomfortably manipulative. In Swinton, the training regime required children to resist temptations and distractions. The junior playground was lined on two sides by currant bushes, and if any of the fruit was taken by children prematurely they were left out of the subsequent picking and eating of the ripe fruits. Similarly, the children were expected to ignore the attentions of the master's friendly dog who was allowed to roam freely among them and instead concentrate solely on their lessons.¹⁹⁰ Tufnell reported that in the first week of the North Surrey school many children rioted and caused £100 worth of damage,

¹⁸² Third Annual Report of the Local Government Board 1873-4. Report No. 22. The Education of Girls in Pauper Schools, by Mrs. Nassau Senior, p. 311.

¹⁸³ Tremenheere, Tufnell Report, 1845, 182.

¹⁸⁴ Local Government Board's Third Annual Report, 1874, 260.

¹⁸⁵ Dickens, 'London Pauper Children', 551.

¹⁸⁶ Ramsbottom, *The Cottage Homes*.

¹⁸⁷ 1839 (239) Fifth annual report of the Poor Law Commissioners: with appendices, 182,185.

¹⁸⁸ Balne, 'Autobiography', 29.

¹⁸⁹ *Cardiff Times*, 2 October 1863.

¹⁹⁰ Dickens, 'Visit to a Pauper Palace', 361, 362.

however, they had quickly become 'so perfectly quiet and orderly' that he compared their lack of riotous conduct to a flock of sheep.¹⁹¹ That children were trained to be 'perfectly quiet' would form much of the later criticism levelled at large 'barrack' schools. Poor law guardian for Eastbourne, Wilhelmina Brodie Hall described the district school child as having no means of doing anything that it likes; it has to do everything by rule, and becomes a mere machine'.¹⁹² Edward Balne seemed to revel in the military lifestyle: 'up at 5.30 'reveille', he recorded, followed by some domestic duties supervised by a servant and two boy 'corporals', then the boys were 'fell in' for breakfast at 7.30.¹⁹³ Balne later became a soldier, so whether his schooling led to this career choice or his language for the school was directed by his future career is uncertain.

Wales

While ideologically and geographically close large urban unions in England embraced the idea of merging to form school districts, the process proved more problematic in both rural and urban Wales. Andrew Doyle, the poor law inspector responsible for Wales and the border regions was a driving force in the establishment of separate schools for pauper children, but his arguments failed to persuade poor law unions in north Wales to create school districts. In Wrexham, the long shadow of Drouet undermined the guardians' confidence in their children being 'sent away' to separate schools.¹⁹⁴ While extensive correspondence was exchanged between Carnarvon, St Asaph and Ruthin unions, and a long meeting attended by guardians from Wrexham, Holywell and Ruthin unions, no agreement to merge was reached.¹⁹⁵ Even Doyle's impassioned plea that many girls educated at Wrexham workhouse had 'turned out bad', took to prostitution and returned to the workhouse pregnant or riddled with 'loathsome disease' failed to convince the majority of guardians.¹⁹⁶

Andrew Doyle had used the Bridgnorth Union in Shropshire as a model of poor law perfection. Bridgnorth was one of several unions which had joined to form the South Eastern Shropshire School District and established Quatt 'farm' school. Doyle marketed Quatt as a paradigm of bucolic enterprise which, rather than spending ratepayers' money on pauper children actually turned a profit. Jelinger Symons had thought the effect of the regime at Quatt was beneficial to the 'minds, morals, heart and conduct' of the children, and boys would learn agricultural and labouring trades, and girls homely pursuits away from the perceived temptation of towns.¹⁹⁷ When a local newspaper wrote about Quatt it was enthusiastic about the '12 little boys with ruddy cheeks' who were digging up potatoes and apparently displaying showing

¹⁹¹ 1852-53 (674) (674-I) Report from the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children; together with the proceedings of the committee, minutes of evidence, and appendix, 216.

¹⁹² 'A Product of the Poor Law', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, October 1896, 538.

¹⁹³ Balne, 'Autobiography', 14-15.

¹⁹⁴ *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* 17 Feb 49,

¹⁹⁵ *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* 18 November 1848, 3 March 1849, although the Ruthin guardians voted in favour of the merger, *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 10 March 1849.

¹⁹⁶ *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 3 March 1849.

¹⁹⁷ 1849 [1111] Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education; with appendices. 1847-8-9. England and Wales. Schools of parochial unions, 250.

contentment and intelligence.¹⁹⁸ All these arguments failed to persuade north Wales guardians to join together, just as it failed to convince most of the unions of England and Wales.¹⁹⁹ Although many individual poor law guardians sought similar outcomes for their children, the formation of large school districts was resisted in most of the country as local guardians balked at the costs involved and failed to find sufficient common ground for collaborations.

It was a similar tale in south Wales, where although Newport Union's Caerleon Industrial School in 1859 and Cardiff Union's Ely Industrial School was established in 1862, no school districts had been formed.²⁰⁰ There was some strong opposition further west as Dr Leahy of the Bridgend and Cowbridge union thought the idea was 'education run mad', and the unions of south west Wales also failed to reach agreement on the formation of school districts.²⁰¹ Jelinger Symons claimed for the removal of children from workhouses to avoid a cycle of 'hereditary' pauperism which in Swansea workhouse he alleged ran to three or four generations, a situation he was convinced would only change if children were moved away from the workhouse.²⁰² Although the Welsh unions lagged behind they were among the first to establish 'cottage homes'.

The end of barrack schools

A call for more 'family' orientated strategies for pauper children fuelled censure of large 'barrack' type schools and were used to promote the establishment of smaller establishments for pauper children. Criticism of schools which 'aggregated' large numbers of children together had been ongoing since the 1850s with concerns ranging from the prevalence of contagious diseases, such as skin complaints and the dangerous eye disease ophthalmia, to the alleged demoralising effect of a large institution.²⁰³ It was widely reported that the 'moral contagion' in large schools was often more of a threat than physical dangers.²⁰⁴ While both men and women spoke against the schools, female commentators felt particularly strongly about what they perceived as the lack of moral and vocational guidance available for girls.²⁰⁵ Henrietta Barnett related a common complaint of the barrack school girls that they were 'unacquainted with the names and uses of kitchen articles' because of the mass catering employed in the schools.²⁰⁶ The future of the race could also be affected as girls were also thought to be lacking in 'God-implanted' maternal instincts, and would be unwilling or unable to care for their children.²⁰⁷

¹⁹⁸ *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 21 September 1848.

¹⁹⁹ *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 31 March 1849.

²⁰⁰ D. B. Hughes, 'The Caerleon Industrial School', *Gwent Local History*, no. 29 (1970), 14-25.

²⁰¹ *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, 18 September 1858.

²⁰² WGAS, U/S 4/1, Workhouse Visiting Committee Report Books, 6 August 1858.

²⁰³ Crowther, *The Workhouse System*, 77.

²⁰⁴ *The Cambrian*, 5 February 1875.

²⁰⁵ Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, 275.

²⁰⁶ Henrietta O. Barnett, 'The Home or the Barrack for the Children of the State', *The Contemporary Review* (August 1894), 243-258, 247.

²⁰⁷ Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 58-9.

Workhouses and Women's Work, published in 1858, had reminded readers that unlike fee-paying public schools there was 'no going home for the holidays' for the children in barrack schools.²⁰⁸ Murdoch claims that middle-class women used domesticity as an 'important rhetorical tool' in their critique of large schools as an entrée into the public realm of children's institutions.²⁰⁹ This expression was used most passionately in hopes for the moral guardianship of pauper girls, and was a familiar theme within the maternalist rhetoric of female reformatories from Elizabeth Fry.²¹⁰ *Workhouses and Women's Work* claimed 'we cannot help thinking that this is a portion of the work which might well be performed by women. Why should not ladies in each parish of the union be appointed to visit the girls'.²¹¹ According to Louisa Twining, the appointment of Jane Senior as the first female poor law inspector 'made a complete change about all the ideas of the treatment of children in the schools'.²¹² Frederic Mouat thought that 'no man could possibly approach the question with so thorough a knowledge of all its bearings, and no official enquiry that I know of, has ever been conducted in so thoroughly careful and painstaking a spirit' as Jane Senior.²¹³ These new female guardians worked to improve domestic comfort for the girls under their care, especially to foster ideals of decency. Miss Baker, first female guardian in Holborn in 1882 cut out 1500 nightdresses herself in her room 'to get them done', as the girls in Holborn poor law schools had no nightwear.²¹⁴ In 1874, Jane Senior recommended the break-up of large schools and the adoption of 'schools of a more home-like character', with no more than 20-30 children of differing ages in each house.²¹⁵ While barrack schools were not abandoned at this time largely because it would entail 'the rejection of costly buildings', a more family orientated system began.²¹⁶

Cottage Homes.

In the 1850s Florence Davenport Hill had accompanied her father on his philanthropic tours, and their visit to the Mettray colony in France must have stayed in her mind when she wrote *Children of the State*, in which she claimed that large numbers in

²⁰⁸ Louisa Twining, *Workhouses and women's work: reprinted from the Church of England Monthly Review*, 1858, 10.

²⁰⁹ Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 53.

²¹⁰ Alana Barton, 'A Woman's Place: Uncovering Maternalistic forms of governance in the 19th century reformatory', *Family & Community History*, 14:2 (2011), 89-104, 90.

²¹¹ Twining, *Workhouses and Women's Work : reprinted from the Church of England Monthly Review*, 1858, 12.

²¹² 1888 (363) Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Poor Law Relief; together with the proceedings of the committee, minutes of evidence, and appendix, 337.

²¹³ Frederic J. Mouat, 'On the Education and Training of the Children of the Poor', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, vol. 43, no. 2 (1880), 183-250. 218.

²¹⁴ Poor law schools committee. Minutes of evidence taken before a departmental committee appointed by the Local Government Board to inquire into the existing systems 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. 1896, c.8032, vol. II.

²¹⁵ 1874 [C.1071] Third annual report of the Local Government Board, 345.

²¹⁶ Third annual report of the Local Government Board, 225.

district schools could be overcome by dividing into smaller groups such as at Mettray.²¹⁷

The Mettray colony in France was a reformatory establishment which, as Driver claims, exerted an 'extraordinary influence' outside France.²¹⁸ Its layout as a 'model' village comprising of houses run as families had not impressed Michel Foucault who saw it as the ultimate personification of 'the disciplinary form at its most extreme, the model in which are concentrated all the coercive technologies of behaviour'.²¹⁹ However throughout the nineteenth century Mettray had turned many a philanthropic tourist's head; Matthew Davenport Hill compared his visit to a pilgrimage to Mecca, and the Reverend Mitchell felt his visit had renewed his belief in the salvation of souls.²²⁰ It was Andrew Doyle's espousal of the system adopted by the Mettray reformatory school following his visit in 1873, and subsequent glowing report that provided an impetus for this model in Britain.²²¹ Doyle recounted his first impression of the French industrial school as a 'well arranged village, amongst villagers, the members of the families engaged at their various occupations', an ordered rural idyll in stark contrast to the undisciplined urban confusion of the workhouse or boarding-out. An arrangement, Doyle felt, that illustrated 'in the most touching way' how this 'family' system had reformed the most 'unpromising subjects'.²²² Twenty years earlier William Leigh had also claimed that the 'success' of Mettray was due principally to the 'family' system in which 'happy influences' were inspired by the 'love of home'.²²³

This facsimile of 'family' was at the forefront of the Cottage Homes regime and followed, as Levene claims, a 'preoccupation with an idealized form of childhood'.²²⁴ Child welfare activist Henrietta Barnett also summed up this romanticised reading of 'family' life when she pictured an inclusive and diverse cottage home which was 'ruled by a working-woman as its mother, containing the helpful girl of fifteen, the weeny

²¹⁷ Hill, *The Children of the State*, 65; see also Matthew Davenport Hill, *Mettray, The Exemplar of reformatory Schools* (London, 1855), 6; for 'philanthropic tourism', see, Jeroen Dekker, 'Philanthropic Networks for Children at Risk in Nineteenth-Century Europe', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, vol.3, no.2 (2007), 235-44.

²¹⁸ Felix Driver, 'Discipline without Frontiers? Representations of the Mettray Reformatory Colony in Britain, 1840-1880', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1990), 272-93, 272.

²¹⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 293.

²²⁰ Matthew Davenport Hill, *Mettray: A Letter from the Recorder of Birmingham to Charles Bowyer Adderley* (1855), 9; 1851 [1357] [1358] Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education; correspondence, financial statements, &c.; and reports by Her Majesty's inspectors of schools. 1850-51. Vol. I, 296.

²²¹ For Doyle's visits to Europe and 'philanthropic tourism', see, Jeroen Dekker, 'Philanthropic Networks for Children at Risk in Nineteenth-Century Europe', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, vol.3, no.2 (2007), 235-44.

²²² Andrew Doyle, *Proposed District School on the System of Mettray* (London, 1873), 7.

²²³ William Henry Leigh, *The reformatory at Mettray: a letter from a visitor to that institution, addressed to a member of the committee of the Warwickshire Reformatory, November 1855* (London: Thomas Hatchard, 1856), 1-15, 5; see also Felix Driver, 'Discipline without Frontiers? Representations of the Mettray Reformatory Colony in Britain, 1840-1880', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1990), 272-93; For a portrayal of Mettray as 'the disciplinary form at its most extreme, the model in which are concentrated all the coercive technologies of behaviour', see Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 293.

²²⁴ Levene, 'Family Breakdown and the "Welfare Child"', 74.

babe of three, the delicate child to whom the cosiest seat must always be given, the cripple who must be helped to school'.²²⁵ At a poor law conference for the Welsh unions, an emotive anecdote bought tears to the eyes of not a few guardians; workhouse children were asked what was the meaning of 'Home'? Some children had laughed and some had stared vacantly, but 'one bright-eyed little fellow had not quite forgotten. He thought a little, and then burst out crying'.²²⁶ In these ways sentiment was used as a way of 'marking out' a particular way of seeing; in this case to generate sympathy for pauper children.²²⁷

The 'family' system that was imagined was to be a far cry from the chaotic home life perceived to be the lot of the indigent poor. The Mouat Report of 1878 had been unequivocal in its estimation of the 'moral and physical characteristics' of pauper children 'as a class'. It was thought imperative that they receive special care in education and training 'to correct the original defects of mind and body which are more or less inseparable from the circumstances of their birth, parentage, and bringing up'.²²⁸ The report recommended that each cottage should house 12 to 20 children in a 'mixed family' arrangement of both boys and girls.²²⁹ Whilst maintaining that pauper children were dependant 'not as a consequence of their errors, but of their misfortunes', the report nevertheless stated that pauper children were generally 'a low moral and physical type' who would have to be fashioned 'into a hardy youth accustomed to wrestle with the physical elements of nature for their bread'.²³⁰ At Marston Green cottage homes in Birmingham the objective was 'to fit both [boys and girls] to become healthy heads of families, and the progenitors of children free from the hereditary taints now common to their class'.²³¹ Many old pupils of Marston were reported as having families of their own who had apparently benefitted indirectly from their parents' 'training' at the homes.²³² The work ethic was shown to boys by example when they reached an age when it was thought appropriate to separate them from girls into a boys only cottage. The cottage had both a 'mother', and a 'father' who was also the homes' industrial trainer. He left for work with the boys every morning, returned home for midday meal and went back to work for the afternoon.²³³

How 'homely' was the cottage homes system, and what type of 'home' was the strategy designed to promote? They seemed to echo a middle-class painting of

²²⁵ Barnett, 'The Home or the Barrack for the Children of the State', 256.

²²⁶ Barnett, 'The Home or the Barrack for the Children of the State', 256.

²²⁷ Judith Stoddart, 'Tracking the Sentimental Eye, in Suzy Anger, ed., *Knowing the Past: Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 204.

²²⁸ Report of F.J. Mouat and Captain J.D. Bowly, on Home and Cottage System of training and educating Children of Poor, 1878, paper no. 285, 22 [hereafter Mouat Report], 11-12.

²²⁹ Mouat Report, 11.

²³⁰ Mouat Report, 8-10.

²³¹ Mouat Report, 8-10.

²³² A Short History of Marston Green Cottage Homes, 1929, 20.

<http://marcusbelben.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Bham%20Lives/Birmingham%20Lives%202001/marston/book.htm>

²³³ Mundella, cmd. 8032, II, 270.

working-class family life; both boys and girls were housed in 'cottages', cared for and supervised by a live-in matron or 'mother'. They ate meals together in their cottage which were prepared by their matron and the older girls, prayers were said, chores were done and suitable leisure pursuits were encouraged. However, the system included very large self-contained establishments almost resembling a small town with schools, workshops and hospitals on the enclosed site. Some like Shoreditch, Marston Green in Birmingham and the Kensington and Chelsea Union's homes at Banstead housed around 372, 420 and 600 children respectively.²³⁴ The Banstead Homes consisted of 20 houses, a school, infirmary, baths and also had its own shop.²³⁵ Slightly smaller was Leicester Union's Countesthorpe Cottage Homes were set in 55 acres of land with 250 children living in 11 cottages. 250 children, 16-20 children per cottage, an infirmary with isolation block, laundry, stores and swimming baths.²³⁶

In her evidence to the Mundella Committee, Miss Tuckwell reported that children were more 'restrained' at Banstead than Marston Green, while children at both establishments led 'a separate life from ordinary children'.²³⁷ In his assessment of the Mettray system Andrew Doyle had recorded some reservations about larger establishments and recommended smaller groups of children for the British model of 'if possible' no more than six boys and six girls per cottage as was the practice in Swiss and German institutions.²³⁸ Following the example of the several non-poor law philanthropic 'family' style establishments investigated for the Mouat Report in which children were educated in on-site schools, it was recommended that education should be on-site in a building 'corresponding to an ordinary village school'.²³⁹ However, poor law inspector H. G. Bowyer's statement in the Mouat Report claimed that the advantages to workhouse children of being educated in a local school with 'children of the independent labouring class' could 'hardly be doubted', and anticipated recommendations in the Mundella Report of 1896 that stressed the importance of pauper children attending 'ordinary' elementary schools 'side by side with other children'.²⁴⁰ However for the larger cottage homes, it was never going to be viable to send such vast numbers of children to local schools and on-site schooling continued in many cottage homes.

In some establishments the children appeared to be isolated within these large cottage homes. At Marston, each cottage had its own playground and it was reported

²³⁴ Mundella II 644-5, Short History of the Homes, 29.

²³⁵ Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 105.

²³⁶ Negrine, 'The Treatment of Sick Children', 37-8.

²³⁷ Mundella,cmd. 8032, II, 244.

²³⁸ Doyle, *Mettray*, 9.

²³⁹ Mouat Report, 12, the schools were Princess Mary's Village Home, Addlestone, Home for Little boys, Farningham, Dr Bannardo's Village Home for Orphans, Destitute and Neglected Girls, Ilford, Philanthropic society's Farm School, Redhill, the Stockwell Orphanage London and the Children's Home, Bonner Road, London.

²⁴⁰ 1896, [C. 8027] Report of the departmental committee appointed by the Local Government Board to inquire into the existing systems 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, Vol. I [hereafter Mundella Report], 43-45.

that 'each home keeps to itself'.²⁴¹ There were 'high brick walls' surrounding cottages in the Kirkham in Lancashire, although separated siblings might meet in the school.²⁴² The children's treatment and well-being depended largely on their house mother, and many cottage homes suffered from a high turnover of staff, and the difficulties in finding women who were capable of looking after up to 30 children with long hours and poor pay. This variance of care was illustrated by reports that some house mothers at Marston were 'more able' to make 'nice little things' for the children than others.²⁴³ The Sheffield Union had experienced staffing problems within their cottage homes. Over twenty matrons or couples had resigned or had been dismissed, some for serious offences such as ill treatment of children, staying out all night, 'drink', and entertaining 'a man whom she could not marry' because of her estranged husband.²⁴⁴ Although high staff turnover seemed to have affected many homes, some house mothers were employed in the same cottage homes for many years. Letitia Lloyd began her employment at Swansea cottage homes in the mid-1880s and died there in 1909 at the age of 68, she was praised for her vigilance and kindness during a measles outbreak, and other periods of sickness at the home.²⁴⁵ James Howard lived in Mrs Lloyd's cottage and in his memoirs recalled that she would often relax her normal firm rule to 'act the nurse to a child in pain'.²⁴⁶

Like the district schools these establishments were expensive: Marston had cost over £40,000 to establish. These large homes were rejected by unions in south Wales which nevertheless took the lead in establishing smaller cottage homes, first in Swansea in 1877, and in 1878 the Bryncoch Cottage Homes in Neath which housed 44 children in groups of 20 and 12. The Bridgend and Cowbridge Union's homes cared for 60 children in groups of 10.²⁴⁷ Only the Pontypridd homes had an on-site school for their 140 children, although the granddaughter of a pupil remarked that her grandmother had described the homes 'so warmly', she was shocked when after her death she realised they were 'a branch of the workhouse'.²⁴⁸

The Welsh unions, although criticised at times for their espousal of smaller, cheaper homes and therefore less well endowed with integral facilities, avoided some of the isolation experienced by other schools because of the integration of their children into

²⁴¹ 1896 [C.8032] Poor law schools committee. Minutes of evidence taken before a departmental committee appointed by the Local Government Board to inquire into the existing systems 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. Vol. II [hereafter Mundella Evidence], 271.

²⁴² Martin Ramsbottom, *The Cottage Homes, Moor Street, Kirkham* (Fylde: Hedgehog Historical Publications, 2008), 7.

²⁴³ Mundella Evidence, 269, 311.

²⁴⁴ Sheffield cottage homes for children (reports). *Copy of the report of the Chief General Inspector, the medical inspector, and the architect of the Local Government Board on the Sheffield cottage homes for children, together with the reply of the Sheffield guardians, and the letter addressed to the guardians by the board on the subject*, 1897, paper no. 113, 22 [hereafter Sheffield Report].

²⁴⁵ *The Cambrian*, 30 June 1909; WGAS, U/S 66/2, Visiting Committee Report Books, 29 June 1887.

²⁴⁶ Howard, *Winding Lanes*, 22.

²⁴⁷ Mouat Report, 10.

²⁴⁸ TNA, ED132/25, 20 September 1904; Former Children's Homes, 'Pontypridd Cottage Homes', http://www.childrenscottagehomes.org.uk/pontypridd_cottage_homes.html

the local community. Similarly their more manageable size meant that local philanthropists could indulge the entire establishment in special teas, outings and innumerable Christmas events. The children at Swansea's cottage homes were regularly treated to events such as these, as were the Neath children. However, James Howard's memory of a visit to a school friend's home embodies these feelings of loss and suggests that the facade of 'family' within cottage homes was somewhat brittle. He recalled that this visit was his 'first remembered sight of a real home', a welcoming kiss from his friend's mother felt like 'heaven to a homeless boy' generated a new way of thinking within his 'astonished soul'.²⁴⁹ Howard also expressed his pleasure in associating with children from outside the homes at the local school and stressed that there was no distinction between any of the children.²⁵⁰ Life in the Pontypridd cottage homes however must have been rather bleak at times as the schools inspector recommended that the children might 'be taught to play some games'. He also suggested more books and some pictures for the walls, although he commended the policy of sending the best scholars to the county school, which implies that education came before homeliness.²⁵¹

Many children came back to visit these places they thought of as home. Former pupils who had returned for a visit to Norwood were given dinner and tea. The inspectors remarked on the 'pleasing sight of happy greetings and inquiries' between the returners and their former schoolmates'.²⁵² Balne also remembered some teachers with affection, one was known as 'Daddy Woodward' because of his fatherly air, and he claimed that the music teachers had 'kindness and understanding'.²⁵³ Helen Rogers points to the 'intimate and affective relationships' that could grow between teacher/'reformer' and pupil.²⁵⁴ WHR also remembered several male teachers with palpable affection, and especially Mr Todhunter who appears to have been a trusted mentor who advised him as a father.²⁵⁵

That children were trained to be 'perfectly quiet' would form much of the later criticism levelled at large 'barrack' schools. Some children however resisted discipline by unruly behaviour or running away. In the Red Hill school's register of offences, the column titled 'disorder' was the most used, and by far the most common reason given for punishments by the Bryncoch Home in Neath was 'absconding'; out of 84 punishments given over a twenty year period between 1890 and 1910, only seven were for offences other than absconding.²⁵⁶ Some offences were more serious, in Quatt three boys had been charged with setting fire to their beds and bedding.²⁵⁷ As

²⁴⁹ Howard, *Winding Lanes*, 25.

²⁵⁰ Howard, *Winding Lanes*, 22-23.

²⁵¹ TNA, ED 132/25, 4 April 1908.

²⁵² Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, with appendices. 1845 [622], 1843-4, 1845, 185.

²⁵³ Balne, 'Autobiography', 19-23.

²⁵⁴ Helen Rogers, 'Kindness and Reciprocity: Liberated Prisoners and Christian Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of Social History*, (2014), 1-25, 2.

²⁵⁵ Local Government Board Third Annual Report, 1874, 257.

²⁵⁶ Charles Dickens, 'Boys to mend', *Household Words*, 11 September 1852, 602;

WGAS, U/N 36, Bryncoch Cottage Homes, Punishment Book. Although see also Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?* for more serious punishments.

²⁵⁷ *Caernarvon and Denbigh herald*, 25 July 1890.

Chapter One showed, corporal punishment was commonly used, with and without official sanction, although its use was widely contested. In memoirs beatings are rarely forgotten; WHR remembered savage beatings in the workhouse, but also 'boxed ears' from a favourite master in his district school.²⁵⁸ James Howard claimed that, to one superintendent, birching 'seemed almost a pastime' to which he resorted for almost every offence, until the guardians apparently 'interfered'.²⁵⁹ Some of his superintendents were depicted as being not only strict disciplinarians but also apparently deriving pleasure from the beatings they administered. Some of Howard's other memories of assimilation indicate that children were often included in their local school's group identity and also implies that children enjoyed some freedom after the school day had finished. Howard recalled that the boys took part in at least one organised fight a week, generally on Fridays after school. One battle lasted apparently for three evenings in a row; 'night and mutual exhaustion were the only interruptions possible'.²⁶⁰ It is easy to guess why James was punished so frequently.

Across England and Wales a multiplicity of strategies to remove children from workhouses was evident. However, all these plans were threatened by what was known as the 'ins and outs'. Ins and outs were children who were removed and then brought back to poor law establishments by their parents, often on a regular basis. Charlie Chaplin's mother had discharged herself from Lambeth Workhouse so her children were returned to her from the district school and they subsequently enjoyed a day together before she reapplied for poor law assistance.²⁶¹ Thus, many children remained steadfastly beyond control because of their parent's recidivistic dependency on poor law assistance.²⁶² Murdoch claims that these children represented the largest section of children in most poor law and Barnardo homes and were seen as a 'foul stream running through the district schools'.²⁶³ The ins and outs often returned to their families, and they were branded as a source of moral corruption and were not thought as compliant as the more permanent residents of poor law institutions.²⁶⁴ The Mundella Report devoted a chapter to the problems caused by ins and outs and some witnesses estimated that they made up a 'considerable proportion' of pauper children. In Shoreditch, the clerk to the guardians reported that in one year, 52 children who had passed through the cottage homes were regarded as ins and outs.²⁶⁵ In the Styal cottage homes in Lancashire, an inspection found their school teaching excellent, but the 'migrating' children [ins and outs] were reported as lowering the standard.²⁶⁶

²⁵⁸ Local Government Board Third Annual Report, 1874, 258.

²⁵⁹ Howard, *Winding Lanes*, 20-21.

²⁶⁰ As above, 23, 25-26.

²⁶¹ Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (1964),

²⁶² Negrine, 'The Treatment of Sick Children', 34; WGAS, U/S 1/14, Guardians' Minutes, 27 February 1879.

²⁶³ Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 95, see also Menella Smedley, *Boarding-Out and Pauper Schools Especially for Girls: Being a Reprint of the Principal Reports on Pauper Education in the Blue Book for 1873-4* (London: Henry S. King and Co, 1875), especially chapter two.

²⁶⁴ Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 49.

²⁶⁵ Mundella Report, 71-72.

²⁶⁶ TNA, ED 132/13, 30 October 1905.

Florence Davenport Hill was unequivocal in her condemnation: 'they come in and out from all sorts of horrible places and scenes of vice, and mix with the children in the schools and are constantly turning their moral filth on them'.²⁶⁷ The report concluded that 'this state of things is cruel in every respect' as the ins and outs children were deprived of the 'advantages of education' and the administration of the home was also impaired; the permanent children were 'often contaminated physically and morally' by the ins and outs.²⁶⁸ Swansea Union felt their care and money was wasted on 'casual' children, or as they called them 'mere birds of passage'.²⁶⁹ No solution was forthcoming although it had 'constantly been considered', and this lack of control over parents of poor children led many to comment that these children would be better off if they were orphans.²⁷⁰ Thus, poor parents were seen as neglectful of their children because their parenting ethos contradicted that of the poor law authorities.²⁷¹

Scattered homes

By the beginning of the twentieth century, fashions had again evolved and even the cottage homes which had been 'pioneers' in their care of pauper children were considered 'too much of the character of an institution'.²⁷² Since 1893 Sheffield Union had pioneered the isolated or scattered homes system. Children would be looked after in groups of up to 20 in ordinary houses scattered about the union and would live as a family with a house mother and attend local schools. The scheme had apparently 'succeeded beyond their most sanguine expectations'.²⁷³ Children were 'mixing more with non-pauper life', and the policy also enabled Catholic children to be housed near Roman Catholic schools.²⁷⁴ Life appeared to be better for the children themselves as in Camberwell the children could 'run about the streets and form friendships with other boys and girls, run all the risks and enjoy all the privileges of ordinary young humanity'.²⁷⁵ However, an inspection of some of the Sheffield scattered homes pointed to the system being more like 'normal' working-class life than intended with makeshift and make-do regimes which saw meat running out by Saturday, a lack of toothbrushes to go round all the children, and infestations of head lice. The latter was assumed to be brought back from local schools, where standards were not as particular as those of poor law inspectors. The inspection however, remarked upon the 'happiness and contentment' of the children themselves, which although welcome appeared to be secondary to the smooth, ordered running of the home. Presumably, the children also learned valuable life lessons about budgeting and hygiene from their far from perfect house mothers.²⁷⁶

²⁶⁷ Mundella Report, 78.

²⁶⁸ Mundella Report, 72.

²⁶⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/14, Swansea Board of Guardians Minutes Books, 27 February 1879.

²⁷⁰ Mundella Report, 78.

²⁷¹ Joanne Bailey, 'The History of Mum and Dad: Recent Historical Research on Parenting in England from the 16th to 20th Centuries', *History Compass*, 12:6 (2014), 489-507, 499.

²⁷² WGAS, U/S 1/42, Guardians' Minutes, 17 September 1908.

²⁷³ C.R.W. Offen, 'The pseudo and the "real cottage homes" for children, a reply', *Westminster Review*, 14:7 (May 1897), 572.

²⁷⁴ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 6 October 1893, 3 November 1892.

²⁷⁵ *Weekly Standard and Express* August 27, 1898.

²⁷⁶ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* 26 June, 1896.

In 1896 a letter written to a Sheffield newspaper accused the Local government Board of being 'at times an ass' for not adopting the scattered homes system earlier. The writer had visited the hospital which served the scattered homes and reported how the children 'clustered' around the visitors 'chatting in childish confidence'. They were 'comfortable, natural, well behaved', and 'unabashed and unstamped by the workhouse'. Unlike the inspector who had complained that some children 'run about and shout and play like anybody else's children', he saw this as proof of the veracity of the scheme.²⁷⁷ Certainly, the children appeared free of the supposed 'taint' of the workhouse and fitted into everyday working-class life, but this perception of working-class life was not what was imagined by some. As with all these strategies to remove children from the workhouse, the staff were pivotal to the success or failure of the scattered homes. Inspections did not prevent children being seriously beaten in Plymouth, as well as locked in coal houses and kept under water in the bath, by one house mother.²⁷⁸ Florence Hill had claimed rather optimistically, that 'systematic and continued cruelty' to children in local communities would be 'virtually impossible' as they would enjoy the protection of inspectors, neighbours and the 'Argus-eyed' press.²⁷⁹ Although cruelty was abhorrent to most local guardians and the central authorities, we have no way of knowing how many children were badly treated while in scattered homes. Not all staff were remembered for their cruelty. In Marston Green one teacher, Mr Benbow was described by a boy as having 'bright red hair, a withered arm and a great purple disfigurement on his face'. As workhouse boy himself Benbow had been injured while rescuing someone from a fire. He apparently used his withered arm as a weapon but was remembered by his love of poetry and exasperation with the children's dull rendition of his favorite rhymes.²⁸⁰

These new policies were lauded as a 'much needed reform' across England and Wales, and were implemented widely during the twentieth century.²⁸¹ However, older systems of care were still used and even Sheffield union opened new cottage homes in 1905.²⁸² At a poor law conference in 1900, Cardiff Union reported that only 154 of its 2204 indoor children were housed in the recently introduced scattered homes.²⁸³ In 1910 there were 3,883 children in district schools (mostly in London), 7604 children in separate schools, 11,640 in cottage homes (3277 in London) and 7366 scattered homes (1083 in London)²⁸⁴ *The Times* reported that 'in almost every district guardians appreciate the desirability of removing children from the workhouse' although there still existed many unions who resisted this, and as the figures above demonstrate,

²⁷⁷ As above, 1 August 1896.

²⁷⁸ *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 12 November 1910.

²⁷⁹ Florence Davenport Hill, 'The Family System for Workhouse Children', *The Contemporary Review*, 15 (September 1870), 240-273, also cited in Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 203.

²⁸⁰ Jennifer Wayne, *Brown Bread and Butter in the Basement*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1973, 65-6.

²⁸¹ *Northern Echo*, 2 October 1896.

²⁸² Former Children's Homes, Fulwood Cottage Homes, <http://www.childrenscottagehomes.org.uk/fulwood.html>

²⁸³ *Western Mail*, 13 September 1900.

²⁸⁴ Statement of the number of Paupers relieved on the 1st of January, 1910, and the 1st of July, 1910, paper no. 242, xii.

large barrack schools, cottage, and scattered homes continued to be run concurrently.²⁸⁵

Conclusions

Whether the multiple strategies to remove children from the moral contagion of workhouse resulted in rounded, respectable and responsible citizens depended on the policy, the child, and the 'school or 'home' to which the children were sent. Luck played a huge part in the wellbeing of these children who could be billeted with a kindly, neglectful or cruel carer. Poor law regulations intended to give the children education and training to fit them for work and parenthood, although how many really overcame the stigma of the poor law child even away from the workhouse? In Edward Balne's own words:

'When I was fourteen, it was when scoring for the Hanwell team one Saturday afternoon at an away game, that I first became conscious of my lowly status in Society. And being a highly sensitive lad, I was never to forget the incident (which I will not disclose here) which occurred that afternoon. The shock of the realization of being in what that I was considered to be a member of the lowest form of human creation, was an experience from which I have never fully recovered. It affected the nerves and my whole outlook upon life. It affected my confidence and personality and it left a feeling of a deep and profound inferiority complex which generally has overshadowed everything I have tried to accomplish over the years'.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ *The Times*, 11 November 1911.

²⁸⁶ Balne, 'Autobiography', 34-5.

PART TWO:

PAUPER CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

‘Upon this the parish authorities magnanimously and humanely resolved, that Oliver should be “farmed,” or, in other words, that he should be despatched to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor-laws, rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing, under the parental superintendence of an elderly female, who received the culprits at and for the consideration of sevenpence-halfpenny per small head per week’.

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, Chapter two, 4.

The boarding-out of pauper children

In an 1869 article, Charles Dickens had championed the boarding-out system which placed pauper children in the homes of paid foster parents.²⁸⁸ This strategy had been polarising opinion in England and Wales although the system had been used with apparent success in Scotland for many years.²⁸⁹ Dickens pointed out that much of the rhetoric applied by detractors of the system had derived from his novel *Oliver Twist*, and the callous and brutal encounters with baby-farming and parish apprenticeship suffered by the eponymous hero.²⁹⁰ Dickens felt that Oliver had been a victim of an 'utter absence of system' in a time when pauper children had been 'out of sight and out of mind', which he claimed contrasted strongly with the thorough policing of the welfare of pauper children advocated by the supporters of boarding-out.²⁹¹ Similarly, in a paper read the same year before the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Florence Davenport Hill sought to distance the present boarding-out system from baby-farming and parish apprenticeship.²⁹² Many of the poor law unions which had not adopted the boarding-out system, she felt, had imagined that these 'evils of the past' were being revived.²⁹³

The lack of distinction between boarding-out and these former child-care 'evils' was not the only concern of the Poor Law Board regarding boarding-out. In 1862, Poor Law Board inspector Andrew Doyle had thought boarding-out was 'a very bad way of disposing of the children'. If the system became widespread he felt, proper inspections would be 'utterly impractical', and the children would be dependent solely on their foster parents for the

²⁸⁷ John Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union or How to turn a Drone into a Working Bee*, Swansea, 1876.

²⁸⁸ Charles Dickens, 'Little Pauper Boarders,' *All The Year Round, A Weekly Journal. Conducted by Charles Dickens. With Which is Incorporated Household Words*, 28 August 1869, 301-05.

²⁸⁹ For the Scottish system, see Helen Macdonald, 'Boarding-Out and the Scottish Poor Law, 1845-1914', *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 75, no. 200 (1996), 197-220; Lynn Abrams, "'Blood is Thicker than Water": Family, Fantasy and Identity in the Lives of Scottish Foster Children', in Lawrence, Starkey, eds., *Child Welfare and Social Action*, 195-215.

²⁹⁰ For Parish apprenticeship see K.D.M. Snell, 'The Apprenticeship System in British History: the Fragmentation of a Cultural Institution', *History of Education*, vol. 25, no. 4 (1996), 303-21; Katrina Honeyman, *Child Workers in England, 1780-1820: Parish Apprentices and the Making of the Early Industrial Labour Force*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007; Alys Levene, 'Children, Childhood and the Workhouse: St Marylebone, 1769-1781', *London Journal*, vol. 33, No.1 (2008), 41-59, 51-2; Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship and the Old Poor Law in London', *Economic History Review*, vol. 63, no. 4 (2010), 915-41.

²⁹¹ Dickens, 'Little Pauper Boarders', 305.

²⁹² Florence Davenport Hill, *The Boarding-Out System Distinguished from Baby-Farming and Parish Apprentices: A Paper Read Before the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science at Bristol, October 5th, 1869*, London: Macmillan & Co., 1869, 1-10.

²⁹³ Hill, *The Boarding-Out System* 3. Hill differentiated between state and private 'farming out', where in the past a large number of pauper babies and toddlers had been 'massed together' in institutions or 'farms', see Thomas Pettigrew, *The Pauper Farming System: A Letter to the Rt. Hon. Lord John Russell on the Condition of the Pauper Children of St James Westminster*, London, 1836. Hill also distanced herself from the private sector of baby-farming in which mothers, unable or unwilling to look after their babies, left them with paid baby-farmers where they were sometimes neglected or even murdered, a practice which still continued and was about to generate national outrage. See Margaret Arnot, 'Infant Death, Child Care and the State: the Baby-Farming Scandal and the First Infant Life Protection Legislation of 1872', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1994), 271-311; Ruth Homrighaus, "'Wolves in Women's Clothing": Baby Farming and the *British Medical Journal*, 1860-1872', *Journal of Family History*, vol. 26, no. 3 (2001), 350-72.

development of their characters.²⁹⁴ In practice, only children under the permanent care of the poor law such as orphans or those deserted by their parents could be boarded-out and such vulnerable children, Doyle felt would be 'very much better done by' in the care of guardians in local workhouses.²⁹⁵ Thus, the practice of boarding-out was perceived by the central authorities as flawed because it could not be monitored sufficiently, and working-class foster parents could not be trusted to instil the required values into these 'vulnerable' children. However, the practice was popular with poor law unions as it was economical, conformed to an imagined model of a 'family' upbringing, and sought the removal of children from the moral contagion of the workhouse. Furthermore, discussions supporting boarding-out were especially charged with sentimentality and often idealised foster parents, foster homes (particularly rural homes) and fostered children.

Subsequently, during the 1860s and 1870s the Poor Law Board came under persistent pressure from local poor law unions and child welfare campaigners to support boarding-out. Florence Davenport Hill was one of over 3,000 women to sign a petition in favour of boarding-out which was presented to George Goschen, the new president of the Poor Law Board, in 1870.²⁹⁶ The system, as several correspondents to *The Times* identified, was not a 'new invention'. Belmer pinpoints its origins from 1843 in Edinburgh, and many unions were already placing children, singly or in pairs, in the homes of foster parents within union boundaries and generating varying degrees of approbation or condemnation towards the ambiguous 'limited legality' of the strategy from the Board and regional poor law inspectors.²⁹⁷ Supporters of boarding-out pursued dual objectives; they sought to change not only attitudes within the central authorities, but also regulations: they attempted to persuade the central authorities that boarding-out was morally valuable, extremely 'de-pauperizing', cost effective and a more appropriate care-system for pauper children than the district school. For many metropolitan and densely populated unions, a policy of boarding-out pauper children in the overcrowded, anonymous and what was perceived as undomesticated homes of their urban poor was anathema. Consequently, campaigners and various unions lobbied for the right to board out children in rural areas; 'without' the union or outside their union boundaries. Following Joseph Henley's largely positive reconnaissance of the Scottish system of boarding-out, the Poor Law Board issued a circular letter in November 1870 which authorised the supervised boarding-out of certain children 'beyond the limits' of their unions and also conceded that no regulations were in force that prevented orphan or deserted children being boarded out within the boundaries of their union.²⁹⁸ This chapter, while exploring national and regional strategies and the lives of boarded out children across England and Wales, will also focus on the Swansea Union in South Wales. The actions of their guardians both encapsulate what poor law inspectors feared most about boarding-out, and in particular shows how important regional research is to know the bigger picture of of strategies such as boarding-out.

Fostering is today's primary care strategy for Britain's 'looked after' children. Although many ideological and practical variances differentiate boarding-out from modern foster care, the

²⁹⁴ Second Report from the Select Committee on Poor Relief, 1862, paper no. 321, 114.

²⁹⁵ As above, 114. However, the regulations did not allow illegitimate children to be boarded out.

²⁹⁶ *The Times*, 4 May 1870; Behlmer, *Child Abuse*, 202; Hill, 'The Family System for Workhouse Children', *The Contemporary Review*, 15 (September 1870), 240-73, 273.

²⁹⁷ *The Times*, 4, 8 June 1870; Michael Horsburgh, "'No Sufficient Security': The Reaction of the Poor Law Authorities to Boarding-Out", *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1983), 51-73, 65.

²⁹⁸ Report of J. J. Henley, Esq., Poor Law inspector, to the Poor Law Board, on the boarding out of pauper children in Scotland; and, of reports of Poor Law inspectors to the Poor Law Board, on the boarding out of pauper children in certain unions in England, 1870, paper no. 176, [hereafter Henley Report]; Twenty-third annual report of the Poor Law Board, 1870, c. 396, 11-12.

main difficulty of a shortfall of suitable foster parents remains the same.²⁹⁹ However, even as a forerunner of the foster care system, the nineteenth-century practice of boarding-out in England and Wales has generated little research by historians and much of the scholarship is fragmented and often oversimplified. However, historical retrospectives of foster care written by child policy specialists offer more information, but tend to perceive boarding-out as the under-developed origins of an enlightened system.³⁰⁰ Both Murdoch and Hollen Lees devote scant attention to boarding-out. Hollen Lees, condensing the theme to a sentence or two, alludes to boarding-out as a means of integrating pauper children into 'ordinary' working-class communities.³⁰¹ While Murdoch dismisses boarding-out as a 'limited solution' favoured more by philanthropic societies than the state, she nevertheless cites several contemporary sources which endorse the discursive prevalence of boarding-out and hence the significance of the policy in the nineteenth century.³⁰² Hendrick offers a brief analysis of boarding-out's administrative difficulties and outlines qualities such as resourcefulness and thriftiness which the Mundella Report had felt the working-class home could offer pauper children.³⁰³ Driver, however, recognises how the system was perceived as the 'preferred option' towards the end of the nineteenth century. He locates boarding-out within campaigns for a 'family system' for pauper children, where they could be 'grafted' onto 'normal' families and avoid the moral contamination thought inherent in workhouses.³⁰⁴ Similarly, although Behlmer writes briefly about boarding-out, he does so in a rather positivist manner. In his agreement with Florence Davenport Hill that a 'private home' was 'vastly preferable' to a workhouse he oversimplifies the values and negativities of both boarding-out and the workhouse system.³⁰⁵

In one of two articles devoted to boarding-out, Michael Horsburgh, using comprehensive primary research, foregrounds the discussions and campaigns of the poor law authorities and child welfare activists and also offers useful insights into the roles of women and class within the boarding-out debates.³⁰⁶ Rooke and Schnell's ambitious 'cross-cultural perspective' claims that a British and Canadian 'transformation' of attitudes to childhood is illustrated by the transition from binding (or tying a child into an apprenticeship or indentures) to boarding-out.³⁰⁷ Whilst Rooke and Schell's impressive research affords a valuable cross-continental comparative study, their emphasis on a linear 'transformation' from one system to another simplifies the complexities and regional idiosyncrasies within child-welfare discourse and practice.

²⁹⁹ Gillian Schofield, Emma Ward, *Understanding and Working With Parents of Children in Long-term Foster Care*, London; Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011. See also Richard Meckel, 'Protecting the Innocents: Age Segregation and the Early Child Welfare Movement,' *Social Service Review* 59 (1985), 455-75.

³⁰⁰ The Scottish system has attracted more interest, see note 3 above and Linda Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class and Family: Britain 1840-1940*, London: University College London Press, 1995, 48-9; good examples are, V. George, *Foster Care, Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1970); John Triseliotis, Clive Sellick, Robin Short, *Foster Care, Theory and Practice* (London: B T Batsford, 1995).

³⁰¹ Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers*, 276.

³⁰² Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 43, 181.

³⁰³ Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 42.

³⁰⁴ Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 101, 105, 159. See also Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed*, 184; Crowther, *The Workhouse System*, 78.

³⁰⁵ Behlmer, *Child Abuse*, 30, 202. Although Behlmer does not examine boarding-out in any detail, he writes at length about baby-farming.

³⁰⁶ Michael Horsburgh, "'No Sufficient Security'".

³⁰⁷ Patricia T. Rooke, R. L. Schnell, 'From Binding to Boarding out in Britain and English-Canada: A Transformation in Childhood Sentiment and Practice', *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1984), 461-91.

It is unclear whether Rooke and Schnell's 'binding' was used by guardians around England and Wales, although it appears that manifestations of a boarding-out style system was utilised by the Swansea Union as early as the 1850s. In 1853, the Poor Law Board claimed boarding-out had 'always' prevailed in Welsh unions.³⁰⁸ It is also unclear whether, in the early 1850s, children were boarded out as foster children or hired out as servants, as unions' responses to enquiries from the Poor Law Board were ambiguous and contradictory. In 1852, the poor law inspector John Graves reported that Swansea Union had 'put out some boys from the workhouse into farm service' and paid their masters one shilling and sixpence a week in return for keep and instruction.³⁰⁹ In later correspondence with the central authorities, the Swansea guardians felt the Poor Law Board 'labours under a mistake in supposing that the children are hired out into domestic service', but were placed with 'Agriculturalists' to learn their trade.³¹⁰ This appears to be contradicted by a document provided by the union clerk detailing the names and circumstances of the children in question, as one of the headings was 'date of hiring or taking as servant'.³¹¹ In reality, the only difference between children working as unpaid farm servants rather than as unpaid 'trainee' farm servants is one of perception and adherence to regulation. To the Poor Law Board, paying such an allowance signified unauthorised and unfettered out-relief. It also sidestepped principles of less eligibility, as independent labourers were unable to pay for their own children to be placed in situations. The argument that farmed-out pauper children were thus advantaged compared with non-pauper children had been used successfully to end the practice in Penrith union in 1847.³¹²

Guardians across Wales and England reminded the Poor Law Board again and again that the workhouse was an unsuitable place for children and because many unions claimed they were 'destitute of the means' of providing industrial training for the children.³¹³ Similarly, although schools inspector Graves thought accommodation and schooling for boys in some workhouses was 'tolerably good', continued residence in the workhouse, he felt, would be deleterious to both the girls' health and morality.³¹⁴ Of the eleven children 'farmed-out' above, seven were girls. The youngest, Mary Ann Stephens, was ten and the others between the ages of eleven to thirteen. The boys were slightly older; David Rosser was fourteen and the others thirteen.³¹⁵ All were without parents: the majority because of the death of both mother and father, but some originated from equally traumatised lives. Mary Jones was illegitimate and had been deserted by her mother, and Mary Ann Clements' father had died, while her mother was an inmate in a lunatic asylum.³¹⁶ Apart from Thomas Davies who had lived with farmer Griffiths Hughes for 14 months and Samuel Dutton who had lived with George Gibbs, another farmer, for nearly a year, the document states that the children had been placed with their new 'masters' in the summer months of 1852, amounting to just two or three months; it is possible that places were more forthcoming during the busiest farming season. None of the children appear to have attended school, but all were recorded as being able to read and write, and all save David Rosser attended Sunday School regularly.³¹⁷ Their masters were, in the main,

³⁰⁸ TNA, MH 12/16440, 13 January 1853, see also the speech of John Llewelyn in 1873 which claimed that the union had been boarding-out children for over 25 years, *Western Mail*, 17 April 1873.

³⁰⁹ TNA, MH 12/16440, 9 September 1852.

³¹⁰ As above., 20 January 1853.

³¹¹ TNA, MH 12/16440, 13 October 1852.

³¹² Horsburgh, "'No Sufficient Security'", 61.

³¹³ TNA, MH 12/16440, 20 January 1853.

³¹⁴ As above, 3 November 1852.

³¹⁵ As above, 13 October 1852.

³¹⁶ As above.

³¹⁷ For the importance of the Sunday School movement in Wales, see Lorraine A. Cook, 'The Contribution of Nonconformity to elementary education in Swansea from the mid-Victorian era to the end of the nineteenth century', *History of Education*, vol. 26, no. 1 (1997), 41-52.

farmers, although John Rosser was placed with a shopkeeper, Mary Ann Stephens with an engineer/grocer and Mary Ann Clements with a minister. All foster-parents (or indeed masters) would have been perceived as being capable of providing appropriate industrial training to enable a pauper child to become an independent labourer and thus 'sever all links with pauperism'.³¹⁸

It is impossible to know how these children were treated by their new 'masters' or whether they were considered as part of the family, or as a servant. In Scotland, an inquiry in 1852 into the assault of two foster children found that it was an isolated case of mistreatment and claimed that the vast majority of boarded-out children were treated with 'kindness and often tenderness'.³¹⁹ One guardian claimed that he knew of several instances when children were regarded as family members.³²⁰ Although unions claimed that these plans would prove to be beneficial for both children and ratepayers, and promised inspections 'from time to time' by the district relieving officer, it was agreed by the guardians to discontinue the scheme.³²¹ For how long, or indeed if at all, Swansea Union refrained from boarding-out children with local farmers is uncertain. Just four years later, in 1857, the policy came under fire again from both H.M. Schools Inspectorate and the Poor Law Board. At this time there appears to be a tangible shift from regulatory opposition to disquiet about the children's welfare and education.

Objections by Jelinger Symons, the Inspector of Schools, was not limited to the apparent lack of education of children he described as 'sent out' and placed in 'different houses at an early age', although he felt their education was 'wholly prevented'.³²² Symons also reported to the Poor Law Board that unions were 'farming out' children as young as eight. He was in no doubt that many were 'overworked and underfed' as 'but slight inquiry' was made of the fitness of their foster parents.³²³ Swansea Union in particular responded by bringing together a 'very large number' of farmed out children to enquire into their care and education.³²⁴ This review did not appear to include any inspection of the children's living conditions within their respective foster parents' farms. However, the massed gathering of their charges apparently reinforced in the guardians present the 'great responsibility' inherent in the care of so many destitute children.³²⁵

At a meeting following the review, most guardians did not seem to question the apparent good health and treatment of the children, even though it had been discovered that some of the children wore borrowed clothes to the review. One guardian thought that there was not a farmer in the country who would treat pauper children any different from his own.³²⁶ Indeed, although evidence given by Andrew Doyle in 1862 demonstrated his overall distaste of the farming-out system, he had also reported that the children had been 'very kindly treated'.³²⁷ However, the apparent lack of any educational provision for the children provoked a rather more vociferous reaction from the Swansea guardians. In addition to the eighteen pence or

³¹⁸ TNA, MH 12/16440, 13 October 1852; Macdonald, 'Boarding-Out and the Scottish Poor Law', 205.

³¹⁹ Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for Scotland, 1852, cited in Macdonald, 'Boarding-Out and the Scottish Poor Law', 199.

³²⁰ *The Cambrian*, 17 April 1857.

³²¹ TNA, MH 12/16440, 9 October; 20 January 1853.

³²² *The Cambrian*, 28 August, 6 November 1857; WGAS, U/S 4/1, Visiting Committee Report Books, 26 August 1857.

³²³ TNA MH 12/16442, 9 October 1857.

³²⁴ *The Cambrian*, 6 November 1857, most children were farmed out in the rural area of the hamlet of Clase to the north of Swansea and therefore the nearby village of Llanyfelach would have been a central meeting point, see WGAS, U/S 11/1, List of Paupers and Abstract of Accounts, 1877.

³²⁵ *The Cambrian*, 6 November 1857.

³²⁶ As above.

³²⁷ *Second Report from the Select Committee on Poor Relief*, 1862, 114.

two shillings weekly given to farmers for the maintenance of the children, Swansea Union also paid for the education of many of the farmed-out children. Whilst questioning the children who attended the review it was discovered that only in a 'very few instances' had they actually attended any school. The guardians were particularly disconcerted to discover that one girl had never been sent to school, nor had she ever attended a church or chapel.³²⁸ Thus, the 'trouble and anxiety' invested by the guardians to enable the children to learn reading and writing during their time in the workhouse had been wasted. This illustrates in particular guardians' recognition of the importance of education to enable the children 'to raise themselves in society' and avoid future pauperism.³²⁹

Further inquiry found that almost all the farmed out children who could read and write had been taught in the workhouse prior to their being 'sent out'; out of a total of 115 children, 81 were described as 'growing up in a deplorable state of ignorance'. The committee discovered that the elder two of the four children currently farmed out to Solomon Francis, a farmer in Llangyfelach, could neither read nor write, and consequently was dismayed to learn that Francis had brought up 21 pauper children from infancy.³³⁰ Whilst one guardian wondered whether the pauper children were in a similar state of ignorance as the children of the farmers themselves, the general consensus reached was that of paternalistic, sentimental and somewhat evangelical remorse. Many guardians across Britain expressed the opinion that a lack of proper education notwithstanding, many farmed out children turned out well, unlike the 'blocks of wood and stone' who had been brought up entirely in the workhouse. Consequently, although education was perceived as vital for the future independence of a child, many guardians repeatedly rejected their present workhouse as an appropriate locus for their pauper children.

In 1868, guardians proposed to send all the children out into the country, as they felt this would provide both the 'ideal' of an approximation of 'normal' childhood plus physical and mental training for the children whilst saving the ratepayers a considerable amount.³³¹ The response from the Poor Law Board was unequivocal in its rejection. There could be 'no sufficient and permanent security' concerning the scheme and questioned if the children would be fed, clothed, educated and employed appropriately. As with objections in earlier years, the Board also thought that the employment of non-pauper children would be disadvantaged as the poor law assisted children would be seen as cheaper labour.³³²

It is unclear again whether, on this occasion, unions acted against the wishes of the central authorities. Evidence collated by Francis Longe for the 1870 Henley Report alleged that many boarding-out policies were 'merely a continuation of an old practice' and that many orphans were boarded out.³³³ Longe's report was explicitly reproachful towards Swansea Union and he also compared the union unfavourably with others boarding-out children in his district. Swansea had given 'very few of the particulars supplied from the above four unions', and specified that no answer was provided as to the occupations of foster parents, nor the numbers of children in each house. The clerk of Swansea Union admitted freely that the boarding or farming-out system had been 'many years in force' in the union and it had been

³²⁸ *The Cambrian*, 6 November 1857.

³²⁹ As above, 5 February 1858.

³³⁰ *The Cambrian*, 5 February 1858, the children were John Jones, aged 12, Sarah Jones, aged 9, Mary Williams, aged 4 and Mary Harris, aged 3.

³³¹ WGAS, U/S 4/3, Visiting Committee Report Books, 1 September 1868; Rooke and Schnell, 'From Binding to Boarding Out', 483.

³³² *The Cambrian*, 18 September 1868.

³³³ Henley Report, 1870, 188; See also Hill, who states in 1870 that Swansea Union 'had pursued the system for twenty years', 'The Family System for Workhouse Children', 266.

found to work well.³³⁴ Although a strategy considerably cheaper than sending children to district schools, boarding-out cannot be seen as popular in Swansea solely because of its economical nature. In 1870 John Llewelyn claimed that the 'future condition' of the children outweighed the cost of school fees and clothes and admitted that Swansea Union had been using the strategy for many years, although not to the extent he wanted.³³⁵ Similarly, other poor law unions did not appear to be deterred by the Poor Law Board's censure of boarding-out. Charles Dickens reported in 1869 that the Highworth and Swindon Union boarded out 'as many children as they possibly can' and had been doing so for the past seven or eight years.³³⁶

The Poor Law Board was subjected to persistent pressure by Boards of Guardians and child welfare campaigners to endorse boarding-out for pauper children at this time.³³⁷ Within child welfare circles, boarding-out epitomised the emerging belief that a family or home influence could best eradicate the moral contagion and welfare dependency from poor children. In the 1868 edition of *Children of the State*, Florence Davenport Hill wrote at some length about boarding-out in Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Russia and America as well as England (which presumably included Wales).³³⁸ Hill claimed that boarding-out had been tested for a sufficient length of time and under such varied circumstances that its 'excellencies' were well established.³³⁹ Boarding-out was also used extensively by the voluntary sector and, although perhaps better known for children's homes, Barnardo's employed the practice extensively. Barnardo felt that the boarding-out system was superior to either barrack schools or cottage homes.³⁴⁰ The Church of England Waifs and Strays Society had adopted the system since its founding in 1881 and, by 1905, 745 of its children were fostered.³⁴¹ A cautionary note was however offered by one correspondent to *The Times* who reminded readers about the 1849 scandal of Drouet's 'farm' in Tooting.

In her 1874 report on the education of pauper girls, Poor Law Inspector Jane Senior had also concluded that the policy of boarding-out in 'cottage' homes was the best strategy for orphaned pauper children.³⁴² Senior's report had generated vocal opposition from the senior inspector of poor law schools, Edward Tufnell. His subsequent condemnation that Senior's report was 'irretrievably biased' not only reignited the debate about the care, housing and education of pauper children, but also embodied the gender conflict within the poor law profession.³⁴³ Whilst acceding to Senior's diligence in the collection of her evidence, throughout the remainder of his report Tufnell was biting in his criticism of Senior's recommendations and her belief in the boarding-out system. He claimed that Senior's conviction that appropriate accommodation for children was to be easily located was an 'extraordinary absurdity'. As evidence, he cited the Bishop of Manchester's opinion of

³³⁴ Henley Report, 1870, 188. The other unions were Evesham, Leominster, Ludlow and Merthyr Tydfil.

³³⁵ *The Cambrian*, 24 June 1870; WGAS, U/S 1/8 Guardians' Minutes, 23 June 1870.

³³⁶ Dickens, 'Little Pauper Boarders', 302.

³³⁷ Horsburgh, 'No Sufficient Security', 51.

³³⁸ Hill, *The Children of the State*, 118-214.

³³⁹ As above, 233, 238.

³⁴⁰ For the strategies used by Barnardo's, see Koven, 'Artistic Fictions'; Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*; Mundella Report, vol. I, 95.

³⁴¹ The Children's Society, *Hidden Lives*, <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/history.html>.

³⁴² Jane Senior, 'Report of Mrs Nassau Senior as to the effect on girls of the system at Pauper Schools, Third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1874, c. 1071, 311-394, 345. I suspect that some historians have understood Senior's use of the words 'cottage homes' to mean the cottage homes system explored in the last chapter, and consequently underestimated the impact of boarding-out.

³⁴³ Edward Tufnell, Pauper schools. Copy of observations on the report of Mrs. Senior to the Local Government Board, as to the effect on girls of the system of education at pauper schools, 1875, [hereafter Tufnell, Observations] paper no. 10, 1-41; Murdoch, 'From Barrack Schools to Family Cottages', 153-4.

cottages of the poor. The Bishop had visited 300 parishes and concluded that the accommodation of only two cottages was both 'admirable in quality and sufficient in quantity'.³⁴⁴ One of Tufnell's most damning denunciations was how boarding-out would engender a rise in child mortality, arguing that at least 30 more children would die as a result of 'this lady's plan'.³⁴⁵

Many unions claimed a long-standing autonomy, but this was denounced in 1875 when boarding-out policies of the Swansea Union was singled out for particular criticism in the Local Government Board's Fourth Report. The report contained an open letter to Swansea Union's Chairman, John Llewelyn, from Local Government Board Inspector Andrew Doyle, which accused Swansea Union of offering children 'very little protection' against trafficking in child labour and catalogued 'numerous' sanitary and moral 'abuses'. Doyle's criticisms did not extend to the motives of John Llewelyn to whom he attributed a 'deep and real interest' in the children, but to foster-parents and guardians' visiting committees. In his exploration into the homes of foster-parents, Doyle found several to be 'scandalously overcrowded' and expressed surprise that some had evaded the attentions of the inspector of nuisances.³⁴⁶

Doyle also articulated his concern about the moral welfare of the children, in particular the sleeping arrangements within foster homes. In a two-roomed house he was disconcerted to find a lodger occupying one room and the child sleeping with the foster-parents in the other. He also reported that at the time of his visit, the lower room was 'crowded by noisy women' one of whom was apparently so drunk she could hardly stand up. In another house two children were sharing a room with foster-parents at night, while during the day it was occupied by a 'drunken man'; Doyle alleged that it was common practice for a child to be 'deprived' of their bed if paying lodgers were in residence.³⁴⁷

His criticism of the visiting committee was particularly biting when he claimed that the children were 'completely and absolutely neglected as if they did not belong to you'.³⁴⁸ However, surely Doyle had uncovered signifiers of poverty rather than cruelty?³⁴⁹ Doyle complained that boarded out children had no discipline and could not 'be kept from running in the streets', a practice which Anna Davin claims was widespread among most poor children.³⁵⁰ Throughout his report, Doyle reflected elite supposition that the poor were undomesticated; he enclosed the words 'homes' and 'foster-mother' in quotation marks on numerous occasions to stress their incongruity in the houses he visited. As discussed in Chapter Two, Doyle's implicit objective appears to be the curtailing of boarding-out, not because of the 'abuses' he exposed, but for the dual purpose of restricting outdoor-relief and promoting a large industrial school which had long been his recommendation for pauper children. To Doyle, boarding-out was 'simply another name for out-door relief' and, as he attempted to illustrate, an arrangement which he felt was not adequately controlled by the Swansea guardians.³⁵¹

This apparent neglect of the monitoring of foster parents caused Swansea Union to be condemned by the national press and child welfare campaigners to the extent that they were used as an illustration of how the boarding-out system could fail. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, whilst

³⁴⁴ Tufnell, Observations, 24-25.

³⁴⁵ As above, 15.

³⁴⁶ Local Government Board: *Fourth Annual Report*, 171-179.

³⁴⁷ As above.

³⁴⁸ As above.

³⁴⁹ Hill, 'The Family System for Workhouse Children', 240-273, also cited in Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 203.

³⁵⁰ Local Government Board: *Fourth Annual Report*, 173; Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor*, 63-66.

³⁵¹ As above, 172.

denigrating the small monetary remuneration paid to foster parents around Britain and especially Wales, mentioned specifically Andrew Doyle's 'ugly disclosures' concerning Swansea Union and their boarding-out policies.³⁵² In her 'vindication' of voluntary boarding-out committees in the same year, Joanna Hill cited Swansea as an example of how abuses can occur when no distinct boarding-out committee existed in a union, and mentioned Doyle's assertion that 'every objection to boarding-out' could be found in the Swansea Union's policies.³⁵³ This negative publicity continued into the following year when the National Committee for Promoting the Boarding-out of Pauper Children claimed that the practices of Swansea Union was not boarding-out but 'casting out' and was destined to end in failure.³⁵⁴

Was the Swansea Union neglectful of their boarded out children as Doyle (and previous inspectors) alleged? Doyle's report of Swansea Union has also been used by historians as an example of poor law child neglect; Parker points to a 'catalogue of unsatisfactory conditions' exposed by Doyle.³⁵⁵ Behlmer is more scathing, describing Doyle's 'careful assessment' of Swansea leading him to question how children fared with 'drunken lodgers, rag pile for beds and privies under the stairs'.³⁵⁶ As Rooke and Schnell argue, it is undeniably true that the boarding-out system was dogged by inherent weaknesses such as a lack of suitable foster parents and inadequate supervision.³⁵⁷ However, within a regional study such as this, a closer reading of multiple sources can be attempted, which shows us more than in a generalised study.

Although in the minority, there were favourable accounts mentioned within Doyle's report, but they did not arouse similar publicity at the time and have also been overlooked by historians. Agnes R was boarded out with her grandmother and was found to be well treated and very happy, as was John M who lived with his 'extremely kind and affectionate' aunt. Alice M who was boarded out with her stepbrother also appeared to be 'well done by'. Elizabeth O, who fostered four children was described as 'exceedingly kind' and hardworking. However this apparently happy house was deemed unfit for any child to live in because Doyle found it to be in a state of 'disgraceful overcrowding'. Similarly Harriett P lived with her grandmother who was a kind and affectionate woman, but her house was described as filthy and untidy.³⁵⁸ The urban poor were widely thought to be beyond moral control living as they did in unsegregated accommodation without means of spatial differentiation, although Florence Hill believed that even a 'second or a third rate' home was preferable to the workhouse for the care and education of girls.³⁵⁹

Swansea Union apparently intended to supervise the children they placed with foster parents. It was recorded in 1865 that each boarded out child was to be seen at least once a month by the local relieving officer.³⁶⁰ As the foster parents were all paid at the same time it seems likely that the relieving officer did meet with the foster parent, but whether the children were

³⁵² *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 June 1875.

³⁵³ Joanna Margaret Hill, *A Vindication of Voluntary Boarding-Out Committees from the Charges of E. Carleton Tufnell, Esq.*, contained in the *Observations on Mrs. Senior's Report*, Birmingham, 1875, 29.

³⁵⁴ *The Cambrian*, 11 February 1876.

³⁵⁵ Roy Parker, *Away from Home, a History of Child Care* (Barkingside: Barnardo's, 1990), 58.

³⁵⁶ Behlmer, *Friends of the Family*, 286, see also Horsburgh, 'No Sufficient Security' on the earlier questioning of Swansea Union's boarding-out policies, 61.

³⁵⁷ Rooke, Schnell, 'From Binding to Boarding out', 478.

³⁵⁸ Local Government Board: Fourth Annual Report, 176-7.

³⁵⁹ Felix Driver, 'Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 13, no.3 (1988), 275-87, 280-81; Hill, *Children of the State*, 240; for the perceived correlation between 'dirt' and immorality see Pamela K Gilbert, *Mapping the Victorian Social Body* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004), 30.

³⁶⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/5, Guardians' Minutes, 9 March 1865.

present is not apparent. Poor law inspector Francis Longe believed that the system was organised with ‘proper caution’ as to foster parents, although it is doubtful whether Longe actually visited the foster homes himself.³⁶¹ Doyle, however claimed that ‘on paper’ Swansea Union’s procedures and instructions for foster parents was ‘admirably provided for’, but he felt that because of the voluntary nature of ongoing supervision, the guardians’ interest had slackened over time.³⁶² Visits by relieving officers did take place but Doyle felt they were no substitute for guardians; if the Swansea guardians knew about ‘the actual conditions of the children under their care’, he felt sure they would not allow it to continue.³⁶³

In response to Doyle’s report John Llewelyn reported that ‘one or two’ children had been removed from foster parents, but he felt that the majority were ‘on an equality with other children of wage-earning parents’ and far better served than in the workhouse.³⁶⁴ This opinion appeared to have been shared by the majority of Swansea guardians. A ‘large number’ of the boarded out children had been visited by several guardians following Doyle’s revelations and most were positive about the children’s situations. The report written by Messrs. P. Rogers and P. Jenkins refuted Doyle’s correlation of dirt and neglect. The homes were not as ‘good and clean’ as might be hoped, but this was offset by the ‘great affection’ shown to the children. However, one guardian M. B. Williams felt the boarding out system as a whole was unsatisfactory and a separate school would offer better facilities for the children.³⁶⁵

Although Doyle castigated Swansea guardians for their alleged disregard of the children’s circumstances, he did however allude positively to visits by ‘one gentleman’ who was, in all likelihood, John Dillwyn Llewelyn.³⁶⁶ In 1876, Dillwyn Llewelyn reported that he had for several years, visited ‘our children in their country homes’ and compiled lengthy published reports.³⁶⁷ He described in some detail the living conditions of children boarded out in both the rural and urban areas of Swansea and contested Doyle’s allegations of neglect. The homes of the poor he claimed, could not be compared with Doyle’s favoured ‘model’ district schools, which were kept to a high standard of ‘show’ in readiness for inspections and visitations.³⁶⁸ This argument of course, dovetails neatly with his son John Llewelyn’s rebuttal of Doyle’s report in *The Cambrian*. For both Llewelyns, signifiers of poverty such as overcrowding and dirt did not necessarily equate to neglect or mistreatment. Rather, the importance of ‘ties of affection’ and a ‘motherly connection’ to enable the current well-being and future independence of the child was foregrounded, which contrasts strongly with Doyle’s condemnation of dirty but seemingly happy homes.³⁶⁹

‘There are enough of bruised affections in the world; enough of misery; enough of broken hearts, and I should not like to be the agent of adding another drop in the ocean.’³⁷⁰

³⁶¹ TNA, MH 12/16447, 30 December 1870.

³⁶² Local Government Board: Fourth Annual Report, 172-3.

³⁶³ As above, 171-2.

³⁶⁴ *The Cambrian*, 25 June 1875.

³⁶⁵ As above, 23 July 1875.

³⁶⁶ Local Government Board: Fourth Annual Report, 172.

³⁶⁷ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 3, 25. This is the only report I have been able to locate although a previous report is quoted at length in Ingram, ‘Additional Facts and Arguments on the Boarding-Out of Pauper Children’.

³⁶⁸ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 18.

³⁶⁹ As above, 4; Ingram, ‘Additional Facts and Arguments on the Boarding-Out of Pauper Children’, 512.

³⁷⁰ John Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union or How to turn a Drone into a Working Bee*, Swansea, 1876. Swansea Museum, box 93.

These words, spoken by John Dillwyn Llewelyn, reflect again how well-intentioned guardians mitigated the worst effects of poor law policy. He was speaking of refusing to remove children from their foster parents because for one reason or another they were deemed 'unsuitable' by the central authorities. He appears to have visited the majority of boarded out children over a very wide area in 1876, and his subsequent report is a fusion of care, sentimentality and recognition of the living conditions of the poor. Unlike Doyle, who equated disorderly domesticity with mistreatment, Dillwyn Llewelyn identified 'a spirit of good' among the people he visited, although some lived in very poor circumstances.³⁷¹ His philanthropic credentials are well documented and he demonstrated his concern for the pauper children of Swansea via his donation of land, without which it is unlikely that the cottage homes would have been built. He was to establish Parc Llewelyn, a 'people's park' in the outskirts of Swansea, and had served on the Board of Guardians since 1837.³⁷²

Although a tone of melodrama fills his report, Dillwyn Llewelyn's professed intention to tell the 'unvarnished truth' about the homes he visited appears to be genuine. Although he eulogised the benefits of a rural upbringing in the 'green' country of Swansea as opposed to the 'black' country of the urban and industrial centres, he also recognised that foster parents were easier to find in urban areas. Rural 'peasants', he felt, were unwilling to take the added responsibility of a pauper child and of course their numbers were less than in the heavily populated urban areas.³⁷³ Bucolic imagery was common in arguments supporting both boarding-out and the cottage homes movement although Florence Hill also thought 'the natural conditions of home life' improved the health of boarded out children even when they were moved from a country workhouse to urban foster parents.³⁷⁴ One of the widely agreed benefits of a rural upbringing was the distance between child and 'former bad influences'. Several children were boarded out in the 'wild, secluded spot' of Carn Swllt and Dillwyn Llewelyn wished more homes could be found in similar places where 'frugality and hard work' were required, unlike the 'the bread of idleness' which pervaded the workhouse.³⁷⁵ Dillwyn Llewelyn also voiced another commonly held opinion that children could avoid the contamination of pauperism if removed from workhouses. The many children taken in at Gellywran Farm, he felt, had been well brought up 'without a single taint of pauperism clinging to them'. In his own village of Penllegare, the children were apparently visited regularly by his own family; Catherine Murphy, Mary Price, Emily Popham and Catherine Reeves were all boarded out in the village with different families and all were reported as being safe and doing well.³⁷⁶

In these areas he visited there were 27 children living 'physically speaking' in 'bad' places, but with relatives of respectable character. Thirteen year old Sarah Lloyd and eleven year old Charlotte Lloyd both lived with their sister Ann Davies. In his report, Doyle complained of overcrowding in the house, but Dillwyn Llewelyn found them clean, 'civil and obliging in demeanour' and scholastically very good. He concurred with Ann Davies' desire to find the elder girl 'a good and comfortable place', doubtless in service.³⁷⁷ He related the circumstances of two children who were not living with relatives but who had been informally

³⁷¹ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 25.

³⁷² For the history of Parc Llewelyn, see Robert Skinner, 'John Dillwyn Llewelyn's People's Park', *Gower*, vol. 57 (2006), 59-68.

³⁷³ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 14.

³⁷⁴ Hill, 'The Family System for Workhouse Children', 269. See also Michael Horsburgh (1983) 'Her Father's Daughter: Florence Davenport-Hill, 1829-1919', *International Social Work*, 26(4), pp. 1-13.

³⁷⁵ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 14. Now Garnswllt, which is located between Pontardulais and Ammanford and still pleasantly wild and secluded.

³⁷⁶ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 10, 14-15.

³⁷⁷ *Fourth annual report of the Local Government Board*, 177.

adopted by their foster parents. Margaret Lynn's foster parents, a childless couple according to Dillwyn Llewelyn, displayed ingenuity and industry by growing vegetables and keeping poultry in their garden. Although their home was in Fleet Street which was badly paved and drained, he felt her life to be 'full of happy promise' because of the example set by the Hughes. The circumstances leading to the 'adoption' of Alfred Snow by a Mrs Bennett could not be ascertained by Dillwyn Llewelyn, but he was satisfied by her assertion of 'he is mine now, and no one shall take him away'. He also visited three children living with their aunt whom Doyle had singled out for criticism. He does not name the family but professes himself satisfied with the children's appearance and their attendance at the local school. He felt that the children should become accustomed to the type of 'rough, working life' that they would encounter when they grew up.

One child, David Howell, was painfully thin, spitting blood and thought likely to die. His foster mother had moved home to a warmer area and although he was still consumptive, Dillwyn Llewelyn recorded that he had 'rallied'. His foster mother Mrs Lewis provided care for him 'ungrudgingly', commented Dillwyn Llewelyn and asked 'where could you find this level of care in a public institution?'³⁷⁸ Young John Whelan was thought unlikely to ever be able to read, but was now being cared for by Welsh speaking parents, and he was learning fast in his native tongue. Dillwyn Llewelyn, ignored the central authority's rules on outdoor relief by allowing payment to children's relatives, and two young sisters, Sarah 13, and Charlotte 11, lived with their older sister who cared for them as a mother.

One foster home was of a more 'professional' type of which Dillwyn Llewelyn felt he could not in theory give his wholehearted approval, but in which he nevertheless thought the children 'well placed'. The children were boarded out with Mrs Morris and her collier husband. She had looked after 20 children over the years and at the time of Dillwyn Llewelyn's visit had six boys between the ages of seven and eleven, one of whom was proving troublesome as he was a truant and could neither read nor write unlike the other boys. Mrs Morris appears well known to Dillwyn Llewelyn and although he admitted she practised 'a kind of trade', he found her kind and motherly and all of the children had apparently become independent workers without recourse to 'parish resources'. He felt that although money might be at first be a primary motivating factor for many foster parents, 'ties of affection' often became stronger. Dillwyn Llewelyn also claimed that boarded out children turned out better than those brought up in the workhouse and cited one example of a girl who was very well settled and married and likely to rise to an 'advanced position'.³⁷⁹

Although Dillwyn Llewelyn described the urban streets as narrow, crowded and offensive; redolent of vice and degradation with people who staggered about 'under the influence of gin and vice', he felt that most of the children boarded out there should not be removed from the foster parents they loved. Most of these children lived with relatives grandmothers, aunts, brothers or sisters, and Dillwyn Llewelyn appeared to believe that family ties were important to their wellbeing and future independence; this contradicts to some extent his previous statement that isolated rural areas separated children from their former vicious companions. In these areas he visited 27 children living 'physically speaking' in 'bad' places, but with relatives of respectable character..³⁸⁰ In his report, Andrew Doyle had complained of overcrowding in this house where Sarah and Charlotte Lloyd lived with their sister, but Dillwyn Llewelyn had found them clean, 'civil and obliging in demeanour' as well as scholastically able. He concurred with Ann Davies' desire to find the elder girl 'a good and comfortable place', doubtless in service. It appears that many of the children mentioned by Dillwyn Llewelyn lived

³⁷⁸ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 14-15.

³⁷⁹ As above, 4, 19-23.

³⁸⁰ As above, 15-16.

with their relatives who were paid around one shilling and sixpence to two shillings a week. Doyle had felt this was an excuse for disguising out-relief as 'assistance', which would have the effect of suppressing a 'natural' reluctance to be in receipt of poor relief.³⁸¹ Similarly, Swansea Union appeared to keep boarded out siblings together. Benjamin and Joseph Levi, nine and seven year old orphans, were boarded out together as were seven and five year old Margaret and Thomas Park, along with several others.³⁸² Dillwyn Llewelyn also visited three children living with their aunt who had been singled out for criticism by Doyle. He did not name the family but professed himself satisfied with the children's appearance and their attendance at the local school. He felt that the children should become accustomed to the type of 'rough, working life' that they would encounter when they grew up.³⁸³ This view was also shared by the Local Government Board inspector of boarding-out Miss M.H. Mason who did not mind how 'rough' a foster home was, provided the child was kindly treated.³⁸⁴

Dillwyn Llewelyn also related the circumstances of two children who were not living with relatives, but who had been informally adopted by their foster parents. The description of Margaret Lynn 'with a doll in her arms and a smile on her lips' is emblematic of the language of sentimentality which he employed to romanticise the children's situations. Margaret Lynn's foster parents were a childless couple who, according to Dillwyn Llewelyn, displayed ingenuity and industry by growing vegetables and keeping poultry in their garden. Although their home was in badly paved and drained Fleet Street, he felt her life to be 'full of happy promise' because of the example set by the Hughes. The circumstances leading to the 'adoption' of Alfred Snow by a Mrs Bennett could not be ascertained by Dillwyn Llewelyn, but he was satisfied by her motherly assertion of 'he is mine now, and no one shall take him away'.³⁸⁵ Sarah Stratton lived with the Jeffrey family and she was playing in the fields 'well and happy' when Llewelyn visited. Dillwyn Llewelyn remarked particularly that John Whelan who lived in Pontardulais could write his name. The boy had previously been unable to recognise his letters but 'the seeds of learning' were now beginning to 'fructify' and he felt sure he would do well as his progress was praised by his family.

This language of sentimentality ran the gamut from mercy and melodrama to selflessness in an article in *The Cambrian* about the 'adoption' of a 'poor orphaned mite of blue-eyed, wondering humanity'.³⁸⁶ A 'fine, tall, motherly' working-class woman had come before Swansea guardians to ask for permission to permanently take care of a 'golden curly-haired' girl of around four years old. No financial input was requested by the woman and sanction was given accompanied by a heartfelt cry from one of the guardians of 'There, take her, and God bless you!'³⁸⁷ Concerns about foster parents taking in children for financial gain had been voiced for many years. In a letter to Andrew Doyle in 1873, 'CB' reported that boarding-out children with paupers should be restricted or prohibited as one woman he had visited in the Pembroke Union had openly admitted that she took the children 'with the purpose of making money'.³⁸⁸

³⁸¹ Local Government Board: Fourth Annual Report, 177-8.

³⁸² TNA, MH 32/20, Statement of Children Boarded out in Swansea, January 1874.

³⁸³ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 16-18.

³⁸⁴ Mundella Report, vol. II, 570, see also Behlmer, *Friends of the Family*, 288.

³⁸⁵ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 16-18

³⁸⁶ *The Cambrian*, 6 September 1878.

³⁸⁷ As above, It is possible that this Dickensian-style tale concerned a Mrs Esau's application to 'adopt' Bessie Havard, which is the only comparable entry in the records at the time, but written without any of the drama and relish of *The Cambrian's* version, WGAS, U/S 1/13, Guardians' Minutes, 22 August 1878.

³⁸⁸ TNA, MH 32/20, 2 December 1873.

Of course, not all children were happy. Mary Ann Evans chose to run away from her foster parents in Plasmarl back to the workhouse.³⁸⁹ Dillwyn Llewelyn had acknowledged there would be ‘failures’ resulting from the boarding-out system, one of which was Mary Ann Whelan who, despite ‘most careful management’, had left her foster parents to lead a ‘wandering life’. She was described as lacking honesty, propriety and cleanliness but Dillwyn Llewelyn felt he was still obliged to seek her out and do what little he could ‘for her reformation’.³⁹⁰ Her reluctance to attend school had also been noted in a statement to the central authorities the previous year.³⁹¹ The ‘grave concerns’ for her future welfare voiced by Dillwyn Llewelyn doubtless referred to her pursuing a life of crime and prostitution in spite of being brought up in a suitable foster home.³⁹²

In his report, Dillwyn Llewelyn had also stressed the importance of his wife’s role in his visits to boarded out children. She had accompanied him on nearly all his visits and he felt women understood the needs of children better than men and ‘knew what to look for and what to ask’.³⁹³ The role of women in the supervision of boarded out children was also recognised by the central authorities and their resolution to enlist the ‘active co-operation’ of women.³⁹⁴ There had been increasing pressure over several years for women to be more involved in the management of pauper children. Florence Hill considered it vital that ‘constant and active supervision’ was undertaken in the boarding-out system, preferably with the assistance of women of a ‘superior social position’.³⁹⁵ Charles Trevelyan felt that as ‘women’s work’ was so debated and discussed, work such as the superintendence of boarded out children was ‘truly beneficent’ and also ‘entirely feminine’.³⁹⁶ It was also felt entirely normal by most that a woman’s maternal tendency and care-giver role was her primary skill.³⁹⁷

That this was not a universal viewpoint was demonstrated by Edward Tufnell’s assertion in 1875 that women were ‘unfitted’ to superintend ‘matters of this sort’.³⁹⁸ Female guardians in unions such as Bristol, Bradford, Eastbourne, Croydon and Fulham had involved themselves in boarding-out large numbers of pauper children.³⁹⁹ In her study of Welsh women poor law guardians, Preston claims that female guardians in Cardiff at times excluded men entirely from boarding-out committees.⁴⁰⁰ Although *The Cambrian* related ‘specially cheering accounts’ from ladies’ boarding-out committees in Birmingham and reported that Swansea Union had resolved to enlist the active co-operation of women in 1876, there is no specific mention of female participation within boarding-out committees in Swansea Union records until the mid-1890s.⁴⁰¹ It is possible that some Welsh unions were at that time loath to include women on boarding-out committees as, in 1897, Local Government Board Inspector Thomas Bircham requested that Miss Mason, the poor law boarding-out inspector, address a poor law

³⁸⁹ WGAS, Visiting Committee Report Books, U/S 4/7, 13 November 1875.

³⁹⁰ Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 11.

³⁹¹ TNA, MH 32/20, Statement of Children Boarded out in Swansea, January 1874.

³⁹² Dillwyn Llewelyn, *A Report on the Children Boarded Out in the Swansea Union*, 12.

³⁹³ Quoted in Ingram, ‘Additional Facts and Arguments on the Boarding-Out of Pauper Children’, 517.

³⁹⁴ *The Cambrian*, 11 February 1876; WGAS, US 1/12, Guardians’ Minutes, 20 April 1876.

³⁹⁵ Hill, *The Children of the State*, 239; ‘The Family System for Workhouse Children’, 270.

³⁹⁶ *Report of a drawing-room conference on boarding-out pauper children*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1876.

³⁹⁷ Catherine Preston, ‘Welsh Women Poor Law Guardians, 1894-1914’ (Unpublished M.A. thesis: Cardiff, 2006), 59.

³⁹⁸ Tufnell, *Observations*, 20.

³⁹⁹ Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865-1914* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, 1987), 256-7.

⁴⁰⁰ Preston, ‘“To do Good and Useful Work”: Welsh Women Poor Law Guardians 1894-1914’, *Llafur, The Journal of Welsh People’s History*, vol.10, no. 1 (2010), 87-102, 99.

⁴⁰¹ *The Cambrian*, 11 February 1876; WGAS, US 1/12, Guardians’ Minutes, 24 February 1876.

conference held at Langland Bay near Swansea. In her speech, Mason had claimed particularly that children should never be boarded out unless they could be supervised by a ladies committee.⁴⁰²

Conclusions

It does appear that following the criticism and resultant publicity of the 1870s that Swansea Union embarked upon a more regulated regime for the protection of their boarded out children. Boarding-out committees with 'local knowledge' were to be established and foster parents were to be 'adequately remunerated' for their care and education of children, although no specific amounts were mentioned. Urban homes were not proscribed outright, but were to be 'avoided' and children were to be found homes in country villages if possible.⁴⁰³ Whether Swansea Union adhered to this policy, or whether it was again reflective of Doyle's accusation that Swansea Union's procedures looked good 'on paper' but failed to deliver in practice, is difficult to discover.⁴⁰⁴ There were no more major scandals and, from the 1880s, quarterly visits by both relieving officers and medical officers to boarded-out children were recorded in the minute books. Across England and Wales, boarding-out was becoming an increasingly popular strategy and the number of children being boarded out doubled between 1885 and 1897.⁴⁰⁵

Rural homes continued to be imagined as the normal place for boarded out children. Some child welfare campaigners believed that it was a child's right to be taken from the slums of London to enjoy play and 'fresh air' on a holiday to the country, implying that the joys of childhood were absent from urban life.⁴⁰⁶ However, Miss Mason saw through this rural idyll and pointed to farmers who 'often take them as servants'. Mason also recounted how a farmer had been imprisoned for cruelty against a four year old girl.⁴⁰⁷ The desirability of female supervision was reinforced by the Boarding-Out Order of 1909 which ordered that at least one-third of boarding-out committees should be women. Unions were also encouraged to employ a female 'Visitor'.⁴⁰⁸ After consultation with several other unions in Wales and England, Swansea Union resolved to appoint a 'Female Visitor' in June 1910. She was to be a trained nurse between the ages of 25 and 40 and preferably a Welsh speaker.⁴⁰⁹ The post also encompassed the office of Infant Protection Officer and included visiting the elderly and 'deserving' poor who were in receipt of relief, as well as visiting the Workhouse maternity wards.⁴¹⁰ Visits to the foster homes of the Union's children were to be on a monthly basis, although the Local Government Board stressed that inspections by local relieving officers

⁴⁰² Local Government Board, Twenty-seventh Annual Report, 1897-98, 150; *Western Mail*, 7 May 1897, Report of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Poor Law Conference.

⁴⁰³ WGAS, US 1/12, 24 February 1876.

⁴⁰⁴ Local Government Board: Fourth Annual Report, 172-3.

⁴⁰⁵ Local Government Board, Twenty-seventh Annual Report, 1897-98, cd. 8978, 153.

⁴⁰⁶ Behlmer, *Child Abuse*, 57.

⁴⁰⁷ Local Government Board, Twenty-seventh Annual Report, 1897-98, 159. Swansea Union also ordered a copies of Miss Mason's report to be sent to each guardian, WGAS, U/S 1/29, Guardians' Minutes, 13 October 1898.

⁴⁰⁸ Boarding-Out (Within Union) Order 1909, Local Government Board Circular Letter, WGAS, U/S 1/44, Guardians' Minutes, 6 January 1910.

⁴⁰⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/44, Guardians' Minutes, 9 June 1910.

⁴¹⁰ As above, 23 June 1910; for the ramifications of the Infant Life Protections Acts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Daniel Grey, "'More Ignorant and Stupid than Wilfully Cruel": Homicide Trials and Baby-Farming in England and Wales in the Wake of the Children Act 1908', *Crimes and Misdemeanours: Deviance and the Law in Historical Perspective*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2009), 60-77, 65-6.

should continue as before.⁴¹¹ The duties of the Female Visitor appear to be those of both a district nurse and social worker, and it seems to have been an important appointment as the starting salary offered was £70 per annum. This was more than the relieving officers received and only slightly less than the Union Clerk.⁴¹² The appointment of Albena Williams from a strong field of seventeen applicants saw her salary as a charge nurse in Swansea workhouse doubled.⁴¹³

It appears that, by this appointment in 1910, Swansea Union was catching up with unions around England and Wales and was instigating a professionalisation of their boarding-out/fostering system, which would be more recognisable to child-care agencies today. The children were more closely supervised and it is likely that Albena Williams followed Miss Mason's example and questioned neighbours, friends and employers of foster parents about their characters and relationships with their foster children, and also consulted with teachers at the children's schools.⁴¹⁴ Whilst it is undoubtedly true that a pauper child had a better life at the end of the period covered by *Pauper Children* than at the beginning, this rather intrusive surveillance may have ensured safer children but it may also have deterred some potentially caring foster families.⁴¹⁵ Whether increased control and costs generated better care is also debatable. Swansea Union appear to have boarded out pauper children throughout the period, both with and without the cooperation (or indeed knowledge) of the central authorities. Although the system was imagined as providing a normal family life for pauper children, it also demanded a high level of supervision to satisfy the central authorities. Discourses of sentimentality were used widely to endorse the benefits of 'home' and 'family' for a pauper child, while imaginings of the ideal home were contested strongly by guardians, child welfare campaigners and the central authorities. Many of the children who were boarded out were placed in the homes of relatives and the impact of these relationships was not always perceived as positive. Although parents and children living together as a unit represented an imagined normality in middle-class and respectable working-class families, when this unit required poor law financial support in order to stay in the home, imaginings were considerably more slippery and contentious.

⁴¹¹ WGAS, U/S 1/44, *Guardians' Minutes*, 6 January 1910.

⁴¹² As above, 9 June 1910. Her salary would rise by annual increments of £5 to a maximum of £90. The clerk was paid £80 per annum and the highest paid relieving officer just over £53 per annum.

⁴¹³ WGAS, U/S 1/44, *Guardians' Minutes*, 9 June, 7 July 1910.

⁴¹⁴ Local Government Board, *Fifteenth Annual Report, 1886-6*, c.4844, appendix, 51-61.

⁴¹⁵ Higher levels of supervision within foster families have not always prevented cruelty and abuse of foster children, in 1945, Dennis O'Neil, aged 13, was beaten to death by his foster father, Reginald Gough, at Bank Farm, Shropshire and Eunice Spry was imprisoned in 2007 for 'horrifying cruelty and sadism' to her foster children over a 19 year period in Gloucestershire.

Outdoor Relief

The 1834 report by the Royal Commission on the poor laws is littered throughout with the word 'evil'. However, the epithet of 'master evil' was conferred upon the practice of allowing paupers a dole of money or food in their own homes, otherwise known as outdoor relief.² Following the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, various outdoor relief prohibitive and regulatory orders were issued by the central authorities and an alleged 'crusade' against outdoor relief was launched in the 1870s.³ Apart from those in the London unions, where outdoor relief was less common until the twentieth century, the numbers of paupers receiving relief in their own homes outnumbered those in workhouses by a considerable margin.⁴ In 1873, discounting the metropolis, the ratio of outdoor to indoor paupers was six to one.⁵ The figures for Wales demonstrated a larger outdoor pauper population and more variable policies, with unions relieving between 6 and 80 paupers in their own homes, for every one in workhouses. In Swansea, the figure was eleven to one and between 1837 and 1843 the average number of children relieved in the workhouse was 63, while 713 children received outdoor relief.⁶ By 1907, almost 74 percent of pauper children in England and Wales were relieved at home and the vast majority of pauper children remained at home throughout the years 1834 to 1910. However, if as Hendrick claims, the 'ideal' notion of childhood was a middle-class childhood,⁷ then few of these outdoor pauper families could have conformed to this. Indeed, the inability of fractured families to conform to what was imagined as normal appears to be a major factor for outdoor relief generating such widespread anxiety.

Historical scholarship regarding these thousands of outdoor pauper children is a neglected area. On many levels, this is understandable as they are even more 'hidden' from us than their institutionalised peers. Numbers of paupers relieved and the resultant expenditure along with various 'crusades' against outdoor relief have, to a certain extent, been explored by historians, but analysis of the lived experience of outdoor pauper children proves more elusive.⁸ Thane analyses how women were treated by the new poor laws and claims that, although women and their children at times were allowed 'adequate' relief, it often just allowed 'barest survival'.⁹ Indeed, the Webbs felt that the central authorities had never themselves made any

¹ WGAS, U/S 1/12, Guardians' Minutes, 7 December 1876, Rules for outdoor relief.

² Report from His Majesty's commissioners for inquiring into the administration and practical operation of the Poor Laws, 1834, 156; see also Michael Rose, 'The Allowance System under the New Poor Law', *Economic History Review*, vol. 19, no. 3 (1966), 607-20, 607.

³ The term 'crusade' in relation to outdoor relief appears to have been coined by the Webbs: 'a persistent crusade against outdoor relief, as such, to any class or section of the pauper host', Webbs, *English Poor Law History*, vol. I, 436.

⁴ Ellen Ross, 'Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London before World War I', *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1 (1983), 4-27, 20.

⁵ Paupers in receipt of outdoor relief in London did exceed those relieved in workhouses by a smaller margin of approximately two to one, Local Government Board, *Second Annual Report, 1873*, 286.

⁶ As above, 286-8; Vivian, *Letters addressed to the Ratepayers in the Swansea Union*, xiii.

⁷ Hendrick, *Child Welfare* 28, 37.

⁸ See, A. G. Parton M. H. Matthews, 'The Returns of Poor Law Out-Relief – A Source for the Local Historian', *The Local Historian*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1984), 25-31; Mary MacKinnon, 'English Poor Law Policy and the Crusade against Out Relief', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 47, no. 3 (1986), 603-25; Elizabeth T. Hurren, 'Poor Law versus Public Health: Diphtheria, Sanitary Reform, and the 'Crusade' against Outdoor Relief 1870-1900', *Social History of Medicine*, vol.18, no.3 (2005), 399-418. Karel Williams does provide very useful statistical information concerning outdoor pauper children, Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty*, 196-200.

⁹ Thane, 'Women and the Poor Law', 37.

systematic investigation of the conditions in which outdoor paupers lived.¹⁰ Compared with the wholesale explorations instigated by the 1909 Royal Commission, this is undeniably true, but during the years preceding this, many makeshift and partial enquiries, reports and appraisals were activated by a variety of triggers both locally and nationally. Similarly, both legislative and personal testimony, not related directly to outdoor relief, offer us glimpses into the practice of outdoor relief and the lives of outdoor paupers, as well as the poor in general.

This chapter unpicks these diverse sources to expose a more rounded interpretation of outdoor relief than is often attempted. Analysis will extend to the ways in which outdoor relief was perceived by regional unions, the central authorities and the often contradictory and autonomous practice of outdoor relief. The 'crusade' against outdoor relief in the 1870s are explored, together with any ways the strategy changed families' lives. For most of the period 1834-1910, the education of outdoor pauper children persisted as a site of contention. As discussed in previous chapters, education was perceived as a primary means of removing inbred pauperism from a child and this chapter will question the involvement of poor law unions, the central authorities and also the significance of parental engagement in the education of outdoor pauper children. The lived experiences of the tens of thousands of outdoor pauper children remain largely unrevealed by poor law sources. However, this chapter sheds light on the lives of these hidden children via a close reading of reports, autobiographies and newspapers in order to contextualise experiences of poverty and thus offer representations of the lives and expectations of outdoor pauper children.

It has proved problematic to determine any consistent pattern relating to the granting of outdoor relief. The limited and patchy nature of the available sources is exacerbated by unions' partial recording of outcomes, their contrariness in decision-making and capricious adherence to central authorities guidelines. The phrase 'departures from the regulations relating to out relief' appears regularly within the minute books and is indicative of autonomous decision-making within unions.¹¹ However, guardians also appear to contradict their own decisions and opinions, as in 1838, when a minute book recorded that outdoor relief was to be refused to mothers of 'bastard children' except in cases of sickness or 'urgent necessity'.¹² Nevertheless in just one union, between 1837 and 1843 there was an average of 78 illegitimate children receiving outdoor relief, which although only a fraction of the total average number of 713 outdoor children, was higher than the average of 63 children who were relieved in the workhouse.¹³

The apparent contradictory nature of decisions recorded in the minutes books may be the result of incomplete clarification within the records. The case of Rebecca Bonsey in 1882 is markedly illustrative of these inconsistencies. Bonsey and her seven children had been deserted by her husband. It was proposed to allow her outdoor relief of seven shillings and sixpence a week for four weeks, but an amendment that 'rules adopted by this Board be adhered to' and outdoor relief refused, resulted in the chairman using his casting vote to carry the amendment. However, on the same day, and the very next entry in the minute book, the guardians allowed Gwenllian Lewis, again deserted by her husband, outdoor relief of four shillings a week for four weeks.¹⁴ No reason was given for such direct inconsistencies although

¹⁰ Beatrice and Sydney Webb, *English Poor Law History Part II: The Last Hundred Years* (London, 1929), 507.

¹¹ This has been claimed about Cardiff Union, see Williams 'Some aspects of the history of poor law provision in Cardiff', 53.

¹² TNA, MH12/16436, Guardians' Meeting 21 September 1838.

¹³ Vivian, *Letters addressed to the Ratepayers in the Swansea Union*, xiii.

¹⁴ WGAS, U/S 1/16, Guardians' Minutes, 2 February 1882.

it is possible Lewis had been deserted by her husband for a longer time, thus 'proving' a lack of collusion between her and her elusive husband.

It appears that poor laws inspectors also experienced this difficulty and is demonstrated by a very long report by Andrew Doyle which resonates with palpable frustration. One of his criticisms was the lack of information recorded by relieving officers concerning the circumstances of applicants for outdoor relief. In some cases 'not a word is stated' about the situations of outdoor paupers in receipt of relief.¹⁵ Doyle's main source of exasperation goes some way to explain contradictions within poor law decisions. Instead of meeting as one 'Board', the guardians generally devolved business to committees, one of which was the relief committee which dealt with applications for outdoor relief. The chairs of this committee tended to change constantly which, as Doyle illustrated, resulted in decisions being reversed from meeting to meeting. Although only one of many examples recorded by Doyle, the case of Ann Strawbridge and her two children, aged 10 and 8, illustrates his argument particularly well. Strawbridge had been deserted by her husband and her relief was left to the discretion of the relieving officer for one week. The relieving officer subsequently located an older son of 17 who was earning 13 shillings a week. When she came before the guardians again, the relieving officer recommended an offer of the workhouse. Instead, a different chairman allowed her three shillings for one week and a fortnight later, a different chairman again awarded her three shillings every week.¹⁶ This also demonstrates that unlike today, poor people were encouraged to make ends meet by supplementing their relief with paid work.

Widows and deserted wives

Women appear to be targeted particularly by 'crusades'. Outdoor relief was to be denied to deserted wives during the first year of desertion. Wives and families of convicted prisoners, soldiers, sailors or militiamen on duty, able bodied widows with one child over two years old, and single women with illegitimate children.¹⁷ Although older children were attending school at this time, there was no poor law help with child care available to enable mothers with younger children to work and be self-supporting.¹⁸ The homes of women who were granted outdoor relief were subjected to periodic inspections by guardians and relieving officers to ascertain their children's 'condition, &c'.¹⁹ This policy continued into the twentieth century, in 1909. When Charlotte Hawkins applied for outdoor relief for herself and her four children, the Local Government Board requested that Swansea guardians ascertain her total income 'from all sources at the house' and whether the sleeping accommodation in the house was 'satisfactory'.²⁰

There appears to be more controversy surrounding the outdoor relief of deserted wives than of widows, and is perhaps indicative of an imagined model of respectability. Widows, in this context, signified a blameless fracturing of the family unit, while deserted wives could be perceived as tainted by association with their perfidious husbands. Often, deserted wives were also suspected of 'collusion' or pretending to be abandoned in order to obtain relief. Indeed, in Welsh unions, according to Doyle, it was assumed that widows received outdoor relief as a matter of course as 'widows pay'.²¹ In March 1844, 129 widows and their 344

¹⁵ TNA, MH 12/16448 10 June 1872.

¹⁶ As above.

¹⁷ WGAS, U/S 1/12, Guardians' Minutes, 7 December 1876.

¹⁸ Thane, 'Women and the Poor Law', 39.

¹⁹ TNA, MH 32/20, 5 October 1871.

²⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/44, Guardians' Minutes, 11 November 1909.

²¹ TNA, MH 32/20, 5 October 1871.

dependent children were in receipt of outdoor relief.²² During the Crimean War, guardians also allowed outdoor relief to the wives of serving soldiers and invited the widows of Crimean soldiers to a special dinner.²³ Whether this 'widows pay' was sufficient is unlikely; Marianne Jones, a Church district-visitor observed that in order to 'keep themselves from the union house' aged widows, or widows with children in receipt of outdoor relief, suffered the 'most severely'.²⁴ In 1877, in spite of the alleged 'crusade' against outdoor relief, 275 widows with 622 children dependent upon them were relieved outside the workhouse. This compares with 50 deserted wives and 94 dependent children who were allowed outdoor relief.²⁵ When chair of Swansea guardians, John Llewelyn eulogised about 'fatherless little ones' kept safely in the custody of their widowed mothers, he emphasised that it was conditional on her 'tolerable character'. Such relief, he maintained, would result in boys growing up 'glad and willing' to support their mother and 'maintain the home in which they were nurtured', thus propagating the normality of middle-class imaginings.²⁶ Again, it is problematic to reach any firm conclusions as to the make-up of the outdoor pauper population as a whole. As Doyle claimed, the 'large majority' of parents in receipt of outdoor relief was because of their 'sudden or urgent necessity' such as illness or accidents, and could not be considered permanent recipients.²⁷

Education

One of the main objections to pauper children living with foster parents was the authorities' loss of control over the children's education. This situation was perceived to be magnified considerably for outdoor pauper children. In 1849, Jelinger Symons had condemned the lack of educational provision for outdoor pauper children. There were far more outdoor children than those in workhouses and he felt they were 'especially in need of moral and industrial training at the hands of the State', and they appeared to be excluded from even the 'meagre provision afforded to the handfuls in the workhouses'.²⁸ One of his recommendations was that workhouses should be extended to allow outdoor children to attend their schools. Although some outdoor children were admitted to workhouse schools in the North of England and also to Quatt Farm School in Shropshire, there is little evidence of this happening in other unions.²⁹ Parental influence was again perceived to be negative and Symons verbalised his condemnation thus:

Perhaps there are no children in the kingdom whom it is more essential to rescue from the mismanagement of their parents, and the bad example of their families and companions, than the children of out-door paupers, a class usually characterized by habits and vices disastrous to the morals of young persons, exposed to the contamination of their influence and society.³⁰

Although Symons' censure is also driven by his desire for the setting up of district schools, his comments indicate how parental autonomy was to be tempered by controlling

²² TNA, MH12/16438, 13 April 1844.

²³ *The Cambrian*, 22 December 1854.

²⁴ Jules Ginswick, ed., *Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 1849-1851, the Letters to the Morning Chronicle from Correspondents*, vol. III (London: Frank Cass, 1983), 176.

²⁵ TNA, MH 32/96, 5 March 1877, Figures for outdoor relief in the half year ending Lady Day 1876 [25 March].

²⁶ *Western Mail* 17 April 1873.

²⁷ Reports on the Education of Pauper Children, 1862, 27.

²⁸ Committee of Council on Education, 1849, 237.

²⁹ As above, 190, 281.

³⁰ As above, 253-4.

measures to emulate the middle-class paradigm of the normal family, in which education, both moral, intellectual and often away from home, played a key role.

In 1855, 'Denison's Act' had enabled, but did not compel, boards of guardians to pay for the education of the children of paupers in receipt of outdoor relief.³¹ Some unions did appear to pay for their boarded out children to attend local schools. In 1873 it was reported that the Swansea Union had 'exercised that power' which the Denison's Act gave them although it was thought very few unions had similarly done so.³² Prior to the August enactment of the 1870 Education Act, the union recorded that around £100 per annum was being spent on the education of outdoor pauper children.³³ Trott has demonstrated that registers from the Swansea National Boys Schools record that poor law guardians paid school fees for outdoor pauper children between 1860 and 1864. It is also likely that the union had negotiated a special scale of school fees for many years.³⁴

The Poor Law Board had anticipated that guardians would use the new power 'to some considerable extent'.³⁵ The Newcastle Commission recorded that, in 1856, unions were paying for 3,986 outdoor children to attend schools and, in 1857, the figure had risen to 6,537.³⁶ Some outdoor children attended schools without the help of poor law unions, but an estimated 100,000 outdoor pauper children were not educated at any school at this time and were instead thought likely to be taught 'pauperism, vice and crime'.³⁷ However, these figures were not substantiated by a later report which, in general, disagreed with the Newcastle Commission and recommended that guardians should be compelled to make the education of children a condition of outdoor relief for their parents.³⁸ The figures below from 1 July 1859 still demonstrate a lack of poor law payment for the education of outdoor pauper children but illuminate the significance of philanthropic, and in particular the importance of parental involvement.

Number of children chargeable to the poor rate

in England and Wales	254,034
Children below the age of three years old	63,554
Of the remaining 190,480 children:	
Attending a day school at the cost of their parents	65,656
Attending a day school at the cost of the poor-rates	6,863
Attending a day school at the cost of other parties	35,212
Not attending any day school	48,385

³¹ Previously, in 1844, the central authorities had refused to allow for two pence to be paid for schooling of outdoor children, Webbs, *English Poor Law Policy*, 104.

³² *The Cambrian*, 4 July 1873.

³³ TNA, MH 12/16447 22 February 1870.

³⁴ Arthur Trott, 'History of Church Schools in Swansea, 1800-1870', Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University College of Swansea, 1941, 188. Trott points to registers from others schools not surviving, for school fee negotiations, see WGAS, U/S 1/8, Guardians' Minutes, 13 October 1870.

³⁵ Poor Law Board, Ninth Annual Report, 13.

³⁶ Newcastle Commission, 1861, vol. I, 380; Poor Law Board, Ninth Annual Report, 8.

³⁷ As above, 380-1.

³⁸ As above, 385; Reports on Education of Pauper Children, 1862.

These figures go a long way to negate an assumption that outdoor paupers probably spent more money on gin and tobacco than on school fees for their children,⁴⁰ and it was also assumed that parental 'indulgence in one fatal vice' of alcohol was to the detriment of their children's schooling.⁴¹ Similarly, Mary Carpenter was one of several education specialists who claimed that a 'large class' of people who were poor, often 'dissolute' and law-breaking were being mistaken for paupers by the Education Commissioners. The children of these often wretchedly poor, but non-poor law dependent people, and blurred the distinction of poor children between the pitied 'waif' and the feared 'street-arab'.⁴²

The 1862 reports on education of pauper children also claimed that many outdoor paupers equated the level of school fees with the quality of education offered and several witnesses asserted that cost did not deter even the poorest pauper parents.⁴³ These witnesses, who included James Kay Shuttleworth and Mary Carpenter, were arguing against the compulsory enactment of the Denison Act and the alleged 'mischievousness' of free education and were therefore promoting their own agendas. Nevertheless, as shown by the figures above, the high proportion of outdoor paupers who paid for their children's education demonstrates that many parents considered themselves responsible for their children's schooling. In 1863, Swansea parochial schools also shared the opinion that free education would only result in 'lax attendance' and that all should 'pay something' for their children's schooling.⁴⁴

The effectiveness of schools for working-class children is also uncertain. Swansea's Boys National School was regarded as one of the best in the county in 1851 and York Place Free School received many complimentary observations in the 1847 inquiry into Welsh education, as did some small privately-run schools.⁴⁵ The inquiry was charged explicitly with reporting on 'the means afforded to the labouring classes of acquiring a knowledge of the English language', hence, much of its accounts of privately-run schools emphasised the use, or lack, of English by the school masters and mistresses. As many of their pupils' first, and possibly only, language would have been Welsh, it is of course likely that the pupils would have learned more if the lessons were taught via the medium of Welsh, although this was not the purpose of the inquiry. Criticism was also extended to the imperfect English grammar used by school masters and mistresses, examples of which were recorded, with a degree of superciliousness, in the reports.⁴⁶ Whilst the inquiry can be perceived as a subjective view of Welsh education, it nevertheless revealed many flawed schools intended for working-class children. The Wicliffe British School was apparently in a state 'of perfect disorganisation' when visited and none of the workmen's children who attended Mary Buckingham's school could read. Neither could any of the children attending David Davies' school, who himself appeared not to have washed

³⁹ Reports on Education of Pauper Children, 1862, 99.

⁴⁰ Report from the Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children 1861, paper no. 460; 460-I, 186

⁴¹ *The Cambrian*, 29 November 1861.

⁴² Reports on Education of Pauper Children, 1862, 100-2, see also colourful descriptions of the occupations of this group of people, 99; Davin, 'Waif Stories', 70.

⁴³ Reports on Education of Pauper Children, 1862, 100.

⁴⁴ Trott, 'Church Schools', 181 in Annual Reports, 1863, 12.

⁴⁵ Report of the Reverend Longueville Jones, Committee of Council on Education, 1851, paper no. 1357, 1358, 521; Reports of the State of Education in Wales, 375-6; For this type of educational establishment in Wales as a whole, see Russell Grigg, "'Nurseries of Ignorance'? Private Adventure and Dame Schools for the Working Classes in Nineteenth-Century Wales', *History of Education* (2005), vol. 34, no. 3, 243-262, 255.

⁴⁶ For example, 'they does' and 'I teaches them the Catechism', Reports of the State of Education in Wales, 382-3.

'for years', and also received one shilling and sixpence himself in outdoor relief.⁴⁷ However, many Welsh people felt the inquiry was an unjustified slur upon education in Wales. In a vindication of the inquiry, Jones claimed that the Welsh were 'determined to educate themselves' and the 'eagerness with which a good teacher is everywhere supported - and the very large number of private schools (681), probably without a parallel in the history of a labouring population, amply prove the truth of my assertion'.⁴⁸

Charity and state funding

Although the education of outdoor pauper children was always a subject of debate, so was the burgeoning financial costs of outdoor relief. Anxieties came to a head in 1872 when the Local Government Board's first annual report related that the increase of outdoor relief was great enough to 'excite apprehension'.⁴⁹ Attitudes to the perceived unsystematic nature of awarding outdoor relief were changing. The 'Goschen Minute' issued in 1869 by George Goschen, the new president of the Poor Law Board, had articulated concern that relief should not be given to supplement low incomes, or in 'aid of wages', but only to the 'actually destitute'.⁵⁰ He also claimed for the cooperation of charitable bodies to desist from supplying to those in receipt of poor relief anything that the guardians were 'strictly bound to grant' and instead offer aid that would neither duplicate poor law assistance nor 'constitute a regular increase in income'.⁵¹ Although the 'celebrated' Goschen Minute, as it was described by the Webbs, was aimed at poor relief expenditure in London, it was cited frequently by those who sought to restrict outdoor relief.⁵²

This apparent return to the 'principles of 1834' required co-ordination of charitable giving which appeared to dovetail with the 'morally-conditioned quest' of the newly formed Charity Organization Society [COS].⁵³ In London, the COS had established an 'elaborate machine' in which 36 offices were set up during the first three years with representatives of the society visiting and collating information about claimants.⁵⁴ The society's mission to uncover fraudulent or duplicated claims for charity was underscored by their promotion of 'providence and self-reliance'.⁵⁵ As Prochaska claims, the overlapping philanthropic bodies in some cities was 'staggering'.⁵⁶ The COS was launched in a Victorian Britain so inundated by philanthropic bodies that G. M. Trevelyan remarked that, 'not even the dumb animals were left unorganized'.⁵⁷ The extent of philanthropic participation was astonishing: in London alone, charitable receipts were greater than the budgets of many European countries including Denmark, Portugal and Sweden.⁵⁸ One survey of middle-class households in the 1890s revealed that they spent more on charity than on anything else in their budgets except food,

⁴⁷ Reports of the State of Education in Wales, 380-381. Apparently many children left dame and private schools including the Wicliffe School to attend the National School, Trott, appendix xv.

⁴⁸ Jones, *A Vindication of the Educational and Moral Condition of Wales*, 11.

⁴⁹ Local Government Board, First Annual Report, 1872, 64.

⁵⁰ George J. Goschen, *Letter of the Rt. Hon. G.J. Goschen, president of the Poor Law Board on the relief to the poor in the metropolis*, London: Shaw & Sons, 1869, 4 [hereafter Goschen Minute].

⁵¹ Goschen Minute, 6.

⁵² Webbs, *Poor Law Policy*, 102; Brundage, *The English Poor Laws*, 108.

⁵³ Michael J. D. Roberts, 'Charity Disestablished? The Origins of the Charity Organisation Society Revisited, 1868-1871', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 54, no. 1 (2002), 40-61, 40.

⁵⁴ Hollen Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, 269.

⁵⁵ Charles Loch Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society 1869-1913, its Ideas and Work* (London: Methuen, 1961), 26.

⁵⁶ Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*, 106.

⁵⁷ G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England* (London, New York: Longmans & Green, 1929), 617.

⁵⁸ *The Times*, 9 January 1885.

and by 1911 annual giving to registered charities exceeded national spending on poor law relief.⁵⁹

Outside London, unions such as Newcastle, Darlington, Durham and West Hartlepool worked with the COS, but non-cooperation was much more likely.⁶⁰ Whether this was because of a dislike of interference or apathy to the COS is questionable. Hollen Lees claims that the work of the COS was akin to 'placing small Band-Aids upon the gaping wounds of social distress'.⁶¹ Co-operation between unions and charitable establishments was common with the placing and funding of pauper children in private institutions. Swansea Union's relationship with the COS or its predecessor was more detached, and again, less certain. In 1875, Andrew Doyle wrote to Swansea Union recommending co-operation with the 'Society for the Organisation of Charitable Relief & Repression of Mendicity', the precursor of the COS, although the society appears to recommend only that checks should be made about the status of vagrants with the organisations across the country. Although some guardians appeared to agree with the sentiments in Doyle's letter, a decision on the matter was deferred.⁶² An article in the *Western Mail* in 1879 suggests that South Wales was not familiar with the COS as it reported its activities in London and concluded that the 'general tendency' of its work was beneficial and that societies had been established in several large cities, with no mention of any towns in Wales.⁶³ It appears that a Swansea branch of the COS was established in 1896. Its sixth annual report in 1901, the earliest to survive, stated that its work was beginning to receive more 'widespread appreciation' than before.⁶⁴ It is likely that a certain amount of cooperation existed with Swansea Union as John Llewelyn was president of the Swansea COS between 1900 and 1909. Of course, as Finlayson claims, it is unsafe to see the COS as representative of charitable enterprises.⁶⁵ Many contemporary commentators were critical of its 'Cringe or Starve' epithet and culture, including Charles Dickens, whose 'Haven of Philanthropy' in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* would have been identified by his readers as a parody of the COS. This does appear to be reflected in the Swansea COS as it generally refused more claims for help than it granted and reiterated its dictum across several annual reports that it would 'not knowingly encourage thoughtlessness and improvidence'.

Although the 1870s 'crusade' against outdoor relief did not compel unions to restrict outdoor relief, and the central authorities did not issue new regulations but a more restrictive policy was encouraged.⁶⁶ Nationally, success of the 'crusade' appears startling. In 1870, 37.7 per 1000 people were receiving outdoor relief. This had fallen to 23.6 per 1000 in 1876 and 17.1 per 1000 in 1897.⁶⁷ These figures translated into many children no longer being supported by outdoor relief. In 1871, 336,870 children were thus relieved, while in 1892, the numbers had

⁵⁹ *Statistics of Middle-Class Expenditure*, British Library of Political and Economic Science, 1896, Frank Prochaska, 'Philanthropy' in F.M.L. Thompson *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, vol. 2, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1990), 358; Jose Harris, 'Society and the State in Twentieth Century Britain', in Thompson, *Cambridge Social History of Britain*, 63-118, 68.

⁶⁰ Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare*, 149.

⁶¹ Hollen Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, 274.

⁶² *The Cambrian*, 11 June 1875. It is possible that this matter was dropped because the controversy surrounding the union's boarding-out policies was at its height, see chapter three.

⁶³ *Western Mail*, 8 April 1879

⁶⁴ SCL, S040 SWA, Swansea Reports, Swansea Charity Organization Society, Sixth Annual Report 1901.

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Finlayson, 'A Moving Frontier: Voluntarism and the State in British Social Welfare, 1911-1949', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol.1, no. 2 (1990), 183-206, 199; see also although see A. W. Vincent, 'The Poor Law Reports of 1909 and the Social Theory of the Charity Organisation Society', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3 (1984), 343-63.

⁶⁶ Mackinnon, 'English Poor Law Policy', 607.

⁶⁷ Hollen Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, 262.

fallen to 177,246.⁶⁸ Although these figures appear to suggest that outdoor relief was being restricted severely, at the height of the 'crusade', 73 per cent of paupers were still relieved in their own homes.⁶⁹ As Williams reminds us, out of 41 boards of guardians that reduced their outdoor relief bill to under 30 per cent of their total expenditure between 1872 and 1893, 24 were in London.⁷⁰

In Swansea, an 1872 editorial in *The Cambrian* condemned what it called the 'profuse and lavish' expenditure on outdoor relief and accused the Swansea guardians of 'serious laxity'.⁷¹ The Local Government Board felt that the most important strategy for the restriction of outdoor relief was the implementation of the workhouse test.⁷² Andrew Doyle had stated unequivocally that the workhouse test was the 'only effectual test of destitution'.⁷³ Swansea workhouse experienced periods of overcrowding in the 1870s and 1880s, so strict coherence to the workhouse test was problematic for the union. In a long discussion between the Swansea guardians and Andrew Doyle, Mr Brock claimed that at times Swansea Union could not implement the workhouse test at all because the workhouse was 'quite full'. So, although Doyle pointed to his model union at Atcham reducing outdoor relief to one and a half per cent, unless the workhouse was enlarged or the union split, Brock felt that Swansea Union was unable to administer the workhouse house test to any meaningful extent.⁷⁴

However, unions did respond to rising outdoor relief costs and accusations of fiscal profligacy. In 1871, Swansea union began recording weekly expenditure figures for outdoor relief alongside figures from the previous year. In 1869, when the guardians were questioned as to why so many able bodied men were receiving outdoor relief they replied that many men who were employed by the Copperworks had been laid off recently and that the men were subjected to a 'labour test'. This involved the claimants being put to work between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, either breaking stones or digging and preparing the new workhouse garden.⁷⁵ In 1876, this strategy was included in Swansea Union's 'rules' for outdoor relief which appear to be adapted from a circular that was sent by the central authorities to poor law inspectors.⁷⁶ Outdoor relief was to be regarded as 'an indulgence' which was to be given only to those 'whose destitution has arisen from no fault of their own'.⁷⁷ Able-bodied men who were fathers were expected to labour in return for outdoor relief, in effect to 'test' their dire need for relief. They were allotted either breaking stones or picking oakum between the hours of 7.00 am and 6.00 pm with 90 a minute break. For this they would be paid a halfpenny per day for themselves and their wife and two pence for each child, to a maximum of 12 shillings per week and at least half the relief was to be given in kind, of which bread was the chief item.

⁶⁸ Webbs, *Poor Law Policy*, 179; Local Government Board, Twenty-first Annual Report, 1892, c. 6745, 365.

⁶⁹ Hollen Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, 265, however, as Lees cites, in certain towns such as Southampton, outdoor relief plummeted as a result of cooperation between poor law guardians and the COS, see Ruth Hutchinson Crocker, 'The Victorian Poor Law in Crisis and Change: Southampton 1870-1895', *Albion*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1987), 19-44.

⁷⁰ Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty*, (London: Routledge, 1981), 105.

⁷¹ *The Cambrian*, 21 June 1872.

⁷² Local Government Board, First Annual Report, 1872, 67.

⁷³ TNA, MH 32/20, 5 October 1871.

⁷⁴ *The Cambrian*, 7 June 1872.

⁷⁵ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 26 June 1869; for notions of a 'breadwinning wage' and its connections to respectability, see Anna Clark, 'The New Poor Law and the Breadwinner Wage: Contrasting Assumptions', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2000), 261-81, 262.

⁷⁶ WGAS, U/S 1/12, Guardians' Minutes, 7 December 1876.

⁷⁷ As above.

The men were not allowed to smoke or swear and non-compliance could result in outdoor relief being withdrawn.⁷⁸

Makeshift economies of survival

If information concerning those in receipt of outdoor relief is sketchy, details about the subsequent lives of unsuccessful applicants for outdoor relief are almost non-existent. Although this chapter has established that most poor relief was given to paupers in their own homes, unions utilised the 'workhouse test' as proof of destitution in many cases. The justification for this 'test' was the belief that only the truly destitute would enter the workhouse; fraudulent claimants would be deterred, while others would be motivated to remain independent. It appears that the deterrent effect of the 'workhouse test' in Swansea was successful. Figures for one year revealed that out of 240 applicants for outdoor relief (647 with their families), only 27 applicants had 'accepted' the workhouse.⁷⁹ Not all guardians were comfortable with this strategy, one questioned whether 'in repelling shams' they instead risked 'repulsing honest and innocent poverty' and another guardian compared the workhouse test with the old traditional test for witches.⁸⁰ Mackinnon claims that very few people who were refused outdoor relief would subsequently enter the workhouse and Williams claims that paupers who lost their outdoor relief generally stopped claiming relief altogether.⁸¹ What became of those people who turned down an offer of the workhouse is unclear. Doubtless, there were fraudulent claims, but the description below from the 1910 Royal Commission conveys the hardship experienced by many mothers and consequently, their children.

The decent mother's one desire is to keep herself and her children out of the Workhouse. She will, if allowed, try to do this on an impossibly inadequate sum until both she and her children become mentally and physically deteriorated. If she is lucky she struggles on till the children begin to earn. In many cases she gives up the hopeless struggle and drifts into the House.⁸²

It is likely that many families who had been granted outdoor relief also found it inadequate. In a letter to *The Cambrian*, R. Sutherland claimed that there were 'a large number of cases where the head of a large family receiving what the rules of the Poor-law allows, are in need of extra help from other sources'.⁸³ The Webbs believed that 'many children were 'plainly underfed, housed in unsanitary conditions, half-clothed and generally treated in a manner "likely to cause injury" to their health'; this had led to, as Thane has claimed, women endeavouring to support their families on 'less than subsistence wages'.⁸⁴ That many children were undernourished or indeed 'destitute of food' was recognised in the early twentieth century and presaged the Education (Provision of Meals) Act of 1906.⁸⁵ Oddy has demonstrated how the poorest sections of the population in the late nineteenth century (those in receipt of less than 18 shillings a week) consumed both less volume and also lower calorific values of food.⁸⁶ In Swansea, John Thomas, who was born in 1860, recollected that

⁷⁸ WGAS, U/S 1/13, Guardians' Minutes, 6 June 1878.

⁷⁹ *Western Mail*, 16 April 1873.

⁸⁰ As above., *The Cambrian*, 24 April 1874.

⁸¹ Mackinnon, 'English Poor Law Policy', 604; Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty*, 102.

⁸² Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress, appendix volume XVIII. 1910, 88.

⁸³ *The Cambrian*, 10 December 1880.

⁸⁴ Webbs, *English Poor Law Policy*, 181; Thane, 'Women and the Poor Law', 29.

⁸⁵ Local Government Board, Thirty-Fifth Annual Report, 1906, cd. 310, 317.

⁸⁶ Oddy, 'Working-Class Diets', 318-9.

when his father was out of work they were 'very hard up and I didn't always get enough to eat'. Strategies for survival included the pawning of his father's watch and chain.⁸⁷

It appears that many families in receipt of outdoor relief needed to supplement it with help from other sources. This was also recognised by guardians; at one meeting in 1879, it was recorded that had it not been for the charity dispersed during the preceding winter, the burden on the poor-rates would have been much greater.⁸⁸ However, at times private philanthropic bodies could not keep pace with demand as a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Landore Relief fund demonstrated. Because of 'want of funds', the relief fund had to limit their operations for the following week to supply only soup and bread every morning, consequently, guardians were warned, 'hundreds' more applications for relief should be expected.⁸⁹ The activities of these charitable ventures demonstrate that the poor could turn to several organisations for help in times of crisis, although it is clear that assistance could not always be relied upon. Families who experienced financial distress also had to identify sources of assistance and, as a remark at a meeting of guardians demonstrates, this was not always straightforward. Whilst discussing a forthcoming inquiry for the Charity Commission, the guardians were dismayed to discover that many poor people in Llangyfelach were apparently unaware that 'numerous charities' existed.⁹⁰ However, in Liverpool, Eleanor Rathbone pointed to women being much more likely to seek help from neighbours and friends rather than turn to charitable bodies.⁹¹

At times, guardians did help outdoor paupers with extra expenditure although it is problematic to analyse any particular rules or pattern which allowed this as the sources do not allow for more than informed speculation. Most cases involved negotiations between pauper, relieving officer and guardians. In 1849, Ann Lewis was provided with bedding and clothing for her children to the value of just over £2.⁹² Similarly, in 1891, 30 shillings worth of clothing was given to Jane Thomas for her children Jane, Walter and William. In 1866 it was ordered that clothes given to outdoor paupers were to be stamped with the union stamp and numbered as clothes were often the first items to be pawned by the poor in times of need. Indeed paupers who left the workhouse wearing union clothes were liable to prosecution.⁹³ However, the children of Emma Nethercott were not so lucky. The family was chargeable to the Swansea Union, but lived in Neath and they received 'non-resident' outdoor relief. Several applications from Neath Union, plus a plea from the Mayor of Aberavon, failed to persuade Swansea Union to pay for clothes to enable the children to attend school.⁹⁴ However, some years later a claim from Hannah Holland and her six children, who were resident in Abergavenny, for 11 shillings for boots was granted, a further claim for just over 17 shillings was refused and instead her relief was increased by one shilling a week.⁹⁵ A subsequent claim for 23 shillings for boots was again turned down, which resulted in Abergavenny Union urging the Swansea guardians to reconsider as four of the children were apparently 'shoeless', and they again increased her

⁸⁷ John Birch Thomas, *Shop Boy, An Autobiography* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 56-7.

⁸⁸ WGAS, U/S 1/14 Guardians' Minutes, 22 May 1879.

⁸⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/20, Guardians' Minutes, 13 December 1888. Landore was one of the most densely populated and working-class area of Swansea.

⁹⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/25, Guardians' Minutes, 25 February 1895.

⁹¹ Eleanor Rathbone, *Report on the Condition of Widows under the Poor Law in Liverpool* (Liverpool: 1913), 10, cited in Thane, 'Women and the Poor Law', 35.

⁹² WGAS, U/S 1/1, Guardians' Minutes, 25 October 1849, see also U/S 1/22, 1 June 1891, when 30 shillings worth of clothing was given to Jane Thomas for her children Jane, Walter and William.

⁹³ WGAS, U/S 1/6, Guardians' Minutes, 19 July 1866.

⁹⁴ WGAS, U/S 1/24, Guardians' Minutes, 31 July 1893; U/S 1.25, 8 October 1894, 19 November 1894.

⁹⁵ WGAS, U/S 1/32, Guardians' Minutes, 21 June 1900; U/S 1/33, 27 September 1900.

relief by one shilling a week.⁹⁶ Additional monetary relief was allowed her when two of her sons began working just over a year later. Although her 15 year old son was earning seven shillings and her 12 year old son 5 shillings, Hannah Holland was nevertheless awarded four shillings and sixpence a week.⁹⁷ Justification for this was that she was now obliged to provide meals regularly for the working boys and was consequently unable to continue her charring work, for which she had been paid five shillings a week.⁹⁸ Two months later, her request for twenty shillings for shoes was unsurprisingly ‘not entertained’ by guardians.⁹⁹ However, it appears that it was not uncommon for pauper children to be without shoes, although whether due of lack of parental negotiating skills or poor law parsimony is unclear. In 1874, Swansea Union’s clerk was instructed to talk to Swansea School Board to ascertain whether the masters of board schools had the authority to refuse to receive paupers who went to school shoeless.¹⁰⁰ These examples shows how life in nineteenth-century England and Wales was precarious and uncertain. Sons gained and lost work, and guardians changed their minds over the slightest infraction. Women were at the sharp end of poverty, many having to supplement household income anyway they could; prostitution was sometimes the only marketable commodity left to mothers in need. The situation of Julia Thomas illustrates how a mother would endeavour to keep herself and her children out of the workhouse despite severe difficulties. Her children, Ann, Charles and Henry were all described as ‘lunatic children’ who lived with her in Baptist Well Street. It was reported that the children’s ‘bodily condition and their supervision was far from what it should be’ and it was thought they would be better off in the workhouse. Although it was acknowledged that as far as her circumstances allowed, Julia Thomas ‘did what she could’.¹⁰¹ The Swansea guardians also felt unable to ‘interfere’ in a case brought to their attention by Captain Colquhoun of the Swansea police. He had reported the ‘alleged ill treatment’ by Ann Davies of her children and the guardians instructed the relieving officer to ‘keep an eye’ on the family.¹⁰² There were also some single fathers who were receiving outdoor relief for themselves and their children. It is unclear why attention was drawn to an unnamed father and his two children, but both relieving officer and medical officer were instructed to visit, and they reported that the children were ‘clean and apparently well fed’.¹⁰³

Events such as Christmas, royal weddings, jubilees or particularly harsh weather could also generate generosity from poor law unions. Extra relief of around sixpence or one shilling per pauper was generally given by unions at Christmas, although not all did the same.¹⁰⁴ Gifts were also made to outdoor paupers from benefactors who gave toys and fruit, although it appears that largesse to children in workhouse and cottage homes was much greater than to

⁹⁶ WGAS, U/S 1/35, Guardians’ Minutes, 5 December 1901, 16 January 1902, 17 July 1902, her relief was then seven shillings weekly.

⁹⁷ Originally it was resolved that she be allowed five shillings but the finance committee recommended the lower sum.

⁹⁸ WGAS, U/S 1/36, Guardians’ Minutes, 9 April, 23 April 1903.

⁹⁹ As above., 18 June 1903.

¹⁰⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/10, Guardians’ Minutes, 28 May 1874; however, pauper children who attended board schools were supplied with spectacles if necessary, U/S 1/29, 26 May 1898.

¹⁰¹ WGAS, U/S 1/26, Guardians’ Minutes, 2 March 1896.

¹⁰² WGAS, U/S 1/18, Guardians’ Minutes, 29 Jan 1885.

¹⁰³ WGAS, U/S 1/21 Guardians’ Minutes, 25 April 1889. The Poor Law (Children) Acts of 1889 and 1899 empowered poor law guardians to adopt children thought of as at risk.

¹⁰⁴ For examples, see WGAS, U/S 1/21, Guardians’ Minutes, 5 December 1889 for a proposal to supplement relief in Swansea at Christmas and U/S 1/3, 14 January 1900 for unions such as Monmouth, Llanelly and Carmarthen who declined to do so. Swansea Union also gave paupers between one to shillings extra to celebrate Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee in 1897, U/S 1/28, 24 June 1897, again, some union such as Redruth did not.

outdoor pauper children, possibly because they attracted more pity as they were imagined as 'waifs' or 'orphans'.¹⁰⁵ It is problematic to argue conclusively that some unions showed generosity and concern to its outdoor paupers, but apart from a few instances, the guardians in the later nineteenth century did appear to understand the causes of necessitous poverty.¹⁰⁶ When asked by the central authorities to account for a rise in outdoor relief in 1895, Swansea Union explained that because of 'stoppage and slackness' of normal employments in the Swansea and Llangyfelach areas, sons were not able to care for their parents.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, a circular from the central authorities demonstrated that they were not unaware of the problems of unemployment. Owing to 'scarcity of employment' in certain areas, local poor law guardians were urged to collaborate with other local authorities to arrange for civic projects to 'immediately' employ unskilled labourers.¹⁰⁸

Outdoor paupers survived via an economy of makeshifts.¹⁰⁹ Mary Collins, a 42 year old widow with four children living in Back Street, a very poor area of Swansea, was listed as a pauper in the 1851 census, as were her lodgers, 31 year old widow June Clayson and her four children.¹¹⁰ Many outdoor paupers turned to friends in times of trouble and explains why a 'friendless' person was to be pitied in this period. In 1849 when Ann Thomas and her two young sons were deserted by her husband. She was allowed just three shillings in relief as she they reported she had 'friends who will assist her'.¹¹¹ Many mothers had to make difficult decisions about the care of their children. Mary Harris remained an inmate of the workhouse while her two children were given outdoor relief and the guardians were instructed by the Local Government Board to ascertain the 'suitability' of the home in which the children lived.¹¹² Most local schools also operated 'clothing clubs', into which a small sum of money would be paid each week by pupils. When the club money was paid out, usually just before Christmas, 'attendance bonuses' were added by the schools.¹¹³ This served to encourage thrift and independence as well as school attendance.

Geographies of outdoor relief

Many of the paupers discussed in this chapter lived in the poorest areas, the 'lower parts' of the town as they were often called. These were areas without adequate sanitation which were perceived as dens of vice, crime and disease, often because they housed a substantial unpopular immigrant Irish community.¹¹⁴ Irish inhabitants particularly were berated in the local press and also featured in the *Morning Chronicle's* investigation of 1849-51. Amongst respectable working households, the correspondent found 'the Irish' living in 'filth, rags and

¹⁰⁵ WGAS, U/S 1/5, Guardians' Minutes, 28 December 1865. It is also possible that gifts to outdoor pauper children were not recorded as often as to children living in institutions

¹⁰⁶ One instance was a request from Merthyr Union that their non-resident paupers be paid, an extra shilling relief for one week because of severe weather was refused by Swansea, WGAS, Guardians' Minutes, U/S 1/22, 26 January 1891.

¹⁰⁷ WGAS, U/S 1/25, Guardians' Minutes, 28 January 1895.

¹⁰⁸ WGAS, U/S 1/24, Guardians' Minutes, U/S 1/24, 21 Nov 1892.

¹⁰⁹ Carl Chinn points to the poor surviving by developing coping strategies and networks, Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 6.

¹¹⁰ Census 1851.

¹¹¹ TNA, MH 12/16439, 29 October 1849.

¹¹² WGAS, U/S 1/43, Guardians' Minutes, 4 February 1909.

¹¹³ Trott, 'Church Schools', 362-64, 368, clothing clubs were in operation in many Swansea schools.

¹¹⁴ See Roger T. Price, *Little Ireland: Aspects of the Irish in Greenhill* (Swansea: City of Swansea, 1992).

squalor' and supplemented wages with begging. Their purported love of alcohol had led to them being, in the opinion of the correspondent, 'shunned and disliked by the Welsh'.¹¹⁵

Although there is a paucity of sources relating directly to the lived experience of outdoor pauper children, analysis of the areas which housed large numbers of outdoor paupers can enhance our understanding of their everyday lives. One such area was Greenhill, on the north-eastern outskirts of Swansea town centre. Always a site of civic contention and approbation, it was singled out in 1911 as the most 'pauper-riden [sic] area of Swansea'.¹¹⁶ A map of the area was dotted with numerous symbols representing paupers and their children in a *Cambria Daily Leader* publication, and shows the extent to which these streets housed people supported by the townspeople's poor rates.¹¹⁷ In an area amounting to 112 acres, there resided 279 adult outdoor paupers with 334 dependent children; in the year 1911-12, the annual cost of their relief was £2370.¹¹⁸

In 1911, many of the houses in Greenhill (known locally as 'Little Ireland'), were 'known to be unfit' but could not be condemned for human habitation as there was a lack of alternative accommodation for 'the poorer classes'.¹¹⁹ Similar remarks had been made in the 1840s when the state's sanitary spotlight had been focussed on Swansea and the rest of England and Wales, often for the first time.¹²⁰ In 1845, a Royal Commission requested Sir Henry T. De La Beche to investigate conditions in 50 towns across England and Wales and, in 1849, George Clark reported at length about Swansea to the General Board of Health.¹²¹ The emphasis of these reports was in marked contrast to some previous topographic guides which had sought to attract visitors to what had been promoted as 'fashionable' Swansea.¹²² Although the stark observation that 'nothing deserving the name of a system of drainage can be said to exist' in Swansea was ultimately acted upon, a report in the 1870s, also concerning the 'hundreds of houses' unfit for human habitation in Swansea, demonstrates the levels of squalor and overcrowding which would have been experienced by many outdoor paupers between the years 1834 to 1910.¹²³

There were also sanitation problems in some of the 'principal streets' of Swansea. In his report for the De La Beche inquiry, local physician Dr Bird listed 'Slops, soap-suds, dish-water, urine, ordure, &c' thrown from cottages into the streets and the contents of privies soaked into the soil. Bird also found 'many of the houses have no necessaries and many necessaries have no drains'.¹²⁴ In Greenhill, which George Clark called 'the worst part', overcrowding was rife,

¹¹⁵ Ginswick, ed., *Labour and the Poor in England and Wales*, 201-2. However, around this time meetings were held in Greenhill about the establishment of a Sunday School to assist in the education of the poor, *The Cambrian*, 31 May 1850.

¹¹⁶ William St. John Hancock, *A Greater Swansea* (Swansea: *Cambria Daily Leader*, 1911), 13; Greenhill had a large Irish community.

¹¹⁷ Hancock, *A Greater Swansea* 15: See Appendix 6.

¹¹⁸ As above, 15.

¹¹⁹ As above, 13.

¹²⁰ Tom Ridd, 'Victorian Swansea', *Gower*, vol. 13 (1960), 41-5, 41.

¹²¹ Royal Commission for inquiring into State of Large Towns and Populous Districts: Second Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendices, 1845, paper nos. 602, 610; George Thomas Clark, *Report to the General Board of Health, on a preliminary inquiry into the sewerage, drainage, and supply of water, and the sanitary condition of the inhabitants of the Town and Borough of Swansea* (London, 1849).

¹²² See David Boorman, *The Brighton of Wales: Swansea as a Fashionable Seaside Resort c.1780-1830*, Swansea: Swansea Little Theatre Company Ltd., 1986.

¹²³ Royal Commission for inquiring into State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, 1845, 131; *The Cambrian*, 8 October 1875.

¹²⁴ Sir Henry T. De La Beche, *Report on the State of Bristol and other Large Towns* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1845), 61.

although he found only one 'cellar-dwelling' which was in Bridge Street. In Green Row, up to 30 people a night slept in a two-roomed cottage without a privy or any sewers.¹²⁵ In Mariner Street, where 'back to back' houses were common, it was found that 43 houses had the use of 30 privies, one house was flooded, one shut up and two dilapidated or 'too filthy to enter'.¹²⁶ One resident of Mariner Street was Ann Beynon, a widow in receipt of outdoor relief with two daughters of five and two years old, lived in number 22 around 1851. The householder was John Bowen who with his wife Catherine, were Ann's parents. John Bowen was not a pauper and his occupation was a shoemaker. It is not known how much relief Ann was awarded, but the fact that she lived with her parents was probably taken into account.¹²⁷ Even if poor relief was not claimed, poverty was widespread in this area of Swansea. Near Greenhill was The Cwm in Cwmfelin where Chris Lewis, who was to become an alderman of Swansea, lived as a child. He recalls how in his childhood four 'closets' on the nearby hill served as lavatories for five families. He is reticent about calling his home a 'almost a hovel', and almost apologetically relates how a family of six lived in this two roomed cottage, but goes on to say proudly how his mother, a 'colourful and forceful personality', insisted the cottage was lime-washed each spring before she planted her nasturtiums.¹²⁸

In Back Street, on the edges of Greenhill, a substantial number of residents were thought to be prostitutes or 'habitual criminals'.¹²⁹ Back Street also housed outdoor pauper children and adults. The arrangement in one house demonstrates how women's survival strategies included sharing accommodation. In one house two widows with four children apiece lived together. The aforementioned Mary Collins, aged 42, was the householder and June Clayson, aged 31 was, along with her children, recorded as lodgers. The eight children were between the ages of two and eleven, and all were categorised as 'scholars', although this is not definitive proof that they did not contribute to the household purse.¹³⁰ Some mothers' strategies of making ends meet could result in outdoor relief being discontinued. Martha Jones was made to promise that she would no longer keep a 'disreputable house', in which she had allegedly harboured vagrants and prostitutes, before her outdoor relief was reinstated.¹³¹

Conclusions

It tempting to conclude that although pauper children were often better housed, clothed and fed in poor law institutions, outdoor children at least enjoyed a 'real' and loving family life which no institution could replicate. However, mothers left children in workhouses and also sent their children back to the cottage homes from which they had absconded. This of course could signify that mothers felt the institutions offered by unions were better than they themselves could offer, but the reports of the NSPCC also relate many tales of cruelty and

¹²⁵ Clark, *Report to the General Board of Health*, 1849, 9-10.

¹²⁶ As above., 11; see also, Bob Dean, *Slums, Living Conditions in 19th Century Swansea, parts 1, 2 and 3* (Swansea: Swansea City Council, 1993), 53.

¹²⁷ Census 1851; In 1896 Ann Jones of 27 Mariner Street, whose husband was in gaol for debt was awarded two shillings and sixpence outdoor relief for four weeks, WGAS, U/S 1/27, *Guardians' Minutes*, 25 June 1896.

¹²⁸ Chris Thomas, *My Early Struggles: The Life of Alderman Chris Thomas* (Swansea: Hafod History Society, 1997), 3; For the house-proud reputations of Welsh women, see Rosemary Crooks, 'Tidy Women: Women in the Rhondda between the Wars', *Oral History*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1982.

¹²⁹ Colin Bevan, *The Rise and Fall of Back Street: a study of workers' dwellings in Swansea 1803-1879* (Diploma in Local History: University of Wales Swansea, 1997), 48.

¹³⁰ Census, 1851, for children's work, see Pamela Horn, *Children's Work and Welfare, 1780-1880s* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1994); Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹³¹ TNA, MH12/16439, 28 August 1848.

neglect of children who were later taken into the care of guardians across England and Wales.¹³²

In 1901, the prohibition of non-resident relief to the widows and children of a person who had died in the union of his settlement was reported as being 'harsh and totally out of keeping with the spirit of the times' and guardians called for 'urgent revision' of the regulation.¹³³ Similarly, efforts to 'obviate the stigma of pauperism' were put in place, such as the more discreet recording of pauper children's school attendance.¹³⁴ The wives and children of imprisoned men appear not to be denied outdoor relief as they previously had been. Annie Knight was allowed six shillings outdoor relief for 14 weeks while her husband was serving a gaol sentence for desertion from the army.¹³⁵ Some guardians also paid for physicians to deliver babies of women in receipt of outdoor relief, the cost was not insubstantial and ranged from 10 shillings for a 'natural' birth, to two pounds for an 'instrumental' one.¹³⁶ However, women were having babies in workhouse infirmaries well into the twentieth century.¹³⁷ In 1906, during a discussion concerning the new old age pensions, the Swansea guardians felt that outdoor relief was 'rightly' much more widely offered and denounced 'the questionable mercy of private charity'.¹³⁸ However, in his final visit to the Swansea Union prior to his retirement, the long-serving poor law inspector Thomas Bircham recorded his thoughts in the minutes book: 'excessive out-door relief', he declared 'sapped independence and was very infectious' and the 'old idea of destitution' was the right one.¹³⁹ The 'spirit of the times' that appeared to have been embraced by the Swansea guardians was not replicated by this outgoing representative of the poor laws central authorities.

Boards of guardians were very different bodies by the beginning of the twentieth century. Changes in legislation in the 1870s and 1890s meant that women and working-class men made up larger proportions of boards of guardians, although wealthy men and luminaries of civic society were still invited to participate. However, upon his retirement, although Thomas Bircham had long campaigned for guardians to keep girls in cottage homes until they were older, he thought that changes in the poor laws should not lead to generous or indiscriminate outdoor relief, and this was a very similar viewpoint to those of his predecessor Andrew Doyl

¹³² SM, box file 93, NSPCC, Swansea and District Branch, Annual Reports, 1896-1901.

¹³³ WGAS, U/S 1/34, Guardians' Minutes, 15 August 1901.

¹³⁴ WGAS, U/S 1/32, Guardians' Minutes, 13 September 1900.

¹³⁵ WGAS, U/S 1/34, Guardians' Minutes, 4 July 1901.

¹³⁶ WGAS, U/S 1/37, Guardians' Minutes, 15 December 1904.

¹³⁷ See, for example, Women's Cooperative Guild, *Maternity, Letters from Working-Class Women* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915), 135.

¹³⁸ WGAS, U/S 1/39, Guardians' Minutes, 31 May 1906.

¹³⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/39, Guardians' Minutes, 14 June 1906. Thomas Bircham was retiring after 32 years in his post.

PART THREE:

PAUPER CHILDREN AND PHILANTHROPIC
INSTITUTIONS

‘He hoped that when he grew strong and well again, he could do something to show his gratitude; only something which would let them see the love and duty with which his breast was full; something, however slight, which would prove to them that their gentle kindness had not been cast away; but that the poor boy whom their charity had rescued from misery, or death, was eager to serve them with his whole heart and soul’.

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, Chapter thirty-two, 246

Private sector philanthropy and poor law children

In 1861, a poem was published in a regional newspaper. The words 'orphan home', it claimed, 'fell on the ear like Heaven's own music' and was 'very bliss to hear'. The extremely long verse was intended to publicise a bazaar organised by 'The Ladies Appeal' to raise funds for the building of an orphan home for girls.² In the midst of this sentimental evocation of pity was the threat of the moral jeopardy that could face orphan girls unless they were saved from the pain 'that darts from Vice's cankering fang'.³ This duality of purpose was underlined by the chaplain of the local Gaol, who felt that an orphan home would not only be a 'great blessing on the poor children', but might also prevent 'future crime and infamy'.⁴

This chapter explores aspects of child-saving, reform and containment via the charitable institutions to which poor law unions sent some of their pauper children. Both this and the subsequent chapter are prime examples of what Cunningham calls the 'heroic' nature of child rescue.⁵ Although the institutions discussed in this chapter always housed a minority of pauper children, analysis of their experiences is not only vital to the completeness of *Pauper Children*, but they will also enhance our understanding of the intersection between state and private sector 'welfare' provision. Three types of establishments will be examined in detail, the 'orphan' homes for girls, in particular the Swansea orphan home for Girls,⁶ Roman Catholic institutions, especially Nazareth House in Cardiff, a home for the 'care of the aged poor and orphan girls', and the 'training ships' which trained and housed boys who were considered 'refractory', with particular emphasis on the training ship *Havannah*, also based in Cardiff.⁷ This chapter will demonstrate that although these three establishments, along with others across England and Wales, were intended for very different children, a similar outcome was envisioned; the making of useful members of society from children thought disadvantaged, delinquent or disabled.

By far a more common strategy was the placing of some children of the state with private charitable institutions. Philanthropy was huge in nineteenth-century England and Wales and formed a large part of the work thought becoming for middle-class women. In 1859, several ladies organised a committee to provide a 'refuge' for female orphans. Within a year the house they had procured for the purpose was deemed to be too small and unsuitable. Twenty girls had been admitted during that first year and as subsequent applicants had to be turned

¹ SCL, Swansea Industrial Female orphan home, Fifth Annual Report, 1864.

² *The Cambrian*, 16 August 1861. For a discussion on emotive imagery in relation to child rescue, see Shurlee Swain, 'Sweet Childhood Lost: Idealized Images of Childhood in the British Child Rescue Literature', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2009), 198-214.

³ *The Cambrian*, 16 August 1861.

⁴ *The Cambrian*, 18 October 1861.

⁵ Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor, Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 9.

⁶ Over the years the name of this institution changed slightly and has been called, the home for Female orphan Children', 'Swansea Industrial Female orphan home', Swansea Industrial Female orphan home', 'Swansea home for orphan and Friendless Girls' and other variations. I shall use the institution's different full titles in the footnotes and bibliography, but to facilitate analysis will refer to the institution as 'the orphan home' in the main text.

⁷ Although girls did attend the *Havannah* as day pupils soon after its establishment, 'upwards of a 100 pupils of both sexes', Fifth report of the inspector appointed, under the provisions of the act 5 & 6 Will. IV. c. 38, to visit the certified reformatory and industrial schools of Great Britain, 1862, c. 3034, 63.

away, a fundraising campaign for a purpose-built institution was started.⁸ Local newspapers reported that the ladies would be 'liberally supported' in their venture appears to be borne out as a new building was due to open on Midsummers day 1862, although a further £300 would be needed in addition to the £850 already raised.⁹

Orphan homes

It is difficult to establish the criteria by which unions chose girls to go to the orphan home. Harriet and Emily Williams, aged 11 and 7, appear to be the earliest pauper girls to be sent there in 1864, but no mention was made concerning their circumstances other than 'orphans now chargeable', which may suggest that a parent had died recently.¹⁰ At that time, the only options open to the guardians were to allow outdoor relief, board out children or to keep them in the workhouse. If the two girls were without family, only the last two strategies could apply. It is problematic to maintain any firm conclusions as to whether the orphan home was perceived as an 'overflow' establishment in times of overcrowding or lack of other avenues, or as a placement for specially selected girls, although the latter seems more likely. In one of the orphan home's annual reports, it was recorded how the Local Government Board inspector, Thomas Bircham, had praised the home and regretted that it was not more 'extensively used'.¹¹ The home's policy of only allowing children of married parents may also have ruled out some of the children who were chargeable to many poor law unions.

This criteria for entry was one of many conditions detailed in its annual reports, although it is uncertain whether these rules were acted upon. Proof of the marriage of prospective inmates' parents was apparently required in 1864 and was still in force over forty years later.¹² The circumstances of several girls recommended by the workhouse visiting committee to be sent to the orphan home in 1875 demonstrates again that the category of 'orphan' was fluid and unstable. Laura Jackson, aged five, was recorded as an 'orphan' and Gwenny Jones, aged 12, as having 'no mother', while the mother of Margaret Maloney, aged 12, was a resident of Waterford Asylum in Ireland. However, the mothers of Sarah Fairchild, aged five, Elizabeth Parry, aged nine, Ellen Lowney, aged seven, and Ann Jones, aged five, were all inmates of the workhouse.¹³ It was reported in 1868 that the institution provided a home for girls who had lost both parents, or 'in exceptional circumstances' one surviving parent.¹⁴ In some cases, unions compelled extended family to contribute to the fees payable to the home, and such was the case of the grandfather of Elizabeth Joseph in 1895.¹⁵

⁸ SCL, Home for Female orphan Children', in *An abstract of the accounts of the religious, educational & charitable institutions of the Parish of Swansea which are in connexion with the Church of England*, 1860; throughout its existence women were integral to the management, day-to-day running and also much of the publicity and fund raising of the home.

⁹ *The Cambrian*, 26 April 1861; SCL, Swansea Industrial Female orphan home, Second Annual Report, 1861.

¹⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/4, Guardians' Minutes, 23 June 1864.

¹¹ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Thirtieth Annual Report, 1889.

¹² SCL, Swansea Industrial Female orphan home, Fifth Annual Report, 1864; Swansea home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Forty-ninth Annual Report, 1908. It is possible that some rules were bent to allow the admission of Swansea Union children as they were a source of regular and reliable income for the home.

¹³ WGAS, U/S 4/7, Workhouse Visiting Committee, 1 October 1875.

¹⁴ SCL, Swansea Industrial home for orphan Girls, Ninth Annual Report, 1868; Tenth Annual Report, 1869.

¹⁵ WGAS, U/S 1/26, Guardians' Minutes, 4 October 1895.

It is clear that the primary objective of the home was to produce good domestic servants, trained 'in the fear and love of God'.¹⁶ Although the girls were given religious and secular education, they were prepared explicitly for domestic service.¹⁷ This expectation remained the home's primary goal for the girls over 30 years later, when it was again reported that all girls were 'being educated and trained for service'.¹⁸ Domestic service appears to be the only employment option for which pauper children were trained. The Swansea orphan home, however seems to have been much more focussed on producing more able servants and had strategies in place to ensure that this outcome would succeed. Unlike poor law workhouses and cottage homes, the orphan home could choose their inmates. It was recorded in most annual reports that no child was to be admitted unless they were recommended by a life governor, and they had also to be passed as 'eligible' by the management committee.¹⁹

Similarly, problematic children such as the 'ins and outs', so deprecated by child welfare campaigners as unteachable and morally contagious, would not have been admitted to the home. No girls older than 14 were admitted and, if any child was taken out of the institution before the age of 16, a £5 penalty was deemed payable. These rules helped to ensure that the girls received a sufficient period of training to become good servants and also to deter early removal by poor parents, or indeed poor law guardians who wished to curtail a girl's education for reasons of cost.²⁰ Thomas Bircham, who had regularly complained that cottage homes girls were sent out into service at too young an age, was quoted often in the home's annual reports, one of entry said that he was 'sure the girls here receive a more than ordinarily good training for service'. The longer 'training period' in the home would have met with little resistance from him.²¹ Girls stayed in the orphan home until they were 17, although this was later reduced to 16. Some institutions wanted to keep girls as long as possible. Ruth Holman of the Stockport Industrial School wrote of her girls: 'I cannot let them go [...] We ought to keep them protected until they are 18, 19 or 20 years of age, at which time they would have grown stronger mentally and morally'.²²

However, this view was not shared by the guardians of Swansea Union who, in 1903 resolved to discontinue payments for girls in the orphan home who were over the age of 14. It is unclear whether the £5 the early removal fee was paid by Swansea Union, but it was not recorded explicitly in the union's financial records. At this time, four girls were to be removed Caroline Owen, 15; Evelyn and Fanny Jenkins, both 14 and Bessie Hopkins, who was also 14.²³ All the girls had been in the institution for at least two years.²⁴ The Jenkins sisters first entered the home in 1898 following the death of their mother. The relieving officer was instructed to sell the late Mrs Jenkins' furniture and her children were then sent to live in the orphan home. The family home at 8 Jeffries Place appears to have been fairly substantial, Mrs Jenkins and

¹⁶ SCL, Swansea Industrial Female orphan home, Fifth Annual Report, 1864.

¹⁷ TNA, MH 12/16448, 3 March 1873, Swansea Industrial orphan home for Girls, Thirteenth Annual Report, 1872. This report is lodged with the Swansea Poor Law Correspondence in the National Archives because the home was applying for industrial school certification.

¹⁸ SCL, 'Swansea Reports', Swansea home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Forty-ninth Annual Report, 1908, 19.

¹⁹ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan Girls, Thirteenth Annual Report, 1872. A donation of ten guineas conferred life governor status.

²⁰ As above; Twentieth Annual Report, 1879.

²¹ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Thirty-sixth Annual Report, 1895.

²² *The Times*, 7 October 1894.

²³ WGAS, U/S 1/36, Guardians' Minutes, 24 September 1903.

²⁴ Census 1901.

her three daughters lived in four rooms, whilst a boarder occupied a further two.²⁵ This also suggests that girls from more 'respectable' households were preferred.

The available sources do not reveal where the Jenkins sisters went upon their removal from the orphan home, although it is probable that they were found a place in domestic service. However, the fate of Naomi Upton, who left the home in 1909 because of the discontinuation of fees from the Swansea Union is known. The payment of two shillings and sixpence weekly for Naomi Upton and Elizabeth Thomas was stopped in April 1909 as they had reached the age of 14.²⁶ Two years later, Naomi was living with her older sister and brother-in-law, Frances and John Harris, in 7 Station Road in Cymmer, in the Afan Valley. In the 1911 census, she is recorded as having no occupation and her brother-in-law John was a plumber and gas fitter. There are three children at home and also John's 30 year old brother Walter, who was described as an 'imbecile' in the census. The family also housed a lodger who was a school teacher at the local council school.²⁷ Although Naomi was recorded as not working, it is likely she helped her sister to look after the home, children, lodger and Walter. In 1901, Naomi's sister was 26 and had been married for two years, however the census of that year shows that seven year old Naomi lived in the orphan home.²⁸ It is possible that the Harris family were not as well established at this time, although the fact that Naomi was not given a home with them until there was no other choice may suggest that Naomi was happy in the orphan home and it was perceived as a good place by her sister.

While this strategy of removing older girls from the orphan home would have generated criticism from Thomas Bircham and probably others, Swansea Union made substantial savings as a result of this measure. Prior to 1903, fees to the orphan home paid by Swansea Union averaged around £15 a quarter; during the years following these cutbacks, payments fell sharply to around £6-£7 a quarter.²⁹ However, in Elizabeth Thomas' case, both the Swansea Union and the orphan home appeared to have relaxed financial and health criteria. Although the guardians stopped the funding for Naomi, it was later decided to continue paying for Elizabeth to attend the orphan home as she was described as being 'very backward' and, because of this it was recommended that she continue in the orphan home past the age of 14. Records show that she was still an inmate of the home at the time of the 1911 census.³⁰ Thus, while annual reports of the orphan home state that girls with 'infirmities' could be asked to leave, in the case of Elizabeth Thomas, this dictum was not implemented. The reports also projects that deflections from accepted norms were not tolerated. If a girl was judged as 'never likely to be fit for service', she could, in theory, be removed from the home.³¹ However, it is unclear what 'fit for service' meant, and the managing committee reserved the right to remove permanently any girl who was incapacitated with 'bodily or mental defects' or who displayed 'bad' behaviour.³² These contradictions demonstrate the slippery nature of annual reports and as Mumm claims, the actions of a charitable body can differ dramatically from the undertakings which appeared in its reports.³³

²⁵ The 1891 census shows the mother's and the girls' names, WGAS, U/S 1/29, Guardians' Minutes, 29 September 1898.

²⁶ WGAS, U/S 1/43, Guardians' Minutes, 15 April 1909.

²⁷ Census 1911.

²⁸ As above, 1901.

²⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/36, Guardians' Minutes, 13 August 1903.

³⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/43, Guardians' Minutes, 27 May 1909; Census 1911.

³¹ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan Girls, Thirteenth Annual Report, 1872

³² As above.

³³ Susan Mumm, 'Women and philanthropic cultures', in Sue Morgan, Jacqueline de Vries, eds., *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 55-7, 56; Sometimes a

These strategies imply that the management of the orphan home were intent on turning out clone-like servants who would be welcomed by prospective employers.³⁴ Sentiment was also utilised in 'the cause of the orphan' to the powerful support of this large community.³⁵ Along with pity for the girls' blameless 'orphan' status, they appeared to graduate from a manufactory which produced what employers would imagine as the servant class. Unlike the two other establishments explored in this chapter, the orphan home girls were moulded for general service. Sentiment was also employed in an advertisement offering laundering services which used the skills learned by the girls to supplement the funds of the home. 'Mangling and Fine Needlework' was offered, and also the washing of lace and the advertisement concluded with the plea that the public's assistance was 'earnestly solicited'.³⁶ Thomas Bircham had commented that the girls' needlework was 'exceedingly well done' and this training did appear to produce the results wanted; one former inmate went on to become a matron of a 'home for little boys' in Manchester and it was reported that many girls had been in their jobs for some years.³⁷ The home also followed similar segregation strategies used by workhouses, and the management strived to protect their charges from bad influences. Although friends and relatives of the girls were permitted to visit once a month, none of the girls were allowed 'under any circumstances' to visit or socialize with her friends outside the home.³⁸ This rule was relaxed in 1899 although girls had to obtain 'special permission' from the matron. Former inmates were encouraged to return to the orphan home for leisure when they were placed in situations and, if between employments through no fault of their own, could pay to live in the home until they found another place.³⁹

Although free time appears to have been regulated, the girls were provided with treats and outings, and some girls returned at Christmas and other holidays. Collections were made at local churches which generated gifts of toys, fruit and books for the girls at Christmas, and other gifts, collections and outings were made throughout the year. Presents of new pennies, again like those given to the children of the cottage homes by John Llewelyn, were also mentioned as Christmas gifts.⁴⁰ Unlike the children in the cottage homes, the girls at the orphan home, had only been able to enjoy an 'airing and grass playground' during their month-long annual holiday to Horton until the home's move to Killay House in 1929.⁴¹ This trip was sometimes in doubt if no suitable house could be found.⁴² Motivation for these indulgences followed similar patterns to poor law establishments as they were influenced by

'rigid adhesion' to the rules was recognized to be responsible for reducing the number of pupils, as in 1872 when it was reported that strict application of the rule that only children who had lost both parents could be admitted had resulted in a smaller number of inmates.

³⁴ For a good analysis of employment of domestic servants, see Robert Lee, 'Domestic Service and Female Domestic Servants: A Port-City Comparison of Bremen and Liverpool, 1850–1914', *History of the Family*, vol. 10 (2005), 435-60.

³⁵ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan Girls, Thirteenth Annual Report, 1872.

³⁶ *Western Mail*, 31 July 1873.

³⁷ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Twenty-ninth Annual Report, 1888; Fortieth Annual Report, 1899; Some former inmates had also travelled to America, Thirty-sixth Annual Report, 1895.

³⁸ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan Girls, Fourteenth Annual Report, 1873.

³⁹ SM, Swansea home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Rules and Bye-Laws, 1899.

⁴⁰ SM, Swansea Industrial home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Thirty-fourth Annual Report, 1893.

⁴¹ Brian Lile, 'The Lost Domain: The Williamses of Killay House and their Relations', *Gower* (vol. 41, 1990), 70-8, 76. Following its move to Killay House, management of the home taken over by NCH until 1985, it then provided respite care for profoundly disabled children until 1989.

⁴² SM, Swansea home for orphan and Friendless Girls, Fortieth Annual Report, 1899; The following year the girls stayed at Newton Court for their holiday with local businesses transporting them free of charge,

both benevolence and control and were used to promote the ethos of hard work and the notion that respectable living would generate reward.

Training ships

Treats and outings, although offered, were not at the forefront of the minds of campaigners who sought to establish training ships for boys. In 1860, Mary Carpenter was among the leading reformers who welcomed the opening of the *Havannah* Training ship in Cardiff as an important means of clearing the streets and wharves of 'the wild lawless children who infest them'.⁴³ Carpenter's approbation would have been a boost for the establishment as her initiatives to introduce a more welfare-driven system of reformatories for juvenile offenders had secured widespread recognition.⁴⁴ *Havannah* is the only institution explored in *Pauper Children* which can be considered as a punitive establishment, and although few boys from unions were sent there, it remains an area of child welfare and containment which merits inclusion. Training ships such as this were not intended for convicted juvenile criminals, but for those with the potential to offend, and unions appear to have sent their more 'refractory' boys to training ships such as the *Havannah*.⁴⁵

The *Havannah* had been commissioned in 1811, saw both war and peace-time service around the world and was sent to Cardiff in 1860 to be used as a training ship.⁴⁶ The managers of the ragged school in Cardiff had been aided by Government grants when they procured *Havannah* as an industrial training ship in 1861.⁴⁷ Described as a 'superannuated leviathan', it was intended to 'bend the human twig and train it up the way it should go'.⁴⁸ Indeed, the writer of these words appears to perceive the institution through a lens tinted with sentimentality and the intention to evoke pity is palpable in his rendition of the inmates as 'poor little waifs and strays, some of them no bigger than gooseberries'. He saw the boys at lessons, including tailoring, 'sawing, cleaving and cutting firewood', and at sword and gun drill which was widely thought to instil self-disciplinary habits. The 'rough and ready' boys apparently seemed 'happiest' when doing the bidding of the boatswain, William Jane, who was also known for

⁴³ Letter from Mary Carpenter in *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, 21 April 1860.

⁴⁴ Seth Koven, 'Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840-1914', in Seth Koven, Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (London, New York: Routledge), 1993, 94-135, 97; Mary Carpenter, *Reformatory Schools: For the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes and for Juvenile Offenders* (London: C. Gilpin, 1851).

⁴⁵ I.D. Cowan, 'Certified Industrial Training Ships c. 1860-1913', *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1-9, 2; 'Preventative' work in in many areas of 'rescue' was becoming more recognised, see James Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London* (London: Fields, Osgood, & Company, 1869), Chapter VIII, 'Juvenile Thieves', 92-106; on education as a preventative measure see Carpenter *Reformatory Schools*, 26-7; Carpenter, 'On Educational Help from Government for the Destitute and Neglected Children of Great Britain', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1861), 22-9; for a gendered exploration of juvenile crime and 'delinquency', see Barbara Littlewood, Linda Mahood, 'The "Vicious" Girl and the "Street-Corner" Boy - Sexuality and the Gendered Delinquent in the Scottish Child-Saving Movement, 1850-1940' *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 4 (1994), 549-78; Heather Shore, 'Reforming the Juvenile: Gender, Justice and the Child Criminal in Nineteenth-Century England', in John Muncie, Gordon Hughes, Eugene McLaughlin, eds., *Youth Justice: Critical Readings* (London: SAGE in association with the Open University, 2002), 159-72; for nineteenth-century 'gangs', see Andrew Davies, 'Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 32, no. 2 (1998), 349-69.

⁴⁶ F. M. Norman, *History of H.M.S. "Havannah"* (Cardiff: *Western Mail*, 1904).

⁴⁷ Grigg, 'Educating Criminal and Destitute Children', 296.

⁴⁸ *Western Mail*, 5 June 1869.

showing his impressive collection of tattoos to lady visitors to the ship;⁴⁹ The bending of rules was not countenanced; hard work and discipline would produce upright citizens in these 'moral hospitals'.⁵⁰ Again, a minimum period of training was expected in order to fulfil these standards. The minimum and maximum age for joining a ship was 10 and 12 respectively and for leaving a ship 14 and 16, which meant an enforced stay of at least two years, and up to six years for some boys.⁵¹

Havannah was intended for boys 'not yet convicted of crime', boys who may have been 'neglected by their natural guardians and left exposed to the contamination of idle and vicious associates'. It was remarked that on arrival, most boys could not read or write and had 'no notion' of arithmetic, arising it was assumed, from neglected parenting. In 1892, the superintendent reported that he 'unhesitatingly' stated that 'the downfall of boys on returning to the temptations of everyday life is too frequently traced to the influence of vicious and criminal parents'.⁵² This was a recurring theme in nineteenth century where 'the brutal father and the feckless mother' were recognisable figures in discourses of child-saving.⁵³ The ship was intended for boys who were fit as boys who were 'diseased in mind or body' were not admitted.⁵⁴ In all, there were perceived to be 'few more profitable ways' to spend money that giving a 'destitute' lad the advantage of such a training as he would receive on board a ship'.⁵⁵ These were intended to include the 'sea skills' needed for a career in either the Royal or Merchant fleets which experienced periodic shortages of crews.⁵⁶

The *Havannah's* connection with poor law unions began in 1874. In reply to an inquiry, the Local Government Board informed the guardians that they were empowered to pay for the maintenance of pauper children in a certified school or training ship.⁵⁷ Following the Industrial Schools Acts of 1857 and 1861, certain children could be sent to Government certified industrial schools, which included training ships. Children covered by the acts were those under 14 who had been found begging, wandering, destitute, homeless or frequenting 'the company of thieves'. Also eligible were children under 12 who had committed an offence punishable by prison and children under 14 whose parents were unable to control, and following the late nineteenth-century education acts, children who did not attend school regularly could also be admitted to industrial schools. Later acts also extended to the committal of children if their mothers were criminals or were thought to be involved in prostitution.⁵⁸

The first pauper boys to be sent to *Havannah* were Charles James, aged 12 and William Whelan, aged 11.⁵⁹ The unruly behaviour of these two boys, along with William Fortune, aged 11, had been noted by both workhouse master and school master and they had also

⁴⁹ As above, Davin, *Growing up Poor*, 125-6; For the same purposes of 'habits' of discipline, a fife band was formed in the cottage homes by Daniel Williams who was paid £10 per annum to give boys three lessons a week, WGAS, U/S 1/41, Guardians' Minutes, 23 January 1908.

⁵⁰ D. J. V. Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992, 236.

⁵¹ Training ships, circular letter, 1875, paper no. 11, 26.

⁵² H.M.S. *Havannah*, Annual Report, 1892.

⁵³ Littlewood, Mahood, 'The "Vicious" Girl and the "Street-Corner" Boy', 549-50.

⁵⁴ H.M.S. *Havannah*, Annual Report, 1877.

⁵⁵ *Young England*, 6 November 1880.

⁵⁶ Cowan, 'Certified Industrial Training Ships, 1-2.

⁵⁷ WGAS, U/S 1/11, Guardians' Minutes, 10 December 1874.

⁵⁸ As above, see also John Stack, 'Reformatory and Industrial Schools and the Decline of Child Imprisonment in Mid-Victorian England and Wales', *History of Education*, vol. 23, no. 1 (1994), 59-73, 65; In 1881, 3,724 offences against the Education Acts were recorded, Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, 149.

⁵⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/12, Guardians' Minutes, 7 September 1876.

attempted to abscond from the workhouse. As well as being 'admonished and flogged', the guardians resolved to apply for an order to send James and Whelan to an industrial school.⁶⁰ It is not beyond belief that William Whelan was brother to the Whelan girl so despaired about by John Dillwyn Llewelyn in the boarding-out chapter. The boys were taken to the *Havannah* training ship within two weeks of this resolution and the Swansea Union paid six shillings a week per boy.⁶¹ William Whelan remained on the *Havannah* until at least mid-1877, and Charles James until mid-1878.⁶² The circumstances surrounding William O'Neal's admission to the *Havannah* were slightly different. O'Neal had been referred by the petty sessions court to the ship, and as he had been previously an inmate of Swansea workhouse, the guardians were liable for his maintenance of seven shillings weekly, again O'Neal remained on the *Havannah* for around two years.⁶³

Many training ships of the nineteenth century were seen as employing harsh and punitive regimes. Grigg claims that the discipline in training ships was harsher than in reformatories, although it is unclear whether he refers to the reformatory ships rather than industrial school ships.⁶⁴ Shore points to the most 'visible flouting' of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century industrial school system taking place on training ships moored around Britain, and some of it because of harsh regimes.⁶⁵ Several boys on the *Havannah* were transferred to reformatories following a 'good deal of disorder', petty theft and some absconding. These transfers may have been provoked by the negative publicity in the local press as managers sought to refute the 'stigma' that they felt had been 'cast upon the school'.⁶⁶ It contrasted strongly to an earlier report of 1868, when no 'desertion' had occurred and the standard of school work was found to be 'somewhat advanced'.⁶⁷ The choice of word 'desertion' rather than 'absconding' also reinforces the martial protocol by which it appears the establishment wished to be perceived.

By the 1870s the *Havannah* was attracting negative comments concerning its condition, as by this time the ship was around 60 years old. Although the hammocks and bedding of the boys were found by an inspector to be 'scrupulously clean' and the main schoolroom was large and airy, the upkeep of the fabric of the ship could only be maintained with 'energy and constant attention'.⁶⁸ A few years later, the *Havannah* was being described by inspectors as 'an old and dilapidated hulk', in which around 70 boys were exposed to damp and cold conditions and their educational standard was described as 'backward and inferior'. Cowan claims that this may be attributable to the difficulty in engaging teachers which led to the education on training ships being inferior to elementary schools.⁶⁹ The *Havannah* was not wholly a male environment. From its inception a matron was a member of staff and generally the wife of the superintendent was visible. The 1881 census shows more of a female presence; the wives of

⁶⁰ As above, 27 July 1876.

⁶¹ As above, 14 September 1876.

⁶² WGAS, U/S 1/13, Guardians' Minutes, 19 July 1877, 18 July 1878.

⁶³ WGAS, U/S 1/14, Guardians' Minutes, 8 May 1879, O'Neal stayed until mid-1881, U/S 1/16, 20 October 1881.

⁶⁴ Grigg, 'Educating Criminal and Destitute Children', 308.

⁶⁵ Heather Shore, 'Punishment, Reformation, or Welfare: Responses to "The Problem" of Juvenile Crime in Victorian and Edwardian Britain', in Helen Johnston, ed., *Punishment and Control in Historical Perspective*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 158-76, 170-1.

⁶⁶ *Western Mail*, 26, 27 August 1878.

⁶⁷ Inspector of Reformatory Schools of Great Britain, Twelfth Report. 1868-69, c. 4183.

⁶⁸ As above, Twentieth Report, 1877, c. 1796, 105.

⁶⁹ Cowan, 'Certified Industrial Training Ships', 5.

both the superintendent and boatswain lived on board as did the boatswain's two daughters and three sons, as well as the two sons of the superintendent.⁷⁰

The inspection of 1883 listed a long string of offences and the subsequent punishments received by the boys, and he also remarked that illnesses were more prevalent. The inspector's conclusion was that the boys on the *Havannah* did not 'thrive'.⁷¹ The following year the committee reported that a 'considerable outlay' had been used for repairs and the recommendations of the inspector that the boys' diet was improved had also been carried out. The language used by the committee that the diet was made 'yet more generous' demonstrates that they did not feel the food given to the boys had been lacking.⁷² A 'dietary' from 1899 shows that while the boys' diet was a little more generous and varied than that of workhouse fare, although these boys were probably worked harder than children from workhouses, and food practices were probably more in line with prisons. For breakfast there was eight ounces of bread, some butter and a pint of porridge with milk, meat twice a week and mostly stew or soup on the other days, except Friday, when one pound of fresh fish and the same of potatoes was served, for supper the boys ate eight ounces of bread and jam with cocoa.⁷³ As Grigg claims, the diet was often supplemented by vegetables grown by the boys in a nearby plot of land.⁷⁴

The 1884 report also recorded that the ship had acquired £146 from the 'services of the boys as porters' for the previous year, leaving the ship with a surplus of just over £71.⁷⁵ From 1863, trusted boys had spent their Saturdays in Cardiff market employed as porters, and a quarter of their wages was invested and given to them when they were discharged.⁷⁶ This strategy was criticised constantly by other similar establishments and inspectors who felt that this activity was not preparing the boys for sea service. In 1891 they were accused of wasting tax and ratepayers' money in training boys to run errands and make clothes rather than teaching nautical skills.⁷⁷ One of the worst attacks against the ship was by Admiral Field in the House of Commons who felt that the enterprise was a 'fraud and a scandal', and presumed that the boys were 'half fed'. These allegations were refuted strongly by *Havannah's* honorary secretary, Jonas Watson, in letters to local newspapers and *The Times*. Watson claimed that very few *Havannah* boys chose the sea as a career, whether this was because their training put them off the sea or it was inadequate is unclear. The boys' training included gun, sword and company drills, and 'reefing, furling, bending the sail, splicing and knotting'.⁷⁸ The *Havannah* did not have any sails or masts and was permanently berthed and 'housed over', the only training ship in Britain not to float.⁷⁹ The Admiralty had estimated the cost of providing rigging to be £700 and the *Havannah's* secretary had declined to put the rate payer to such an expense.⁸⁰ It was also claimed in defence of this strategy that masters of sailing

⁷⁰ Census 1881.

⁷¹ Inspector of Reformatory Schools, Twenty-sixth Report, 1883, c. 3716, 150-1, illnesses such as erysipelas, catarrh, mumps, dropsy, skin diseases and one boy had died of 'paralysis of the brain'.

⁷² *Western Mail*, 19 July, 1884.

⁷³ Norman, *History of H.M.S. "Havannah"* 55.

⁷⁴ Grigg, 'Educating Criminal and Destitute Children', 318.

⁷⁵ *Western Mail*, 19 July, 1884.

⁷⁶ Grigg, 'Educating Criminal and Destitute Children', 312.

⁷⁷ Industrial school training ships were also funded partially by a *per capita* grant from the Treasury, Phil Carradice, *Nautical Training Ships, An Illustrated History* (Stroud: Amberley, 2009), 42.

⁷⁸ H.M.S. *Havannah*, Twenty-fifth Annual Report, 1879.

⁷⁹ Carradice, *Nautical Training Ships*, 52, Carradice remarked that the *Havannah* resembled a 'gigantic Noah's Ark'.

⁸⁰ Norman, *History of H.M.S. "Havannah"*, 44.

ships preferred untrained boys as apprentices.⁸¹ In later years, the boys' association with Cardiff Market ceased and they were sent out as 'house boys', which resulted in all their wages being retained by the school, Norman appeared to be critical of this move as it was 'not so generous an administration as formerly'. His assertion that the navy had no need of industrial school boys as they could choose from so many others may have reflected the reality of employment for boys of blemished character.⁸²

However, it does appear that many boys who were placed in reformatories or industrial training ships like the *Havannah* stayed within the law after they were discharged, and Jones also estimates that around two-thirds of boys from Welsh reformatories did not re-offend.⁸³ Grigg claims that reformatory and industrial schools had succeeded in breaking up 'gangs of young criminals' in the larger towns and they put an end to the training of boys as professional thieves.⁸⁴ Figures from 1887 show that among 59 boys who had been discharged from the *Havannah* within in the previous three years, 48 were reported as 'doing well', three were dead, one was recorded as 'doubtful', five had been convicted of a criminal offence or had been recommitted to an institution, and the circumstances of two were unknown.⁸⁵ However, it was remarked that many of the boys who had left had not retained the education they had received whilst on board. The superintendent reported in 1887 that 'it must be owned that the boys' epistles are not all brilliant specimens of penmanship or composition' and that night classes which had been available to the boys not been kept up. It was thought however that there was 'an honest tone' about the letters and also 'evidence of affectionate interest in the school'.⁸⁶ Some boys did not appear to stick to their jobs, Dennis Griffin, who had left the *Havannah* in 1900, had been employed on a farm near the Ross union, but had subsequently been admitted to the Ross workhouse, and as he had been born in Greenhill in Swansea, the Swansea Union was responsible for his relief.⁸⁷ It was also admitted that some former inmates had 'gone to the bad'.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, some of the annual reports of the *Havannah* and letters, purported to have been written by old boys, suggest radical transformations to the supporters and potential subscribers of the ship. When he arrived one boy, 'X.X.' was 'a bad boy well known to the police' and was known to have associated with thieves. Upon his release, 'X.X.' had been reformed into 'a good boy, always to be found at his post, quiet and gentlemanly', and that he would 'rather forfeit a meal than miss church'.⁸⁹ This outcome, achieved by the transformative powers of the *Havannah* has appeared to mould a working-class delinquent into what could be a description (or a caricature) of a middle-class gentleman. What was imagined as normal were middle-class values, but without middle-class advantages. Although encouraging the boys to stay on the right side of the law was the primary purpose of the *Havannah*, class-appropriate employment rather than 'gentlemanly' careers was sought for working-class 'lads'.⁹⁰ Subsequently, letters were published in annual reports which projected these management hopes. 'H.B.' wrote, 'I have been on one situation ever since I came home, that is 16 months, give my love to all the boys, and tell them that I often wish I was onboard the

⁸¹ *Western Mail*, 25 March 1891.

⁸² Norman, *History of H.M.S. "Havannah"*, 50-1.

⁸³ Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, 237.

⁸⁴ Grigg, 'Educating Criminal and Destitute Children', 216.

⁸⁵ Inspector of Reformatory Schools, Twentieth Report, 1877, 105-6.

⁸⁶ CCL, H.M.S. *Havannah* Annual Report, 1877.

⁸⁷ WGAS, U/S 1/34, *Guardians' Minutes*, 25 April 1901.

⁸⁸ CCL, H.M.S. *Havannah* Annual Report, 1883.

⁸⁹ As above, 1876.

⁹⁰ Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981, 10.

old ship again'.⁹¹ It also appears to be important for the management to stress that the boys' 'spirit' was not trained out of them, when it was reported that some letters showed 'levity' which revealed 'traces of the old Arab nature', but significantly 'in a harmless form'.⁹² The reports also relay how employers of discharged boys congratulated the management on their successful reform, which would have reassured supporters.⁹³ Old boys were also reported as returning for visits. In 1883, it was remarked that 'numerous' visits were made and special mention was given to one old boy who was apparently 'doing very well' as a builder in the West of England and who employed 10 men.⁹⁴ Boys returning to visit the *Havannah* would have sent out a dual message to supporters. One that reformed boys accepted their conversion to the respectable and independent classes, and also these visits also mirrored what middle-class subscribers and management wanted; their continued contact with, and support of, their old 'school'.

The management of the *Havannah* instilled into the boys the idea that responsible working-class citizenship would result in appropriate rewards such as enjoyable, yet respectable, treats. Although Cowan claims that outings were 'rare' for training ship boys, several 'annual treats' were offered to the *Havannah* boys.⁹⁵ One Christmas treat included 'a splendid feast of cakes, claret negus,⁹⁶ oranges and crackers', prizes for good behaviour were awarded to Henry Bansfield a 'certified boy' and Henry Norris, a day scholar. In the evening the boys were taken to a local circus.⁹⁷ Another annual treat in March included 89 certified boys, 45 *Havannah* day scholars and 85 girls from Newtown School which also suggests that the establishment was not a 'total institution' and the management possibly attempted to re-integrate the boys into society prior to their discharge.⁹⁸ Local ladies also offered treats to the boys; a summer outing to Wenvoe, with dinner, tea and games, was arranged by Miss Jenner and an autumn feast of apple dumplings, as well as a prize giving offered by Mrs Fulton, neither of these women were committee members, nor wives of committee members.⁹⁹ In 1892 the committee also initiated longer holidays and the boys were taken to the seaside at Penarth where they apparently stayed in a 'comfortable billet' and it was remarked that 'the lads sallied daily for games on the beach and cricket ground'.¹⁰⁰

The Local Government Board continued its support of training ships into the twentieth century. A circular letter of 1904 sought to draw the attention of boards of guardians to the 'advantages' of training ships and the advisability of using them more for recalcitrant lads.¹⁰¹ The forty-ninth and final report of the *Havannah* was published after its closure in 1904. The ship had been sold for breaking up and the boys transferred to the Bristol training ship *Formidable*, and from there to a new naval training school that was being built at Portishead. The committee reported that they were glad to learn that the boys had 'shaken down well in their new quarters'.¹⁰² Although no communications from *Havannah* boys appear to have

⁹¹ CCL, H.M.S. *Havannah* Annual Report, 1877.

⁹² As above, for an analysis of the construction of the 'street arab' see Murdoch, *Imagined orphans*, 25-32.

⁹³ CCL, H.M.S. *Havannah* Annual Report, 1876.

⁹⁴ As above, 1883.

⁹⁵ Cowan, 'Certified Industrial Training Ships, 4.

⁹⁶ Claret Negus was a warm sweetened wine and spirits toddy created by colonel Francis Negus in the early eighteenth century.

⁹⁷ CCL, H.M.S. *Havannah* Annual Report, 1876.

⁹⁸ As above, 1876;

⁹⁹ CCL, H.M.S. *Havannah* Annual Report 1878.

¹⁰⁰ As above, 1896.

¹⁰¹ WGAS, U/S 1/37, Guardians' Minutes, 2 June 1904.

¹⁰² CCL, H.M.S. *Havannah* Forty-ninth and Final Annual Report, 1903.

survived, a letter from a boy W. Lawrence to his old Captain Bouchier of the training ship Exeter in 1897 demonstrates that some boys benefitted from the regime. Lawrence wrote that he wished he had not left the ship and he 'liked it very much' as the officers were kind to him. Unlike the many boys about which the central authorities bemoaned a lack of subsequent sea service, Lawrence did enter the service.¹⁰³

Roman Catholic institutions

Training ships such as the *Havannah* were perceived as employing harsh regimes, and in recent years Roman Catholic children's homes have also been exposed as places of abuse and neglect. Again there is no contemporaneous evidence to suggest similar abuse in either the *Havannah* or at Nazareth House.¹⁰⁴ Nazareth House was an institution in Cardiff which was managed and staffed by Roman Catholic nuns from the order of the Poor Sisters of Nazareth. The order cared for 'crippled, deformed and incurably afflicted' girls as well as for some elderly patients.¹⁰⁵ Unio sent some, but not all, of their Roman Catholic girls to Nazareth House, particularly those who were disabled.¹⁰⁶ The establishment had opened in 1875 with room for 65 children and 46 elderly residents funded partially by recent convert to Roman Catholicism, the third Marquess of Bute.¹⁰⁷ It was thought that workhouse life would be detrimental to Roman Catholic girls as it was reported that they were 'taken as soon as possible from the union, to preserve their faith and morals.'¹⁰⁸ Jane Tobin was the second girl on the Nazareth house register in 1875.¹⁰⁹ Jane was from Newport and was sent to Nazareth House as her mother was perceived to be unable to look after her because of alcohol-related illness. Jane's memories of Nazareth House was that it was a 'roof over her head', and although the nuns did not show any affection towards her, she said she was not badly treated.¹¹⁰ This presents a different picture from one in a Roman Catholic magazine where the children of Nazareth House were described as 'a mob of hearty little ones playing and dancing in the long gay room'. The report also presents a picture of children being independent and self-assured when they apparently ran 'to welcome a stranger with a confidence which has a world of significance'.¹¹¹ It was also reported that Lord Bute also financed outings and treats for the girls of Nazareth House, on his boats in the Bristol channel and he visited the girls

¹⁰³ Carradice, *Nautical Training Ships*, 44. This is not a letter reproduced in an annual report but a letter written by the boy and sent to Captain Bouchier, it was in the possession of Phil Carradice, who unfortunately cannot locate it at present.

¹⁰⁴ In 1998 many former residents alleged physical, and to some extent sexual, abuse in various establishments run by Nazareth House, including appalling cruelties in Cardiff, see *Independent*, 16 August 1998.

¹⁰⁵ Carmen M Mangion, *Contested Identities, Catholic Women Religious in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 132. There are also many children who lived in Cardiff's Nazareth House who were not recorded as disabled in census returns.

¹⁰⁶ The options for Catholic boys were very limited, St. Michael's Industrial School in Treforest being the nearest establishment, for information concerning St Michael's, see Rev. Gareth Leyshon, 'Pontypridd's Catholic orphanage: St Michael's home and the Treforest Nazareth House', <http://www.pontypriddrcdeanery.org.uk/churches/treforest/Registers-and-Archives.html>

¹⁰⁷ Wales and the Marches Catholic History Society, *The Early History of Nazareth House (Cardiff, 2005)*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ CCL, 'Foundation of Nazareth House Cardiff', *The St. Peter's Chair, A Monthly Magazine*, May 1889.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Katrina Coopey, local studies librarian at Cardiff Central library, 8 May 2013. Ms Coopey is the great, great grand-daughter of Jane Tobin and Jane Tobin's feelings concerning Nazareth House were related by her to Ms Coopey's mother.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Katrina Coopey.

¹¹¹ CCL, 'Foundation of Nazareth House Cardiff', *The St. Peter's Chair, A Monthly Magazine*, May 1889.

when he and his family stayed in Cardiff Castle.¹¹² Nazareth House was a substantial institution which, by 1887, was caring for around 165 inmates.¹¹³ The first reference within Swansea Union's records concerning the sending of girls to Nazareth House was in 1893 when it was decided that Elizabeth Wilson should go there at a cost of one shilling and sixpence weekly.¹¹⁴ The 1901 census shows that Elizabeth, then 24 years old and described as 'feeble minded', still lived in Nazareth House.¹¹⁵ However, in 1903 Elizabeth's sister Ann Isaac offered a home to her in Carmarthen which was accepted by both Swansea Union and the Mother Superior at Nazareth House.¹¹⁶ Again, as with the Swansea orphan home girls, it is unclear why this solution was not offered earlier in Elizabeth's life. It is possible either that Elizabeth was discharged from Nazareth house or that being grown up she was considered a help rather than an obligation.

Koven claims that the word 'cripple' projected familiar meanings of 'sentiment and pathos' into the Victorian imagination.¹¹⁷ Similarly, in a retrospective portrayal of Nazareth House, disability was presented in recognisable forms to engender both pity and affirmation. In what is described as the 'Incurable Children's Ward', the 'incurable child rests on some pretty patchwork cushion; the little head that will never meet the storms of the world', and this presents a picture recognisable in Victorian sentimentalised art and literature. Similarly, one girl who was 'rescued from some dark hole where her deformed and blighted face was hidden away' presents a melodramatic danger from which the child is 'rescued'.¹¹⁸ The alms-giving public of Cardiff could be assured that, unlike giving money indiscriminately to be possibly squandered 'in idleness and drink', the sisters of Nazareth House would use the funds wisely and for a noble purpose.¹¹⁹ It is problematic to assign unambiguous disabilities to the inmates of Nazareth House via descriptions made by the Swansea Union and the Sisters at Nazareth House. Similarly, it is unlikely that disabled children conformed to specific 'diagnoses' and the subsequent ordering into classifications surrounding what was imagined as the 'defective' in Victorian society and medicine. Although segregation of disabled children was focussed on their alleged 'defect', meanings and interpretations of disabilities were not fixed.¹²⁰ It is unclear whether children were sent to Nazareth House from the Swansea Union primarily because they were Catholic or were disabled. As the cottage homes in Swansea housed many children of the Catholic faith, it is likely that Nazareth House was seen as a destination for children requiring extra care, but there is no evidence to suggest that any non-Catholic children were sent there from poor law Union.

Discourses surrounding the appraisal of disabilities echo the anxieties concerning workhouse children being morally contaminated by their nearness to older, hardened and debauched inmates. Segregation of children from their parents and other adults was not solely a callous

¹¹² Wales and the Marches Catholic History Society, *The Early History of Nazareth House (Cardiff, 2005)*, 7.

¹¹³ *Western Mail*, 4 January 1887.

¹¹⁴ WGAS, U/S 1/24, *Guardians' Minutes*, 17 April 1893.

¹¹⁵ Census 1901.

¹¹⁶ WGAS, U/S 1/36, *Guardians' Minutes*, 18 June 1903. It is interesting to note that the 1911 census does not mention any disability with regard to Elizabeth.

¹¹⁷ Seth Koven, 'Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers, and the Great War in Great Britain', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 99, no. 4 (1994), 1167-1202, 1171.

¹¹⁸ CCL, 'Foundation of Nazareth House Cardiff', whether 'incurable' means a lifelong disability or a life about to end is uncertain, although I suspect the former. I am reminded of Vicinus' phrase, 'happy endings, however fragile', Martha Vicinis, "'Helpless and Unfriended": Nineteenth Century Domestic Melodrama', *New Literary History*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1981), 127-43, 129.

¹¹⁹ CCL, *First Annual Report of the Catholic Church in Cardiff, 1879*, 9.

¹²⁰ J.S. Hurt, *Outside the Mainstream: A History of Special Education* (London: Batsford, 1988), 134.

poor law device, but also sought to quarantine children from inmates perceived as vicious or idle. Indiscriminate classification whereby the 'young idiot or imbecile' shared accommodation with people with dementia and chronic 'mania' was also perceived to have a poor effect on the child's development. Similarly, 'backward children' who were in elementary schools were to be treated differently to 'ordinary children', lest cross-infection occur.¹²¹

The label 'feeble-minded' was one aimed at girls in particular towards the end of the nineteenth century and often carried implications of moral frailty. Those identified as 'feeble-minded' were considered too fragile to care for themselves but not to such an extent that they could be placed in a lunatic asylum.¹²² Terms such as 'feeble-minded', 'idiot', 'backward' and 'dull' were used in minutes, reports and census returns to describe inmates of Nazareth House, as were depictions of what Turner calls 'anomalous bodies' such as 'dwarf', 'stunted' and 'cripple'.¹²³ However, physical 'defects' alone were not always cause for a child to be placed into a 'special class', although by 1918, there were 60 day schools and 35 residential school for physically 'defective' children.¹²⁴ Although Scull claims that institutions were a 'dumping ground' for a 'heterogeneous mass of physical and mental wrecks', many disabled children in mainstream schools felt subject to the 'undue pressure' that was placed on children who were categorised as 'backward scholars'.¹²⁵ Copeland claims that over a quarter of the witnesses at the commission into elementary education reported such 'over pressure' in relation to 'dull', 'deficient' or 'delicate' children.¹²⁶ Many 'backward' children were also 'passed from school to school' in order to avoid doing badly in assessments.¹²⁷

Care of the children in Nazareth House appeared to satisfy unions as inspections, generally by 'Lady Guardians' were always positive.¹²⁸ In 1904, Emily Williams reported that the children seemed well looked after and that she was 'delighted' with their 'healthy and happy' appearance. This opinion was shared by the Merthyr Board of Guardians who had also commended Nazareth House, observing that the children looked clean and cheerful and they were unable to 'speak too highly of the management'. The veracity of inspections such as these had been challenged in *Punch*, which had depicted a poor law inspector touring a workhouse with his eyes shut.¹²⁹ As well as commending Nazareth House, the Merthyr guardians had also recorded that the boys and girls who lived in the St. Michael's Catholic home were in a 'very dirty state', which suggests that many inspection visits can be viewed as more thorough than box-ticking exercises.¹³⁰ Girls at Nazareth House were educated by the nuns 'in the moral atmosphere of order, duty and busy kindness for life in domestic service',

¹²¹ Royal Commission on Blind and Deaf and Dumb of United Kingdom Report, 1889, c. 5781 I-III, ciii-civ. Final report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the Elementary Education Acts. England and Wales, 1888, c. 5485, 174, [hereafter Cross Commission, 1889].

¹²² Bartley, *Prostitution Prevention and Reform in England*, 121; see also Stephen Humphries, Pamela Gordon, *Out of Sight: The Experience of Disability 1900-1950* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1992), 100.

¹²³ David M. Turner, 'Introduction: approaching anomalous bodies', in David M. Turner, Kevin Stagg, eds., *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-16.

¹²⁴ 1899 Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act, 1899, cited in Borsay, *Disability and Social Policy*, 107-8.

¹²⁵ Andrew Scull, *Museums of Madness: The Social Organisation of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 252; Cross Commission 1889, 493.

¹²⁶ Ian Copeland, *The Making of the Backward Pupil in Education in England, 1870-1914* (London: Woburn Press, 1999), 58; however, Dr Barnardo believed it was 'disadvantageous to fill a house only with children who are deformed or crippled' and recommended that they should 'mingle them with hale children', T. J. Barnardo, *Something Attempted, Something Done!* (London: Shaw, 1889), 127-8.

¹²⁷ Cross Commission 1889, 174.

¹²⁸ *Western Mail*, 26 December 1899.

¹²⁹ *Punch*, 4 January 1868.

¹³⁰ *Western Mail*, 26 December 1899.

and girls would be found places as servants when they were 16 or 17 years old.¹³¹ It appears that disability was not considered a barrier to some form of education. A girl born without arms was taught to write with her mouth and another girl, described as a 'blind imbecile', was 'proud of the one thing she can do - the singing of little songs'.¹³² Although these statements doubtless generated the required pity and funds for Nazareth House, they also affirmed the children's abilities rather than their impairments, although Borsay asserts that 'compassion was disempowering' inasmuch as the recipient lost their agency.¹³³ Surprisingly, these accounts did not include any rhetoric concerning education for the primary purpose of reading or understanding about the word of God, as was the case if institutions for the deaf. Similarly, disabilities did not appear to rule out future employment either in the minds of the management of Nazareth House or poor law guardians. In 1904, three girls, Ellen Ryan, Bridget Williams and Sarah Donovan were sent to in Nazareth House. Although Sarah Donovan was described as a cripple and stunted in her growth, and it was agreed by both that she was to be helped to earn her own living by sewing.¹³⁴ Bridget Williams was also apprenticed to a dressmaker but no mention was made of Bridget being disabled when she was admitted to Nazareth House eight years previously at the request of the Rev. Fitzgerald because her mother had been sent to prison.¹³⁵ Many disabilities were not perceived as preventing paid work and Katherine O'Keefe, who at 15 years old was described as 'very backward' was placed into service with a Mrs Jones in Newport.¹³⁶ However, some girls sent were considered unable to work, as in the case of Sarah Ann Donovan who was still supported by Swansea Union in Nazareth House when she was 22. Described by Adelaide Perkins as 'deformed (very short)' and unable to walk alone, Mrs Perkins reported that as she was unable to 'earn her own bread', the payment of five shillings a week from the Swansea Union should continue.¹³⁷ As household and domestic work were thought to be normal job expectations for pauper girls, they were expected to help with household chores in Nazareth House when they were around 10 years of age.¹³⁸

It appears that some girls with challenging behaviour were also sent to Nazareth House. Margaret Ryan, who was the daughter of an outdoor pauper, was sent there in 1903 when her mother professed herself unable to control her, and Margaret stayed for around three years.¹³⁹ It is unclear in which way she was perceived as 'uncontrollable', although the word could be a pseudonym for sexually wayward.¹⁴⁰ Showalter claims that 'uncontrollable sexuality' seemed to be a 'defining symptom' of perceived insanity in women.¹⁴¹ Whether this

¹³¹ CCL, 'Foundation of Nazareth House Cardiff', *The St. Peter's Chair, A Monthly Magazine*, May 1889; Census records appears to confirm this as there were many girls between the ages of 13 and 18 recorded in several censuses.

¹³² As above.

¹³³ 'Deaf Children and Charitable Education in Britain 1790-1914', in Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely, eds., *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: The Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain 1550-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 71-90, 78.

¹³⁴ WGAS, U/S 1/37, *Guardians' Minutes*, 14 July 1904.

¹³⁵ As above, 14 October 1897.

¹³⁶ As above, 12 November 1908; U/S 1/43, 4 February 1909.

¹³⁷ WGAS, U/S 1/37, *Guardians' Minutes*, 12 November 1908.

¹³⁸ As above, 14 July 1904.

¹³⁹ As above, 3 December 1903; US 1/40, 1 November 1906.

¹⁴⁰ Bartley, *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England*, 95.

¹⁴¹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, (London: Virago, 1987), 74.

would have applied to 17 year old Mary Ellen Moore who was sent back to the workhouse because she was reported as being 'incorrigible' is unclear.¹⁴²

The largest ratepayer in Cardiff, Lord Bute, was a Roman Catholic. However, local priests and Catholic locals were, as elsewhere in England and Wales, often at odds with poor law establishments and management concerning the religious instruction of Catholic pauper children.¹⁴³ In 1893, there was 'agitation' concerning Catholic children who had been placed in the overcrowded Ely Industrial Schools and fears that their religion had subsequently been neglected. The Rev. Father Butler, who was the first Catholic priest to be elected to the Cardiff Board of Guardians, felt that it was impossible to instruct Catholic children about their faith in a workhouse or non-denominational industrial school. He was not alone in arguing that Catholics were not 'properly treated' as a flurry of letters, including some from non-Catholics, sent to the *Western Mail* demonstrates.¹⁴⁴

Conclusions

Privately-run charitable establishments welcomed funding from the state purse. The Swansea orphan home for girls rejigged their regulations in order to keep the large percentage of girls who were funded by poor law unions, and indeed wanted to keep girls in the establishment until they were older. Although the sisters of Nazareth House were described as 'voluntary mendicants' and that 'every farthing of expense was collected by the sisters', many of the girls' places were paid for by poor law unions.¹⁴⁵ Thus, these establishments still needed to retain their autonomy in order to attract further funds from individual supporters. As the *Havannah's* committee reported in 1896, 'philanthropy is a sensitive plant, intolerant to the restraint of red tape'.¹⁴⁶

Both pity and anxiety were used to establish and sustain institutions such as these analysed above. Whilst the girls of the orphan home and Nazareth House stirred feelings of sentimentalised ideals about 'orphans' and 'cripples', the *Havannah* training ship calmed fears of tribes of 'street arabs' rampaging through respectable urban centres. Appropriate education was utilised by all three establishments for its potential to enable disadvantaged children to live useful lives according to their gender and abilities. Whether that was imagined as a life in domestic service, a life at sea or life less disabled was dependant on the institution and the inmate. Compassion for the children was ubiquitous in fund-raising material, it is not known the extent to which that compassion was extended to the children themselves

¹⁴² WGAS, U/S 1/26, Guardians' Minutes, 9 December 1895, she had been an inmate for around 18 months.

¹⁴³ For Catholics being imagined as 'other', see Linda Colley, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies*, 31:4, (1992), 309-29.

¹⁴⁴ *Western Mail*, 3 November, 8 December 1893.

¹⁴⁵ CCL, 'Foundation of Nazareth House Cardiff', 1889.

¹⁴⁶ H.M.S *Havannah* Annual Report, 1896.

Educating blind and deaf children

The boy, who was no older than seven, sat still while his mother talked to the man behind the desk. He couldn't understand what they were saying, he never could, and as always his thoughts remained inside his head. As the man was making notes, presumably about him he imagined, an older boy peeped his head around the door. The boy looked straight at him and started to make signs with his hands. What? he thought, is he talking to me? Then he thought, I understand him, I know what he is saying, he is talking to me with signs.

This little lad was described as having been 'born deaf', and stood 'silent, lonely, passive, patient' while his mother discussed his admittance to the deaf institution with the principal. When this other pupil entered the room and used signs and gestures to the boy, he was transformed by the 'sudden revelation that there was someone here who talked in a language he could comprehend'. He had been accustomed to people around him talking about him, while keeping him 'in ignorance' of what they discussed, but here were children who could communicate with him, and who had also experienced his isolation, 'the sensitiveness, the shame, the loneliness'; the boy burst into tears because he felt he was 'no longer alone!'.¹⁴⁸ Ladd claims that the experience of 'Deaf school' generated feelings of being 'normal', and quotes Raymond Lee, who as a child, had experienced residential deaf schools in the 1950s. Lee recounted that meeting other deaf children enabled them to feel good about themselves, often for the first time.¹⁴⁹ Benjamin Payne, the institution's deaf principal, would have been familiar with these feelings of isolation, even though he had not been born deaf, and although the above account of the deaf boy in Payne's non-deaf son's semi-autobiographical novel *King Silence* is tinged with sentimentalism, it is nevertheless a recognisable portrayal of discovering one is not alone. Indeed, Benjamin Payne used isolation as a punishment, preferring to forbid pupils from talking to a miscreant for a short while, rather than using corporal punishment.¹⁵⁰

In 1872, Swansea's poor law guardians had discussed their financial and civic contribution to the Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind and the Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. As well as monetary assistance, it was recorded that guardians were also urged to lend their time to these two 'valuable institutions'.¹⁵¹ As prominent philanthropic establishments, these institutions attracted patronage from royalty, the nobility and from the upper ranks of ecclesiastic and civic society. Along with Swansea Infirmary, they drew the

¹⁴⁷ *The Cambrian*, 25 October 1872. As a hearing, sighted person I am sensitive to the argument that the history of Deaf education which was written by hearing people 'stood in for true Deaf education', cited in Paddy Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2003), 88. Indeed the same could be said about blind children. Throughout this chapter I will be using the lower case form of the word 'deaf', the use of the word 'Deaf' with a capital 'D' is often used to describe members of the Deaf community who consider themselves to be culturally Deaf, and it is uncertain whether this identity was familiar to the children who were educated in these two institutions.

¹⁴⁸ As above, 1-2.

¹⁴⁹ Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 299.

¹⁵⁰ WGAS, E/Cam 5/1, Letter book, 13 April 1878, Benjamin Payne to John Davies.

¹⁵¹ *The Cambrian*, 25 October 1872. Nonetheless, a resolution to subscribe to the two institutions was deemed subsequently to be illegal by the central authorities, but as the rules were very complex, and often contradictory, it is uncertain whether any Union followed them correctly. WGAS, U/S 1/9, Guardians' Minutes, 14 November 1872. Hereafter, the institutions will be referred to as the Cambrian Institution and the Blind Institution.

largest share of philanthropic support in the town.¹⁵² The previous chapter has demonstrated how the two spheres of philanthropy and the poor laws collided, and this chapter will analyse this via the lens of sensory disabilities. Both these institutions and their inmates have attracted what Holmes has termed a Victorian ‘emotional excess’ of language.¹⁵³ Thus, philanthropic support of these institutions would, for the blind, ‘relieve the wearisomeness of their condition’ and help ‘alleviate their affliction’.¹⁵⁴ The deaf children of the Cambrian Institution, would be ‘certain of universal sympathy’ and none were ‘more deserving of support’.¹⁵⁵ Across the UK by the end of the nineteenth century, there were over 50 such institutions for the blind, instructing and supporting 1,113 people and 26 institutions which educated 2,340 deaf children.¹⁵⁶

This chapter will explore how sensory disabilities were portrayed in the Victorian and Edwardian period and how blame-free helplessness was imagined as the starting point for philanthropic intervention, while the expected outcome of a grateful, passive and productive citizen was imposed on the blind or deaf child. As the previous chapters have demonstrated this result was also desired by the poor law authorities. Although blind and deaf children were supported financially by the poor laws, they were also expected to be trained and educated into usefulness. Most discourses of sensory disabilities endeavoured to integrate blind and deaf people into a population who could see and hear, but this was to be achieved by first removing them from society into institutions. This chapter will explore the future prospects of blind and deaf children who were educated in these ‘valuable institutions’ and whether, as Borsay claims ‘blind and deaf institutions depressed the expectations of all their pupils’.¹⁵⁷

Education and care for blind children

Representations of sensory disabilities were often alike in doctrine and policy during the nineteenth century, and Mantin claims the education of blind and deaf children was similarly debated.¹⁵⁸ Pity was a key dynamic within discourses of sensory deprivation and a blind child was perceived as an unproblematic generator of sympathy, although in 1863 the question whether a ‘life-long silence was worse than a life-long darkness’ remained unresolved at one institution meeting.¹⁵⁹ At an annual general meeting of the South Wales Blind Institution in 1875, the debate arose again concerning whether the absence of hearing or sight was the ‘greater loss’. Although, unlike deaf people, the blind were thought fortunate in being able to hear the word of God, it was felt that loss of sight was a worse affliction, as blind people were prevented from seeing the ‘beautiful world’.¹⁶⁰ At a later gathering, blindness was described as the ‘greatest affliction that mortals can be visited with’.¹⁶¹ Holmes claims that ‘blind children were the ‘preferred figures of disability in the Victorian imagination’.¹⁶² Within children’s literature of the period, blindness was the disability that was most ‘precisely

¹⁵² For Swansea Infirmary, see Davies, ‘Health and The Hospitals’, in Griffiths, ed., *The City of Swansea*, 165-178.

¹⁵³ Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction*, 17.

¹⁵⁴ *Western Mail*, 22 May 1875.

¹⁵⁵ *The Cambrian*, 30 November 1849; 23 June 1854.

¹⁵⁶ Borsay, *Disability and Social Policy*, 95.

¹⁵⁷ As above, 97.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Mantin, ‘Educational Experiences of Deaf Children in Wales: The Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, 1847-1914’ (Swansea University: unpublished PhD thesis, 2012). 27.

¹⁵⁹ *The Cambrian*, 11 September 1863.

¹⁶⁰ *Western Mail*, 22 May 1875.

¹⁶¹ As above, 19 June 1878.

¹⁶² Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction*,

delineated'.¹⁶³ This is also marked by some sentimentalised art of the nineteenth century such as Millais' *The Blind Girl* (1856) and *The Blind Basket-maker with his First Child* (1856), by Michael Frederick Halliday. Neither paintings require further elucidation and both stimulate uncomplicated sympathy because the protagonists cannot see the beautiful landscape or his first-born child. The teaching of blind children can also be seen as less problematic than the teaching of deaf children. Unlike campaigns for and against 'oralism', which wanted deaf people to learn to speak and lip read, the 'battle of the types', or the domination of one raised type reading system like Moon system versus the Braille system, were not as contentious.

The Liverpool School for the Indigent Blind, which opened in 1791 (and still educates children today), was the first school for blind children in Britain and its primary objective was 'to supply this neglected class of our fellow creatures with such a portion of religious knowledge as may reconcile them to their situation and teach them to be easy and contented'.¹⁶⁴ Carpenter claims that for many blind schools their principal concern, after imparting religious instruction, was to fit the blind for work and not necessarily teach them to read and write.¹⁶⁵ In 1865, the first meeting of the Swansea society appeared to consider reading important, albeit for religious purposes, and recommended using the Moon Method of raised type to enable blind people 'to read God's word'.¹⁶⁶ In later years, academic education remained a key tenet of the institution; in 1884, it was reported that pupils should first 'be educated, and then trained in some industrial pursuit'.¹⁶⁷ The institution was also inspected by poor law guardians, inspectors and also by Schools Inspectors. In 1895, the Senior Chief Inspector of schools, the Rev. T. W. Sharpe, reported that the children's schoolwork was 'suitable and intelligently done', perhaps because of superior teachers employed in the school. Humphries and Gordon also point to teachers of the blind enjoying an 'enhanced status'.¹⁶⁸

In Swansea, the South Wales Blind Institution had been established since 1865 when a group of Swansea ladies formed a committee which evolved into the Society for Teaching and Helping the Adult Blind of Swansea and Neighbourhood.¹⁶⁹ The following year the society was given use of a room in the Assembly Rooms by Swansea Town Council. In 1873, the Society bought numbers 1 and 2 South-Hill Place in Swansea and founded the Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind. More schoolrooms, a music room and gymnasium, knitting machines, looms and carpentry equipment were added in 1897, along with two new accommodation wings in 1899.¹⁷⁰ Included in many of its annual reports were poems, a verse from one of which pinpoints the purpose of the institution. 'Lonely blindness here can meet, kindred woes and converse sweet; torpid once can learn to smile, proudly o'er its useful toil'.¹⁷¹ The hoped for outcome of 'useful toil', which would offer self-respect to the inmate, was coupled with a lessening of loneliness felt by blind people by meeting with others similarly suffering. Carpenter has shown how poetry was used even in medical texts such as

¹⁶³ Iain F.W.K. Davidson, Gary Woodill, Elizabeth Bredberg, 'Images of Disability in 19th Century British Children's Literature', *Disability & Society*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1994), 33-46, 38.

¹⁶⁴ John Oliphant, 'Empowerment and Debilitation in the Educational Experience of the Blind in Nineteenth-Century England and Scotland', *History of Education*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2006), 47-68, 54.

¹⁶⁵ Carpenter, *Health, Medicine and Society*, 133.

¹⁶⁶ *The Cambrian*, 24 November 1865.

¹⁶⁷ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Nineteenth Annual Report, 1884.

¹⁶⁸ As above, Thirtieth Annual Report, 1895; Humphries, Gordon, *Out of Sight*, 84.

¹⁶⁹ *The Cambrian*, 24 November 1865.

¹⁷⁰ As above, WGAS, D/D SIB, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Souvenir booklet, 1865-1935. 1935.

¹⁷¹ SCL, 'Lines written for Institution for the Blind', Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Twenty-second Annual Report, 1887.

the *Lancet* which cited Milton's *Paradise Lost* to portray the 'anguish and despondency' surrounding blindness¹⁷²

Although the selective nature of information published in the annual reports of charitable ventures is problematic, the public dissemination of this material demonstrates that academic education was important both to the management of the institution and to its existing and potential subscribers. By the 1890s the Blind Institution was inviting suitably qualified people to examine the pupils in both intellectual and musical skills. David Salmon, the principal of Swansea Training College examined the 'scholastic attainments' of the pupils in 1895, he reported that their reading was 'marked by fluency, distinct enunciation, and natural expression'. Their spelling was good, as was their 'quick and accurate' grasp of mental arithmetic. Salmon claimed that the children would have 'held their own' against sighted children and he felt all were cheerful and happy.¹⁷³ Also included in the annual reports were 'suggestions' about teaching young blind children basic reading and arithmetic before they came to the Institution, which also indicates that scholarly education was foregrounded by the establishment.¹⁷⁴ Unlike the Cambrian Institution, this examination of pupils' progress does not appear to have been a public event.¹⁷⁵ However, international delegates to the Westminster Conference on Matters Relating to the Blind in 1902 were taken to Norwood College to witness the blind students' music recitals, poetry readings and demonstrations of rowing and figure skating, while children from the Swansea Blind Institution displayed their musical skills in public concerts.¹⁷⁶ As Bergen has demonstrated, these events could attract huge audiences, The Yorkshire Blind Institution attracted over 800 people to its public examination in the 1840s, but, by the late 1860s public examinations were tinged with the aura of the 'freak show'.¹⁷⁷ At another public demonstration in Yorkshire 'the sewing of a nine year old girl was handed round the ladies for examination' show both the gendered nature of these events and the pressure put to bear on the children involved.¹⁷⁸ Some children, however, chose to place their deafness in the spotlight, Richard Williams a child at Liverpool deaf school sent a written review of an art exhibition to the *Liverpool Mercury* which they printed with the comments that it was gratifying that he was able to convey his thoughts 'if in an imperfect way'.¹⁷⁹

At first, many institutions educated their pupils via the Moon system, but during the 1870s Braille became the commonly-used system across most of Europe.¹⁸⁰ The British and Foreign Blind Association insisted that blind people choose what mode of type they preferred, a move which can be considered subversive of the charitable sphere of the nineteenth century. It was felt that as 'most of the promoters of the different systems' were sighted, their preferred type may have looked 'well to the eye', but may have been 'unsuited to the touch' and therefore

¹⁷² *Lancet*, October 1825, cited by Mary Wilson Carpenter, *Health, Medicine and Society in Victorian England* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 128-9.

¹⁷³ Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Twenty-eighth Annual Report, 1893.

¹⁷⁴ As above.

¹⁷⁵ There is no reporting of public examinations in either the annual reports or in the local press as there was for the Cambrian Institution.

¹⁷⁶ Oliphant, 'Empowerment and Debilitation', 63.

¹⁷⁷ Amanda Bergen, 'The Public Examination of Deaf and Blind Children in Yorkshire, 1829-1890', *Northern History*, vol. 41, no. 1 (2004), 149-62, 159, 162; Borsay also connects the public examination to the freak show, 'Deaf Children and Charitable Education in Britain, 76-77. For physically disabled children on show, see Koven, 'Remembering and Dismemberment'.

¹⁷⁸ *The York Herald, and General Advertiser*, November 16, 1839.

¹⁷⁹ *Liverpool Mercury*, Friday, December 23, 1842.

¹⁸⁰ Gordon Ashton Phillips, *The Blind in British Society* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 220.

not the most accessible for use by the blind.¹⁸¹ Although, after a lengthy consultation with blind people a decision was not unanimous, this consultation period contrasts strongly with the 'triumph' of oralism that was subjected upon deaf education. However, there are some similarities to the reasons why oralism 'triumphed' in the late nineteenth century, as systems such as Braille or Moon were resisted by those who wanted to incorporate the blind into sighted society. In 1884, a superintendent of a blind school called Braille a 'heathen system of writing' as it did not resemble 'ordinary print' and sighted teachers would be apparently unable to learn and thus teach it.¹⁸²

One of the major advantages of Braille was that it was easier to produce and reproduce manually.¹⁸³ This was seconded by the Swansea Blind Institution when it embraced Braille over the Moon system in 1884. It was felt that pupils were able to use it for writing as well as reading, and the subsequent correspondence to distant friends and family was thought to be a 'great comfort and solace to them in their affliction'. The Braille alphabet was thereafter displayed in the Institution's annual reports.¹⁸⁴ Music, which was also thought to 'cheer' the blind 'in their affliction', could also be written in Braille.¹⁸⁵ Music was imagined as normal in the context of religious worship or for a respectable gathering of people, often with a fund-raising motive. Musical training was also seen as a means of opening up employment in what was referred to as the 'blind trade'. and as a 'blind trade' was imposed on blind people. However, music could also be problematic. Oliphant points to the violin as a particular site of moral contention, which led to their being banned entirely from the Liverpool Blind School in the eighteenth century as the institution had 'no desire to fill the streets with fiddlers'.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, anyone who had played a musical instrument in the street within the previous two years was excluded from the Swansea Blind Institution. Those categorised as the 'vagrant blind' were likely to be treated as public nuisances.¹⁸⁷ In 1870 Dennis Leary, who was blind, was gaoled for two weeks in Swansea for begging after he had apparently 'refused help'.¹⁸⁸ Within the 'Rules of Admission' of Swansea Blind Institution, benefactors proposing adult candidates were asked not only whether they had 'a good character for veracity, honesty, and propriety of conduct', but also whether they had 'strolled about as a beggar, or played any instrument in the streets'.¹⁸⁹ However, music and singing were apparently popular pastimes in the institution for both children and adults. It was also thought that memorising hymns in particular would 'cheer them in their affliction'.¹⁹⁰ Although these tropes of pity were used extensively as fund raising techniques, they also served to remind the intended audience of the humanity of the person as well as the disability.

The use of music as a vehicle for future employment was also contested. In an 1855 study of musical education for the blind in Europe and America, E. C. Johnson claimed that 'we are

¹⁸¹ Phillips, *The Blind in British Society*, 220.

¹⁸² Carpenter, *Health, Medicine and Society*, 136.

¹⁸³ Phillips, *The Blind in British Society*, 225.

¹⁸⁴ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Nineteenth Annual Report, 1884. Although the Moon system was still used for teaching older outdoor blind people and gifts of books in both types were solicited from well-wishers. See Annual Report 1893, where the institution's 'missionary' out-worker describes instructing 'some of the middle-aged and younger blind' in Moon and Braille types in both Welsh and English.

¹⁸⁵ *The Cambrian*, 21 April 1871.

¹⁸⁶ Oliphant, 'Empowerment and Debilitation', 57.

¹⁸⁷ Phillips, *The Blind in British Society*, 167.

¹⁸⁸ *The Cambrian*, 7 January 1870.

¹⁸⁹ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind Twenty-eighth Annual Report, 1893, and many other years.

¹⁹⁰ *The Cambrian*, 21 April 1871.

behind hand in the musical instruction of the blind in England, when compared with other nations'.¹⁹¹ However, by the end of the nineteenth century there were complaints about 'excessive' musical education in institutions for the blind at the expense of what was perceived as more useful instruction.¹⁹² Nonetheless, in the Swansea Blind Institution, the committee felt that 'all the young blind who evince a taste for vocal and instrumental music should be instructed'.¹⁹³

Although many more boys became basket makers than piano tuners or music teachers,¹⁹⁴ musical training did lead to employment for some pupils from the Swansea Institution. In 1892, David Rees who had been receiving instruction in basket making and chair caning, was described as 'very slow' and thought unlikely to earn his living in either trade.¹⁹⁵ It was thought however, that training at the Norwood College in South London would 'fit him for the post of teacher of the blind', or as 'a minister of the religious body to which he is attached'.¹⁹⁶ The Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind in Upper Norwood, South London had been founded by Francis Campbell, an American, in 1872 and offered instruction to pupils with musical talent.¹⁹⁷ The Gardner Scholarship partially funded 'gifted' blind pupils to train at Norwood in order to earn their living as musicians, piano tuners or teachers of the blind.¹⁹⁸ Several pupils from the Swansea Institution had won scholarships to Norwood, Annie Gape had later obtained a position as a teacher in South Shields and another pupil was teaching in the Swansea Institution.¹⁹⁹

It was stressed repeatedly within annual reports and in correspondence that the Norwood College was successful in their training of useful and responsible future citizens. Although the Gardner Scholarship paid £40 of the £60 annual fees, the outstanding amounts would be either requested from poor law guardians or private philanthropy. In one letter to the Swansea Guardians from Joseph Hall of the Blind Institution, he points explicitly to the long-term financial advantages of sending a pupil to the College: 'I mention this to shew [sic] you the practical result of the thorough training at the above college'.²⁰⁰ Again citing future employment as an incentive, Hall requested that David Rees still be allowed £4 for a year after he had finished at Norwood, as he 'was anxious to become a Minister', and his request was again successful.²⁰¹ Shakespeare claims that disabled people, and especially children, were portrayed as 'objects rather than subjects'. But were they? That the children were presented en masse as objects of pity is undeniable, but their personal happiness, behaviour and comfort were also concerns that were recorded in the sources. although these sources are sparse and a little unhelpful on this question some interpretation can be attempted. The pupils' identities, places of birth and causes of blindness were published in annual reports.

¹⁹¹ E. C. Johnson, *An Inquiry into the Musical Instruction of the Blind in France, Spain and America* (London: John Mitchell, 1855), 41, cited in Oliphant, 'Empowerment and Debilitation', 58.

¹⁹² *Blind Advocate*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1898), 3, cited in Oliphant, 'Empowerment and Debilitation', 58.

¹⁹³ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Twenty-eighth Annual Report, 1893.

¹⁹⁴ Cross Commission, 1889, Appendix 7, 100.

¹⁹⁵ WGAS, U/S 1/23, Guardians' Minutes, 13 June 1892.

¹⁹⁶ As above.

¹⁹⁷ Oliphant, 'Empowerment and Debilitation', 63; for a history of the college, see the Royal National College for the blind website, http://www.rncb.ac.uk/About-28/History_of_The_Royal_National_College_for_the_Blind

¹⁹⁸ Phillips, *The Blind in British Society*, 228-9.

¹⁹⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/31, Guardians' Minutes, 6 July 1899; SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind Thirty-third Annual Report, 1898.

²⁰⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/31, Guardians' Minutes, 6 July 1899.

²⁰¹ WGAS, U/S 1/38, Guardians' Minutes, 24 August 1905; The fees for the Swansea Institution were £18 per year, SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, 1884 and 1894 Annual Reports.

Comments pointing to the good spirits of the children abound in both annual reports and poor law sources and the word 'content' is used often, which may indicate that the children were expected to be resigned to their 'affliction'. Corporal punishment was not allowed within the Cambrian institution, and as Joseph Hall was honorary secretary of both institution it is likely that this was also the case in the Blind Institution. One boy did resist the discipline of the institution yet appeared not to be punished considerably. In 1894, Joseph Hall wrote to the Swansea guardians complaining about the behaviour of 17 year old Benjamin Jones and requesting that he be removed from the institution.²⁰² The subsequent investigation by the relieving officer resulted in a recommendation to admit Jones to the workhouse.²⁰³ However, Swansea Union continued to pay for Benjamin to attend the Blind Institution for many more years. In 1900 when he was 24, he was described as having been deserted by his father and that his mother was a nurse in the hospital. He earned three shillings a week making baskets and mats which was supplemented by four shillings a week from Swansea Union.²⁰⁴ It is possible that Benjamin was given a second chance as the 1893 annual report claimed that Benjamin's solo vocal performance was admired and described as 'very correct and tasteful'.²⁰⁵ However, as the institution only had to pay him three shillings a week in wages and be confident that the poor law would top up Benjamin's earnings, Carpenter's comment that workshops for the blind was 'warehousing them for life' has a ring of truth.²⁰⁶ Similarly, profits from the sale of baskets and mats made in the workshops were often vital to the survival of institutions.²⁰⁷

One of the first blind children to be supported by the Swansea guardians was Moses Rees. He was born around 1873 and was referred to in several sources as a 'foundling' who had been blind from birth. At first the guardians paid two shillings a week for his board in Oliver Street, in the St. Johns area of Swansea.²⁰⁸ However, by the time of the 1881 census he was living with the Heffern or Heffron family in Meusydd Road in Landore. He was described as an 'adopted son' and his name was recorded as Moses Heffron Rees. Although this was not an adoption in any legal sense, it does signify that Moses was perceived as a member of the family.²⁰⁹ He was one of eight children (five boys and three girls) living at home and ranging in ages from 26 down to 6 and his adoptive father was an engine driver in Hafod Copper Works. Moses became a boarder at the Swansea Blind Institution in 1883 and his fees and all necessary clothes, tuition and boarding fees were paid for by the Swansea Union. The daily timetable printed in annual reports suggests to subscribers that the pupils' every waking moment was devoted to beneficial pursuits. They would rise around seven o'clock when the girls would make their own, the boys' beds as well as their own and go to morning prayers before breakfast. Very little time was set aside for 'recreation', just half an hour after the midday meal and some time in the evenings between piano lessons and practice, bathing and knitting for the girls. There were also walks on most afternoons and much of Sunday was devoted to religious observance, either in church or chapel, and Sunday School. The children could visit and spend the afternoon with friends on the first Wednesday of each month. Although it is not mentioned explicitly in the sources, it is likely that relatives of the children

²⁰² WGAS, U/S 1/25, Guardians' Minutes, 10 September 1894.

²⁰³ As above., 24 September 1894.

²⁰⁴ WGAS, U/S 1/32, Guardians' Minutes, 1 March 1900.

²⁰⁵ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Twenty-eighth Annual Report, 1893.

²⁰⁶ Carpenter, *Health, Medicine and Society*, 133.

²⁰⁷ John Oliphant, *The Early Education of the Blind in Britain c.1790-1900: Institutional Experience in England and Scotland* (Lewiston (NY); Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007). 141.

²⁰⁸ WGAS U/S 11/1, List of paupers and abstract of accounts, half year ended 25 September 1873.

²⁰⁹ Census, 1881, Swansea Union paid for Moses to be boarded out with this family and as Chapter Three has demonstrated, some foster parents became very fond of the children.

also visited the institution at certain times as 'subscribers and other visitors' were welcomed between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm Monday to Saturday.²¹⁰

In 1879, *The Cambrian* newspaper reported that around 80 children from the Blind Institution and the Cambrian Institution were taken annually on an outing, where they enjoyed a break from what was described as their 'somewhat monotonous life'.²¹¹ Certainly Moses and other children would have experienced days full of education, religion and predictability which would have been a similar experience to many boarders at schools and institutions in the nineteenth century. Like the inmates of poor law institutions, Moses will have been invited to various entertainments in the area such as concerts by local choirs, musical festivals and the 'Shop Assistants Concert'. Local ladies visited the institution to read to the pupils and he would have spent his vacations, five weeks in summer and two weeks at Christmas with his adoptive family.²¹²

It is possible that Moses was a member of the choir as he must have shown some musical aptitude because the Swansea guardians were asked to increase their contribution for Moses from seven shillings to eleven shillings per week to enable him to complete his musical training at Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind in Norwood to train as a piano tuner.²¹³ Girls were also awarded scholarships to Norwood.²¹⁴ A blind female graduate of Norwood came to teach music and other subjects at the Swansea Blind Institution; she was paid £25 per annum, but the 'teacher of men' was paid considerably more at £65 per annum.²¹⁵ The other training and employment in the institution was also gendered. Men were taught basket and mat making and women knitting, crochet, chair caning and 'light basket work'.²¹⁶ support themselves financially. Consequently, girls were less likely than boys to acquire the means to earn their own livings. The 1889 Royal Commission found that a much larger proportion of blind women relied on charity or relatives than blind men, although this was true of the greater population too.²¹⁷

It is unclear whether Moses Rees did earn his living as a piano tuner. Although both the 1901 and 1911 census gives his occupation as a pianoforte tuner, the annual reports for the Institution record him as being employed there as a basket maker and still living with his 'adopted' family in 1912. At an inspection of the institution by the guardians in 1900, they reported that he was consumptive and was unable to earn much; his pay at that time was three shillings a week and he also received four shillings a week from Swansea Union. This was increased to six shillings in 1907 after he had broken his leg.²¹⁸ The highest average earnings to be gained from basket making was around 15 shillings a week, however, some pupils who

²¹⁰ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Nineteenth Annual Report, 1884.

²¹¹ *The Cambrian*, 5 September 1879.

²¹² SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Twenty-eighth Annual Report, 1893.

²¹³ WGAS, U/S 1/23, Guardians' Minutes, 3, 10 October 1892.

²¹⁴ Oliphant claims that Norwood's policy of co-education stemmed from the American background of the principal; see 'Empowerment and Debilitation', 63.

²¹⁵ Cross Commission, 1889, Appendix 2, 28; SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Sixteenth Annual Report, 1881.

²¹⁶ Cross Commission, 1889, Appendix 11, 208.

²¹⁷ Music and singing were apparently popular pastimes in the institution for children and adults.

Memorising hymns was thought particularly to 'cheer them in their affliction'. However, women were considered essential to the running of the institution, the Rules stated there should not be less than 12 ladies serving on the Committee, SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Twenty-second Annual Report, 1887.

²¹⁸ WGAS, U/S 1/32, Guardians' Minutes, 1 March 1900; U/S 1/41, 17 October 1907.

had left institutions for the blind were unable to make a living as basket makers.²¹⁹ After a desperate start in life when he was abandoned as a baby, Moses Rees was educated with other blind children and also appeared to enjoy a settled home life. He travelled to London and was taught a trade at an internationally renowned college, albeit in an imposed 'blind trade', and he contributed to his own maintenance and also to the survival of the Blind Institution. It is likely that Moses would have been trained to integrate into the sighted world by the Blind Institution. However, it is possible that his family would not have heeded advice to guard him against 'acquiring unsightly habits' which were not imagined as normal in the sighted world because they were apparently 'disagreeable' to those who could see them. It is of course equally likely that Moses disregarded this advice and whether he was one of Oliphant's 'passive and grateful' recipients of charity, or whether he played an active role in his life is uncertain.²²⁰ The institution however, could be satisfied that he had been educated, and trained as a 'willing worker' with a 'spirit of independence', but whether this was the same as Moses' ideas of independence is unclear.²²¹

Education and care of deaf children

Although schools for deaf children in England were established early in the nineteenth century, the first Institution in Wales was opened initially in Aberystwyth in July 1847. The first principal, Charles Rhind, reported the inconvenience of sending pupils to Aberystwyth because of the difficulties of access just two years later.²²² In 1850, the institution moved to Swansea, amidst reports that there was 'no doubt' Swansea was 'the most preferable place' for it, because of Swansea's 'rising importance and the extent of its population'.²²³ The Cambrian Institution's patron was the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII and in the Jubilee year of 1897, Queen Victoria granted the prefix 'Royal' to the Institution. The school was intended 'to afford instruction to deaf and dumb children' with Welsh parents or of children of parents residing in Wales 'of all conditions in life'.²²⁴ In common with most annual reports of the time, all supporters were mentioned in the annual reports. Even benefactors to the tune of one shilling were named, and gifts as modest as rhubarb were also recorded.²²⁵

The first mention made of payments for pauper children to attend the Cambrian Institution was 11 year old Jane Clark in 1861.²²⁶ Swansea Union continued to pay her fees and supply her with the clothes requested by the institution until 1865 when, at the age of 21, she was sent to the British Asylum for Deaf and Dumb Females in Clapton Road, Hackney, for which the guardians continued paying until 1871.²²⁷ The Clapton Road establishment appears to have been the only institution available for deaf women; in an 1884 Christmas appeal in *The Times*, the institution maintained it was 'the only charity in England' which met the needs of 'adult female deaf-mutes'.²²⁸ There are no further records of Swansea Union sending more women

²¹⁹ Cross Commission, 1889, Appendix 2, 28; although an apprenticeship between James Lewis, a blind boy chargeable to Swansea Union, and William Davies, a Swansea basket-maker, was funded by the guardians leading to the conclusion that it was thought a viable future prospect, WGAS, U/S 1/4, Guardians' Minutes, 1 December 1864.

²²⁰ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, Twenty-eighth Annual Report, 1893.

²²¹ As above., Twenty-second Annual Report, 1887.

²²² WGAS, E/Cam 1/1, Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Minute Book 1847-55, 3 July 1849.

²²³ *The Cambrian*, 30 November 1849.

²²⁴ SCL, Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind Annual Report, 1866-7.

²²⁵ See for example, SCL, Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Forty-first Annual Report, 1888, W. Ll. Davies, Mrs J. W Protheroe and dozens of other similar amounts collected around Wales.

²²⁶ WGAS, U/S 1/1, Guardians' Minutes, 21 February 1861.

²²⁷ WGAS, U/S 1/5, Guardians' Minutes, 20 April 1865; U/S 1/9, 16 November 1871.

²²⁸ *The Times*, 25 December 1884. Jane was not recorded as an inmate of the institution ten years later on census night 1881.

to this institution although deaf children who were Roman Catholics were sent outside Wales. Mary Leahy, aged 11, Catherine Daley, aged 10 and Charles Burke, aged 8 were all sent to the St. John's Roman Catholic Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Boston Spa, Yorkshire.²²⁹ As with children in the cottage homes, an ambivalent relationship is apparent towards practitioners of the Catholic faith is evident when Canon Richards applied to the guardians to pay the travelling expenses of the above children and their escort, his request was refused several times.²³⁰ However, it was to the Cambrian Institution that most of Wales' deaf children were sent. Although the institution accepted 'parlour pupils', the fees of the majority of its children were paid for by poor law unions across Wales. In 1889, 30 out of 48 pupils were fully or partially paid for by boards of guardians.²³¹ Following the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act of 1893, school authorities were compelled to educate blind and deaf children, and fees to institutions such as the Cambrian were paid by school boards, local authorities or boards of guardians.²³² For deaf children, the imparting of religious instruction was a primary concern. As for blind children, appeals for the education of deaf children were loaded with pity and included underlying threats of the 'painful spectacle of wretchedness' in an uneducated deaf child.²³³ With the appropriate training, however, a deaf child could become 'a moral and responsible being'.²³⁴ By implication, the uneducated deaf remained bereft of morality because of their ignorance of the word of God.

The education of deaf children was contested fiercely during the nineteenth century and, by the twentieth century, 'oralism', or the teaching of deaf people to speak and lip-read rather than use sign language, had gained ground over signing. In 1880, the International Congress on the Education of the Deaf had gathered in Milan and voted overwhelmingly for 'the incontestable superiority of speech over signs'. As discussed above, the 'battle of the types' in blind education had included inviting the views of blind people, but deaf people were barely represented at the Milan Congress.²³⁵ In addition, the balance of participants at the Congress was skewed in favour of religious representatives who preferred speech over sign because, as the president claimed, 'speech alone, divine itself, is the right way to speak of divine matters'.²³⁶ Although the Royal Commission of 1889 reported that 'articulated language and the power of lip-reading accurately' was felt to be the 'greatest alleviation' to the societal isolation of the deaf, in Britain, the manual system was not to be discarded as it had been in France. It was acknowledged that schools teaching both the manual and combined methods had done 'much good work' and would continue to receive equal recognition and monetary grants would still be awarded for the 'amount of knowledge of language obtained, whether written or spoken'.²³⁷ However, many perceived that signing was lower on the 'evolutionary

²²⁹ WGAS, U/S 1/22, Guardians' Minutes, 8 June 1891. Mary Leahy died at Boston Spa in December 1892 from erysipelas, U/S 1/24, 12 December 1892. For more information about this institution, see Joselyn Taylor, *Boston Spa: the Story of St. John's Catholic School for Deaf Children, 1875-1975* (Addlestone: British Deaf History Society Publications, 2007).

²³⁰ WGAS, U/S 1/22, Guardians' Minutes, 22 June, 13 July 1891.

²³¹ TNA, MH 12 164/65, 10 July 1889, Report of Thomas Bircham.

²³² If fees were paid by poor law unions, this did not lead to the child's families being considered 'paupers'.

²³³ *The Cambrian*, 11 September 1863.

²³⁴ Music and singing were apparently popular pastimes in the institution for both children and adults. It was also thought that memorising hymns in particular would 'cheer them in their affliction'.²³⁴ Although these tropes of pity were used extensively as fund raising techniques, they also served to remind the intended audience of the humanity of the person as well as the disability, 16 June 1854.

²³⁵ Mantin, 'The Question of Oralism', 59-71, 59, in Borsay, Dale, eds., *Disabled Children*.

²³⁶ Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 121, although Ladd claims that 'numerous Christians supported Deaf people's attempts to use their own language', 120-1.

²³⁷ Cross Commission, 1889, lxxiii.

scale' than spoken languages and it was also imagined as similar to the noises made by the uncivilised savage.²³⁸ This was also combined with the rise of the eugenics movement, social Darwinism and what Branson and Miller call the 'clinical gaze' alighting upon deaf people.²³⁹ It was not imagined normal to use gestures rather than to speak and this was reflected in children's literature of the time where it was muteness, rather than deafness, which was portrayed as the greatest travail endured by a deaf person.²⁴⁰

At the time of the Royal Commission, Benjamin Payne was the principal of the Cambrian Institution. He had been in the post since 1876 and would continue there until 1909. Payne's stance on oralism at times appears rather contradictory. He told Thomas Bircham, the poor law inspector, that the 'grand purpose' of his teaching was to 'give deaf mute children a moral and intellectual training which will fit them to enter upon the duties of life, having regard especially to the necessity of imparting to them a knowledge of verbal language, sufficient as a means of intercourse with other people'. However, he also stated that the institution did not teach speaking to the 'congenital deaf', or those born deaf, because of its 'inadaptability as a general system, its comparative failure when employed in conjunction with the other system which is indispensable to some if not all of our pupils'.²⁴¹ To a parent, however, he remarked, 'we do not teach our pupils to sign', and signs form no part of their education' [...] 'I therefore hope that all at home will learn to use the finger alphabet with facility and avoid signs'.²⁴² To the Secretary of the Royal Commission in 1889 he reported that 55 pupils were instructed via the 'sign and manual system', while 33 taught via the 'combined system'.²⁴³ As Mantin claims, Payne's stance on oralism was, 'open but questioning, and frequently contradictory'.²⁴⁴ Unlike the vast majority of deaf school principals, Payne was himself deaf as a result of a childhood illness. It is likely his own deafness motivated him to reject the pure oral system. As Ladd claims, oralism could not succeed while there were 'Deaf adults present in the school to undermine it' or children who used it to communicate it to each other.²⁴⁵

Payne's (hearing) son, Arnold, grew up in the Cambrian Institution and, prior to attending a local school at the age of seven, his father's deaf pupils were his everyday companions.²⁴⁶ He subsequently spent a year at Gallaudet College in Washington DC, was ordained a minister, and later became assistant chaplain to the Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb in

²³⁸ Jan Branson and Don Miller, *Damned for their Difference: The Cultural Construction of Deaf People as Disabled, A Sociological History* (Washington D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2002), 150.

²³⁹ Branson and Miller, *Damned for their Difference*, 130; See also Ayca Alemdaroglu, 'Eugenics, modernity and nationalism', in Turner, Stagg, eds., *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity*, 126-41. The annual reports of the institution included information on whether a pupil's parents were related and whether they had relatives who were deaf. From the 1880s the reports also contained a section entitled 'Hints to Parents and Friends of Deafmutes' which stated 'warn him in time against forming any attachment to a born-deaf person of the opposite sex, and do not be persuaded that a union with "one like himself" is the best for him'.

²⁴⁰ Davidson, Woodill, Bredberg, 'Images of Disability in 19th Century British Children's Literature', 38.

²⁴¹ WGAS, E/Cam 5/1, Cambrian Institution Letter book, from Benjamin Payne to Thomas Bircham, 25 January 1878.

²⁴² As above., Benjamin Payne to John Davies 5 April 1878.

²⁴³ WGAS, E/Cam 5/2, Cambrian Institution Letter book, Benjamin Payne to Secretary Royal Commission, 15 April 1889.

²⁴⁴ Mantin, 'Educational Experiences of Deaf Children in Wales', 157.

²⁴⁵ Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 122.

²⁴⁶ Swansea University Salmon Collection, pamphlet 53, A.H. Payne 'The Mental Development of the Orally and Manually Taught Deaf', A paper read at the congress of the British Deaf and Dumb Association in London, July 1903.

London, regularly speaking passionately against oralism.²⁴⁷ In 1919, he wrote the semi-autobiographical novel *King Silence* analysis of which can offer the historian another layer of source material from which to gain insight into the motivations of the Paynes and, most importantly, the feelings of deaf children who were admitted to the institution.²⁴⁸ Payne's work is also a rather polemical argument for the use of sign language by deaf people. Arnold Payne's formative years at the institution would have been filled with discussions concerning his father's, and probably mother's, growing unease with pure oralism. Sayers claims that Arnold Payne's descriptions of the fictional 'Sicard College' in Washington DC which featured in *King Silence* was 'clearly recognizable as Gallaudet [College], down to the smallest detail'.²⁴⁹ Although this is not proof that Payne's fictional rendering of the Cambrian Institution and its pupils is as accurate, it is likely that much of the 'original historical world' was portrayed, albeit with selectivity, as Atwood claimed 'individual memory, history, and the novel are all selective'.²⁵⁰ Benjamin Payne is clearly recognisable in the book as 'Mr Gordon', the principal who tells the mother of a prospective deaf pupil that he had 'no objections whatever to teaching the deaf speech', but wanted to teach them English, not thinking just because a deaf person can 'articulate', he understood what he said.²⁵¹

Public examinations were also popular in deaf schools and drew large audiences to watch children perform and hopefully reflect the teaching and how subscribers' money was being spent. Some observers commented favourably that children being publicly examined showed 'none of the stolidity or want of expression' they felt deaf children often demonstrated, and others pointed out how pretty they felt the 'orphan girls' were. An unfortunate example of condescension and ignorance was often shown towards the deaf. It was reported that, 'it was impossible to prevent laughter' at some of the children's gestures in the Liverpool deaf school.²⁵² While the younger children's answers were praised; 'Tom, 'a most interesting little boy' was asked to give a description of a dog and he answered 'the dog is strong, the dog can bark, the dog eats meat'. Similarly this shows a patronising attitude to both children and deafness.

What was life like the children in the Cambrian Institution? In January 1893, William Isaac of 47 Major Street in Manselton applied to the Swansea Guardians for a grant to enable his nine year old daughter Beatrice to go to the Cambrian Institution.²⁵³ Isaac was a copper smelter and his wife Eleanor was recorded in the 1891 census as having no occupation, at that time the couple had six daughters and one son.²⁵⁴ The family would grow over the years and, by 1911, a further four daughters had been added. Unlike many families who lost children when

²⁴⁷ Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) was, and still is, the leading higher education establishment for deaf students and for training hearing teachers of the deaf, <http://www.gallaudet.edu/x20518.xml>.

²⁴⁸ Arnold H. Payne, *King Silence, A Story*, London: Jarrold, 1919.

²⁴⁹ Edna, E. Sayers, 'B. H. and A.H. Payne. Early Champions of Sign language in the United Kingdom', *Deaf History Review*, vol. 5 (2007), 22-30, 23. Sayers has recently retired from the Department of English of Gallaudet University after thirty years, so is in a position to know it very well.

²⁵⁰ Margaret Atwood, 'In Search of Alias Grace: On Writing Canadian Historical Fiction', *American Historical Review*, vol. 103, no. 5 (1998), 1503-16, 1516.

²⁵¹ Payne, *King Silence*, viii; A review of the book by the American magazine, *The Silent Worker* in 1920 recognises the Payne family (mother, father and son) as 'heart and soul the friends of the deaf', although the reviewer was not convinced by Arnold Payne's portrayal of deaf people in America, Alice T. Terry, 'A Friendly Criticism of Arnold Payne's Book, *King Silence*', *The Silent Worker*, vol. 32. no.7 (1920), 183.

²⁵² *The Hull Packet*, June 24, 1842.

²⁵³ WGAS, U/S 1/24, Guardians' Minutes, 23 January 1893.

²⁵⁴ Census 1891. Beatrice was the fifth daughter.

young, none of the Isaac children had died.²⁵⁵ Once a pupil at the Cambrian Institution, Beatrice's day would have been strictly regulated. Rising early, both boys and girls had housework to complete followed by three hours of lessons in the morning and two in the afternoon. 'Recreation', apart from 45 minutes before supper, was timetabled with 'housework', time for which would be determined by how quickly the chores were finished. Wednesday afternoon was a holiday and much of Sunday was devoted to religious activities.²⁵⁶ Unlike the older boys, Beatrice would not have eaten meat every day and while she was under 14 years old she would not have been offered bread and cheese as a late snack. Breakfast was porridge or bread and milk. The mid-day meal was the most substantial, which, for young girls like Beatrice, included meat three times a week, fish on Fridays, and broth or rice the other days, accompanied by bread, potatoes and vegetables. Supper was bread with jam, treacle or dripping.²⁵⁷ The supper had not changed since 1868 when the institution was inspected for certification by the poor law authorities, but subsequent changes did include more vegetables and fish.²⁵⁸ Quantities of food were not displayed in annual reports but were included in the poor law dietary information. It was recorded that five ounces of meat, eight ounces of potatoes and two ounces of bread were the amounts given for dinner and three ounces of oats, half a pint of milk and sugar in 'sufficiency' made up the porridge breakfasts.²⁵⁹ These amounts are very similar to those of workhouse and cottage homes children although the porridge was more generous (and probably more palatable). Peter Jackson claims that 'workhouse conditions' such as these prevailed in many institutions for deaf children in the nineteenth century.²⁶⁰ But, as claimed above, children in institutions did not have to compete with siblings for food and although Beatrice's family was not poor, feeding six children well would have involved clever housekeeping.²⁶¹

Although principal Benjamin Payne was against 'specifically industrial' training, female pupils were taught needlework and were involved in sewing their own dresses. Dressmaking would have been imagined as a normal skill for many working-class girls, whether as training for employment or as a suitable accomplishment for future wives and mothers. If aptitude was shown girls were also taught 'fancy work', knitting and weaving.²⁶² Some girls were apprenticed as dressmakers, with the Swansea guardians paying the necessary premium. In 1887, Helena Harris was apprenticed to a local dressmaker at the expense of Swansea Poor Law Union.²⁶³ This was an outcome also considered more favourable by the Cambrian Institution. A letter to the guardians urged them not to allow young women to 'remain at home to do housework', once they left the institution. Instead, it was felt more 'desirable' to apprentice the girls.²⁶⁴ This fits with Mantin's argument that the institution tried to deter parents of deaf children from keeping them at home as unpaid domestic to assistants.²⁶⁵ However, many of the Cambrian's domestic staff were ex-pupils. In 1901, the institution's seven domestic servants were deaf people from Wales, some were pupils who had remained

²⁵⁵ Census 1911.

²⁵⁶ SCL, Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Forty-first Annual Report, 1888.

²⁵⁷ SCL, Cambrian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Forty-first Annual Report, 1888.

²⁵⁸ TNA, MH12 16446, Cambrian Institution Dietary Chart, 1 May 1868.

²⁵⁹ As above.

²⁶⁰ Peter, W. Jackson, *Britain's Deaf Heritage* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 1990), 129.

²⁶¹ For the struggles to feed a family, see White, Williams, *Struggle or Starve*; Ross, *Love and Toil*, chapter two.

²⁶² WGAS, E/Cam 5/1, Cambrian Institution Letter book, from Benjamin Payne to Thomas Bircham, 25 January 1878; U/S 1/29, Guardians' Minutes, 15 September 1898.

²⁶³ WGAS, U/S 1/20, Guardians' Minutes, 25 August 1887.

²⁶⁴ WGAS, U/S 1/29, Guardians' Minutes, 1 September 1898.

²⁶⁵ Mantin, 'Educational Experiences of Deaf Children in Wales', 255.

in the institution and others were servants as well as pupils²⁶⁶ Beatrice Isaac showed skill at dressmaking and, along with Elizabeth Phillips, stayed on an extra year. A Swansea guardian, Adelaide Perkins, reported that she was very pleased with the girls' appearance and described them as looking 'bright happy and intelligent'. The girls' needlework was inspected and praised and thought to be a means of earning their own livelihood. Mrs Perkins was also much struck with the manner in which the children were instructed and brought up.²⁶⁷ It is possible that Beatrice and Elizabeth were friends since they were of similar ages and both lived in Swansea and were good at needlework. Many of the annual reports of the Cambrian Institution contained compositions and letters supposed to be written by the pupils. Although these sources need to be read with caution and are unlikely to be unmediated, they can help us build a picture of the children's lives. A composition in the 1894 annual report by a 12 year old girl talks about them going to the park and how Annie and Beatrice [probably Beatrice Isaac] went to town and took pairs of boots to a Mr Wilson, probably to be repaired. This suggests that pupils experienced life outside the institution and paints a picture of two girls on an errand, but also enjoying window shopping and companionship as well. Children were sent on errands daily, to the bank or to pick up newspapers as training to participate in the hearing world. But, like Beatrice and Annie, these excursions were also for pleasure, the principal told the father of John Morgan that he 'gets his pence to buy what he likes on a Saturday', which again is indicative of freedom and enjoyment.

A longer letter from Beatrice was published in the 1900 annual report when she was 16. Some historians have called such letters 'obviously false' and that they were intended solely to impress supporters.²⁶⁸ Although Mantin uses some of these letters he claims that they were 'either heavily manipulated or completely fabricated'.²⁶⁹ The letters were mediated on many levels and children who wrote these letters would also have been tutored in the etiquette of letter writing which included adding issues of note and current affairs as well as personal items. One letter demonstrates this formula for letter writing when it described All Hallows Eve, a football match where Swansea beat Aberavon 1-0 and how the fixture against Cardiff the following Saturday was likely to be 'a great match'. This was coupled with news about the death of the Queen's cousin, the Duchess of Teck.²⁷⁰

A close reading of these letters and compositions can reveal personality traits and the 'unwitting testimony' of the letter writer as well as illuminating the children's day-to-day lives and hopes.²⁷¹ In 1898, a letter from Margaret Jones to her friend, Nellie Lewis was published in an annual report; Margaret was another girl whose stay at the Cambrian institution was funded by Swansea Union. Her letter is particularly full of 'unwitting testimony' which although published by the Institution for an entirely different motive it demonstrates how mediated testimony can also be read and interpreted as indicators of agency and independence. The letter is presented as 'an example of amusing ideas and expressions and of the difficulty even those who lose hearing at four-and-a-half years of age have in mastering language'.²⁷² Margaret's 'amusing ideas' probably refer to her enthusiastic but rather rambling telling of an earlier time when she had been 'astonished' as she had glimpsed her mother filling the Christmas stockings instead of a 'Christmas Father'. One child's letter, although

²⁶⁶ As above, 213, Mantin bases his argument on his database of staff members which was constructed using census returns from 1851 to 1911 and cross-referenced with minute books, letters and the census.

²⁶⁷ WGAS, U/S 1/32, Guardians' Minutes, 1 March 1900.

²⁶⁸ D.G. Pritchard, *Education and the Handicapped, 1760-1960* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1963), 43.

²⁶⁹ Mantin, 'Educational Experiences of Deaf Children in Wales', 267.

²⁷⁰ SCL, Cambrian Institution Fifty-third Annual Report, 1900.

²⁷¹ Marwick, *The Nature of History*, 216-20.

²⁷² Cambrian Institution Fifty-third Annual Report, 1900.

corrected and annotated by a teacher, demonstrates a child could side-step the mediated nature of letters sent home. The letter dated 1 January 1907 is from Winifred, and she ends the letter with dozens of kisses.²⁷³ Unlike the text of the letter, these kisses were a spontaneous act of agency which demonstrates Winifred's affection, childlikeness and spirit. Historians who only look for the mediated nature of such letters are in danger of missing what can be gleaned from a close, and emotion-full reading of such sources.²⁷⁴

The long letter from Beatrice Isaac was also chatty and tells us much about her family and her future plans. She was writing to her elder sister Mary Ann and brother-in-law Tom who live in London and appear to have Beatrice's younger sister, Nellie, staying with them. Another younger sister Katie, who was about two years old, was reported to be home from hospital. Beatrice also wrote that her mother and elder sister Jane came to visit her recently and that Jane's baby had a bad cold. She also hinted that she would love to come and visit her sister and her husband in London. She was looking forward to Christmas and a prize-giving with prizes for being 'well behaved, for being best sewer, for being good conduct, and for being the best in school'. She said that the girls go for a walk every day except Monday and Saturday and wrote that she wanted to become 'a tailoress or dressmaker'. Beatrice did eventually become a dressmaker after she left the Cambrian Institution in December 1900, although she was recorded in the 1901 census as a domestic servant, the 1911 census shows both Beatrice and her sister were self-employed dressmakers living at home with the family.²⁷⁵

Careers for deaf girls were as limited as those for hearing girls. An entry in the 1889 Royal Commission shows that while nine girls from the Cambrian institution became dressmakers, four became assistant housekeepers, three general servants, one laundress, one milliner and one paper bag maker. The boys enjoyed much more varied employment prospects. There were eight tailors, five shoemakers, five operatives in the tin works, two carpenters, a solicitor's clerk, stoker and inn-keeper among other varied occupations.²⁷⁶ It does appear however, that both boys and girls were nudged towards an occupation that involved sewing of various types which can be construed as being similar to the 'blind trades'.

An intimation of what Ladd calls 'Deaf helplessness' was used to sustain philanthropic involvement in the Cambrian Institution, and deaf children were often perceived as 'delicate' and, as a poor law inspector reported, 'inferior due to their defective organization in strength of constitution and of average health to ordinary children'.²⁷⁷ Such 'helplessness' could be transformed into usefulness and independence with the appropriate education and institutions were keen to stage publicly this rehabilitation to encourage donations and subscriptions. Borsay compares the inspections and public demonstrations of institutions for the deaf such as the Cambrian to the 'voyeurism' of those who came to stare at the inmates in Bethlem (Bedlam) Asylum.²⁷⁸ Children could only be trained into submission so far, and resistance to authority is not confined to our time. In 1898, the *Westminster Budget* reported that 'disagreements' were natural 'in healthy children', referring to the graffiti or 'wall sketches' at a school and relating to how Fanny Ives will get 'a smack on the jaw for hitting Nellie Western'.²⁷⁹ The children who were educated in both of these Swansea institutions

²⁷³ WGAS, E/Cam 5/2, Cambrian Institution Letter book, 1 January 1907.

²⁷⁴ See Appendix 9.

²⁷⁵ SCL, Cambrian Institution Fifty-third Annual Report, 1899-1900.

²⁷⁶ Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c., of the United Kingdom. 1889, appendix 2, 29.

²⁷⁷ Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 119; TNA, MH 12/16446, 1 May 1868.

²⁷⁸ Borsay, 'Deaf Children and Charitable Education in Britain', 74.

²⁷⁹ *Westminster Budget*, 12 August 1898, cited in Pearson, *Hooligans*, 90, see also a 1890s music hall rhyme about boys 'always on the riot, cannot keep them quiet', 75.

were social actors in their own lives. In common with all the other children in *Pauper Children*, we cannot know to what extent their actions, or indeed their reactions to their 'training', were their own. Silence in the archives on this matter could mean that children could be active agents provided they demonstrated public compliance. Similarly, what was presented in public annual reports was not always replicated in reality. Although warnings about not marrying 'one like himself' were printed in annual reports of the Cambrian Institution, when Arnold Payne officiated at a wedding of old pupils David Griffiths and Edith Evans, his father provided sign language translations.²⁸⁰

As his correspondence demonstrates, Benjamin Payne did not always maintain control over his pupils, nor indeed his pupil's parents. As Lane claims, although organisations competed 'to "own" the children and define their needs'²⁸¹, it does not follow that they succeeded all of the time. If power 'exists only when it is put into action', the active agency of children can demonstrate their own power in imperceptible and diffused ways as the letters above demonstrate.²⁸² Similarly the composition below, although published in an annual report for its sympathy-gathering attributes, is an example of a subtle communicating of the author's own self.

I am not blind
I am not tired
I am not thirsty
I like milk
I have long hair
Can you sew
Can you swim
Are you lame
I am not hungry
I like apples
I love my mother.²⁸³

Conclusions

The fusing of state and private philanthropy generated by the Swansea Blind School and the Cambrian Institute for the Deaf demonstrates the economic precariousness of many disabled

²⁸⁰ *Western Mail*, 6, a subsequent article entitled 'Deafmutes Honeymoon, contained an interview with the bridegroom, *Western Mail*, 18 April 1904.

²⁸¹ Harlan Lane, 'Constructions of Deafness' in Lennard J. Davis, ed., *The Disability Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1997), 153-186, 155; Similarly, the 'triumph' of oralism held no sway with Benjamin Payne as a report in the 1889 Royal commission demonstrates, 'The manual method is followed mainly by the headmaster Mr B. H. Payne being a deaf mute, and oral teaching is given merely as an accomplishment, the authorities having no faith in its value as a means of communication', Cross Commission. 1889.

²⁸² Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', in Hubert Dreyfus, Paul Rabinow, eds., *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208-26, 219.

²⁸³ SCL, Cambrian Institution Fiftieth Annual Report, 1897.

children but also the mutually beneficial dialogue between local and central poor relief, and private philanthropy. The majority of the institutions' inmates were supported by funding via the poor laws but there was little or no controversy about sending pauper children to these institutions which cost considerably more than any other method of support such as the workhouse or outdoor relief. That these institutions and the children whose causes they served were perceived as unproblematically deserving is shown by the extent of philanthropic support from royalty, the nobility and their vast local and nationwide networks of supporters. While the children whose childhoods were spent in these institutions were perceived as blameless unfortunates, 'the grand object' of their care was motivated by both pity and pragmatism. Both institutions aimed to prepare the children for 'useful occupations in later life' and thus avoid future welfare dependency. Their marketing promoted the notion that without the appropriate education and training they offered, deaf children would be unable to follow the word of God and blind children would be abandoned to idleness because of their 'affliction'. That they were popular, unproblematic causes was shown by the extent of philanthropic support by royalty, the nobility and their vast local and nationwide networks of supporters. This chapter has established that the majority of the institutions' inmates were supported by funding via the poor laws. The fusing of state and private philanthropy generated by these institutions demonstrates both the economic precariousness of many disabled children and also the mutually beneficial dialogue between local and central poor relief, and private philanthropy. Both guardians and the poor law central authorities expected the blind and deaf children whom they supported to enter employment that was perceived as appropriate to their abilities and to wider cultural values, and these 'valuable institutions' exploited to good effect what Holmes terms the 'melodramatization of disability'. They both conformed to perceived rules of educating blind and deaf children and imposed upon their charges what was imagined as normal for their disabilities, gender and class. Nevertheless, the children were offered wider opportunities for education, vocational training and companionship and evidence from their own letters and compositions as well as from the annual reports suggests they were, for the most part, they appeared to be happy. In many respects, they in many ways these were indeed 'valuable institutions' which generally enabled, rather than disabled, the children in their care.

Endnote

In 1838, the workhouse boys were waiting wearily, without any discernible anticipation, for their dinner. The huge vat of gruel was wheeled into the dining room and a queue of lads formed with their bowls in their hands. Slowly, so slowly the gruel was beginning to match the freezing temperature of the room, all bowls were filled with two spoonfuls of the noxious broth. The boys ate quickly and in silence. A scraping sound suddenly disturbed the quiet as one little boy pushed his stool back and approached the cook and said...

‘Please Sir, I want some more’.

Dickens’ hero Oliver Twist stood apart from his companions, raised his head above the parapet and asked for more food. Was he unusual in his resistance to poor law authority? Many of the children whose lives we have glimpsed in *Pauper Children* resisted the circumstances in which they found themselves. Is resistance futile? No. Standing up for yourselves and others always was and still is an act of agency. Whether to ask for more food, run away, lead (or follow) others in large and small acts of resistance, write about your experiences, succeed in later life, and of course throw off the shackles of an unhappy childhood.

Many of the children in *Pauper Children* did some of these things and many did not. Many of their lives are unknowable, and we can but hope to hear their stories via the scraps of information they leave us. Why does it matter so much that we know them? These children are still among us in the shoes (or not) of the thousands of poor and unaccompanied children around the world. We are responsible for them, and if the histories of a handful of children can help policy-makers to understand better the plight of children, then we must strive to share their hopes and experiences as widely as possible.

In the introduction I said there would be no overarching arguments to satisfy academics, only the diverse lives of pauper children and their ways in the world. Similarly, I am not going to present a long conclusion ratifying my findings and drawing all the threads together; the threads are too complex and rich for that. Some children were lucky in finding a home managed by benevolent guardians, or a loving foster parent, a good teacher, a forward thinking principal of an institution for disabled children, or a group of charitable benefactors. Similarly where, when and to whom they born had a huge impact on their care and future prospects. So after six chapters did it all rest on luck? But aren't all historical events a case of luck? That's another book entirely...

Timeline of the 'new' poor laws and key dates for Victorian legislation and social policies

With thanks to the Victorian Web

1790 Justices of the peace empowered to inspect and report on workhouses

1792 Acts dealt with abuses in the removal of vagrants and forbade the whipping of females; and another act introduced punishment of overseers for neglect of duty.

1793 Registration of Friendly Societies. Many of the Societies provided medical attention to their subscribing members.

1795 Poor Law Act authorised overseers, with the approval of the vestry, to give "out-relief" to the poor (i.e. in their own homes) without imposing the 'workhouse test.

Speenhamland System. The local justices and clergymen meeting in May at the Pelican Inn, Speen, near Newbury, to consider the conditions arising from poor harvests and the rise in the price of grain, decided to introduce a subsistence level pegged to the price of bread and to use the poor rate to supplement the wages of labourers to that level. Although not the first to take that decision, they were widely copied and this use of outdoor relief became known as the Speenhamland System. Although such relief was better than nothing, it resulted in lowering wages, increasing the poor rate, and removing the distinction between pauperism and independence.

1808 County Asylums Act for "the better Care and Maintenance of Lunatics being Paupers or Criminals" enabled counties to construct asylums for the insane.

1815 Corn Law prohibited the importation of corn into Britain until the home price reached 80 shillings per quarter. The cost of a four pound loaf of bread in London averaged over one shilling between 1816 and 1818. See 1846.

1815 Poor Law Act extended the power to give outdoor relief.

1819 Poor Relief Act, Sturges Bourne Act, attempted to ensure that property owners had an influential say in the conduct of poor relief; gave parishes optional power to hire paid officers (assistant overseers), and to establish a formal procedure whereby they might elect committees to supervise the work

1824 Vagrants Act amended the definitions of idle and disorderly persons, rogues and vagabonds; set out powers of searching persons and premises; and prescribed maximum penalties and terms of imprisonment.

1834 Poor Law Amendment Act followed the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission on Poor Law. The Act limited outdoor relief to the aged and infirm who were "wholly unable to work"; encouraged the building of workhouses, and introduced a spartan regime and the "Workhouse Test"; and considered any relief given to be a loan. The Act required wards to be set aside for the impoverished sick and empowered justices of the peace to give an order for medical relief to any poor person with "sudden and dangerous illness".

The Act set up the Poor Law Commission to consist of three commissioners to supervise the implementation of the act, the first secretary of the Commission was Edwin Chadwick (1800-90). Boards of Guardians were encouraged to combine into Unions to build the workhouses. Disraeli proclaimed that the new law was "announcing to the world that in England poverty was a crime".

1838 Report by Dr Neil Arnott (1788-1874) and Dr James Kay and another by Dr Southwood Smith exposed the extent of preventable disease and the dreadful living conditions under which people existed in Manchester and London respectively.

1840 Vaccination Act made free vaccination available as a charge on the poor rates. Vaccination was, thereby, the first free health service provided through legislation on a national scale and available to all.

1841 Vaccination Act declared that vaccination should not be considered as “parochial relief” and that no person shall by reason of vaccination be deprived of any right or privilege or be subject to any disqualification whatsoever.

Association of Medical Officers of Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane formed. In 1865 the name was changed to the Medico-Psychological Association (in 1925 became Royal) and in 1971 it became the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

1842 Lunatic Asylums Act gave power to the Metropolitan Commissioners (see 1828) to inspect, twice yearly, all asylums and madhouses in the country whatever their legal status.

1844 Poor Law Amendment Act introduced changes in the election of guardians and empowered mothers of illegitimate children to apply to justices in petty sessions for a maintenance order against the father.

Reports of the Select Committee on Poor Law Medical Relief (chairman, Lord Ashley)

outlined a comprehensive picture of current practice; opposed the requirement for a relieving officer to determine need and eligibility for medical attention; and favoured direct access to a medical officer. No change followed the report.

1845 Lunatics (Care and Treatment) Act and Regulation of Asylums Act

improved the procedure for certification; and set up a Board of Commissioners (chairman, Lord Ashley) to inspect and supervise asylums and other places where mentally ill people were cared for.

Poor Law Scotland (Amendment) Act retained the parish as the unit of administration with parochial boards consisting of elected representatives and, ex officio, the chief magistrate as the manager. Each board had to appoint an inspector of the poor who had direct control of relief and could only be dismissed by the central Board of Supervision, also setup by the act. Relief was limited to the aged and infirm poor. Parochial boards were permitted to subscribe to any public infirmary, lying-in-hospital, asylum or dispensary and were required “to provide for medicines, medical attendance, nutritious diet, cordials, and clothing for such Poor, in such manner and to such extent as may seem equitable and expedient; and it shall be lawful for the parochial board to make provision for the education of poor children who are themselves or whose parents are objects of parochial relief”.

1845 Potato blight in Ireland caused widespread famine; recurred until 1849 resulting in high mortality and emigration. Scotland was also affected with similar results.

1846 A Select Committee of Parliament was set up to inquire into the over-harsh and inhumane treatment of paupers in the Andover Workhouse.

Convention of Poor Law Medical Officers founded.

1847 Poor Law Administration Act revised and consolidated previous legislation setting out rules and principles for the administration of the poor laws. The intention was to ensure more humane practice than that of many boards of guardians, but the new powers were used sparingly and the enforcement of the principles gradually fell into desuetude.

1847 Corn Laws, which imposed duties on imported corn, repealed

1853 Vaccination Act introduced compulsory vaccination for all infants within four months of birth, but contained no powers of enforcement. Responsibility was with poor law guardians.

Charitable Trusts Act appointed Charity Commissioners and introduced regulations to supervise private philanthropy.

1855 Poor Law Medical Reform Association formed with Richard Griffin (1806-1869, an outstanding leader in the campaign to reform the Poor Law medical services) as the first chairman.

1858 Workhouse Visiting Society formed with William Cowper (1811-88, later Lord Mount-Temple) as president and Louisa Twining as secretary.

1860 Pressure mounted to reform Poor Law Medical Relief and a Medical Relief Bill was presented to Parliament, but rejected. The Poor Law Board issued "Consolidated Orders Respecting Medical Relief".

Select Committee on Lunatics received substantial evidence of wrongful detention and abuse of patients, but its recommendations were not acted on.

1861 Publication for the Workhouse Visiting Society of "A Plea for the Destitute Incurable" by Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904). The plea was that the chronic sick should be separated from other inmates of the workhouses and be given extra comforts. There were about 80,000 people in the category of "destitute incurable" in the institutions. A petition to the House of Commons included signatures from leading physicians and surgeons of London hospitals who agreed that such people should not be kept for more than a brief period in any hospital established for the cure of the sick.

Nurses were appointed for the first time to the staff of a Poor Law hospital (Liverpool) and Agnes Jones (1832-68) was appointed the first superintendent.

1864 Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act authorised casual wards at workhouses to be used for vagrants in the London area.

A Select Committee reported that there were not sufficient grounds for materially interfering with the existing system of medical relief for the poor, despite the evidence presented to it of abuse and deprivation.

1865 Union Chargeability Act substituted a twelve months residence qualification for help from the local rates, in place of the rule that any pauper, no matter how long his or her residence in the parish, must be sent back to his or her parish of birth. The act permitted Guardians to examine the books and papers of the overseers and transferred the raising of the poor rate from the parish to the union.

1866 Labouring Classes Dwelling Act enabled the Public Works Loan Commission to make loans towards the erection of dwellings for the labouring classes.

Simon's Annual Report for **1865** to the Privy Council contained the results of a survey, by HJ Hunter (1823-1908), of dwellings of the labouring classes in towns. A survey of rural dwellings had been

reported the year before. The general conclusion was that existing powers were completely inadequate to control overcrowding or prevent the continued use of dwellings unfit for human habitation.

1867 Poor Law Amendment Act made the Poor Law Board permanent; amended administrative details of previous acts; and applied the principles of the Metropolitan Poor Act to the rest of the country, thus enabling boards of guardians to establish infirmaries for the treatment of the sick poor separate from the workhouses.

1869 The Charity Organisation Society founded as a "general family casework agency". The Society distinguished between "charity" for the deserving poor, which it took as its own sphere of activity, and "relief" for the rest, which it left to the poor law guardians. The Society was opposed to indiscriminate alms giving

1870 The Poor Law Board raised in its annual report the possibility of establishing a system of free medical advice for all wage-earners; in the words of the report, to consider "how far it may be advisable, in a sanitary or social point of view, to extend gratuitous medical relief beyond the actual pauper classes generally".

1871 Local Government Board Act set up, following the recommendation of the Royal Commission, the Local Government Board with a minister as president. Public health, poor law administration and the supervision of local government were brought together. Simon was appointed chief medical officer to the Board, retired in 1876. The Board continued until it was replaced by the Ministry of Health in 1919.

1889 Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act made ill-treatment, neglect of or causing suffering to children punishable; and prohibited begging by boys under 14 and girls under 16 years of age.

Poor Law Act permitted the admission of non-paupers to the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and the instruction of medical students in the Board's fever hospitals.

1895 The Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, (chairman, Lord Aberdare) did not recommend any major changes; and suggested that outdoor relief should be adequate, but that conditions in workhouses should be improved. The Commissioners considered that "pauperism is becoming a constantly diminishing evil, ultimately to disappear before the continuous progress of thrift and social well-being".

1897 In this year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, an editorial in "Public Health" stated "of all the achievements of the Victorian Era ... history will find none worthier of record than the efforts made to ameliorate the lives of the poor, to curb the ravages of disease, and to secure for all pure air, food, and water, all of which are connotated by the term 'sanitation'". (Public Health, IX, 10, January, 1897, page 286).

1828 *Repeal of the [Test and Corporation Acts](#)*. This removed the political disabilities imposed on non-Anglican Protestants by legislation passed in 1673 and 1661 respectively. Following the repeal of these Acts, [Dissenters](#) could sit in parliament and participate in local government. The Act changed the [Anglican](#) constitution into a Protestant constitution.

1829 *[Catholic Emancipation Act](#)*. This controversial legislation allowed [Catholics](#) to sit as MPs for the first time since the Elizabethan Act of Settlement (1558/9). The Act was passed by [Wellington's](#) government despite huge opposition; the constitution now became Christian but non-denominational.

[Metropolitan Police Act](#). This was the culmination of the work of [Robert Peel](#) to establish a civilian, unarmed police force. It was the foundation of policing in Great Britain and was based on his work in Ireland.

1831 (Hobhouse) *Factory Act*. This was the third Factory Act, its predecessor being the 1801 Health and Morals of Apprentices Act and the 1819 Factory Act. Hobhouse's Act forbade night work for persons under the age of 21.

1832 [Reform Act](#). It took almost two years for this Act to reach the Statute Books and brought Britain to the verge of revolution. The Reform Act was the first systematic change to the constitution; it extended the franchise to include those who did not own landed property and was the first of a series of constitutional changes.

1833 *Factory Act*. Passed by the [Whig](#) government, this Act was an attempt to regulate the working hours of women and children. It left much to be desired but was a step towards government regulation of working conditions.

[Abolition of Slavery Act](#). This was the culmination of a lengthy campaign that had begun during the 18th Century. The legislation was finalised by the Jamaica Act of 1839.

first *Education* grant. Although not a piece of legislation, the grant of £20,000 for the provision of schools was the first time that the government had involved itself in education in any way. The first Education Act did not reach the Statute Books until 1870.

1834 [Poor Law Amendment Act](#). Following the [1832 Reform Act](#), the PLAA was intended to reduce the poor rates; it was not intended to help the poor who suffered as a result of the legislation. The PLAA replaced the existing poor laws and was responsible for the establishment of [workhouses](#) throughout the country. The poor were treated as criminals and people starved rather than apply for poor relief because that meant that they would become inmates of the dreaded "poor law bastilles".

1835 The [Municipal Corporations Act](#) was a local government version of the 1832 Reform Act. It made existing municipal corporations more answerable to the electors and allowed other towns to apply for incorporation.

1836 *Civil Marriages Act*: after the passing of this law, non-Anglicans were able to marry either in their own Church or in Registry Offices. The [Church of England](#) lost its monopoly over marriage services

Tithe Commutation Act: this provided for the payment of tithes to the Church of England in cash, depending on the price of wheat.

reduction of *Stamp Duty*. The Government's decision to reduce the stamp duty was primarily due to the success of the "war of the unstamped", and in 1836 the duty was reduced from 4d to 1d, in order to take the unstamped newspapers off the streets while allowing legal newspapers wider circulation.

1837 *Registration Act* (of Births, Marriages and Deaths). Although the 1833 Factory Act restricted working hours for young people, there was no means of telling the age of a person since no official records existed. Anglican churches had to record baptisms, marriages, and burials but there were few records for non-Anglicans. This legislation made it compulsory for all births, marriages and deaths to be registered at a Registry Office; certificates were issued for each event and a second copy was retained at Somerset House in London. The administration of this Act was within the remit of the Poor Law Commission.

1838 *Irish Poor Law Amendment Act*. After a Commission reported that the 'importation' of the English

1834 Poor Law Amendment Act was inappropriate for Ireland, the government brought in its own "experts" and the 1834 PLAA was passed for Ireland. It was implemented just before the outbreak of the [potato blight](#) and proved to be inadequate to meet the crisis.

1839 The *Jamaica Act* finalised the 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act, setting the remaining slaves and apprentices free in the British colonies.

The [Rural Constabularies Act](#) extended the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act and required counties to establish their own police forces. The Act was passed in the face of [Chartist](#) activity.

1840 [Penny Post](#). This was the idea of Sir [Rowland Hill](#). Prior to this, recipients paid for any letters that were sent to them. Hereafter, the sender attached an adhesive, pre-paid label to any items that were posted. The most famous 'stamp' of this period is the [Penny Black](#).

1842 *Railway Act*. This first piece of railway legislation was mainly a safety Act to ensure that railways ran safe services. New lines had to be inspected by the Board of Trade, which could demand traffic returns and inquire into accidents.

The [Mines Act](#) prohibited the employment of all females and boys under 10 years old from working underground in mines.

1844 The [Railway Act](#) ("Parliamentary Train Act") followed [Gladstone's](#) Committee of inquiry into railway policy. By this law, the government assumed the absolute right to take control of all railways in times of national emergency and to fix fares and freight charges. It also said that railway companies had to provide a minimum service of one train each day each way, travelling at not less than 12 miles per hour and stopping at every passenger station, charging no more than 1d. per mile for third class passengers.

[Bank Charter Act](#). This Act tied the issue of bank notes to the Bank's gold reserves and required it to keep the accounts of the note issue separate from those of its banking operations. The Bank of England ([image](#)) had to produce a weekly summary of both accounts.

This *Factory Act* legislated only for textile factories and was the successor to the 1833 Factory Act. It said that women and young persons (13-18) were to work no more than 12 hours per day; children under 13 were to work no more than 6½ hours per day and no child under 8 was to be employed.

The *Companies Act* aimed to prevent 'reckless speculation' and to prevent the establishment of dubious companies by making it compulsory for all companies to be registered officially. The companies also had to issue prospectuses and publish accounts regularly.

1846 [Repeal of the Corn Laws](#). The [Corn Laws](#) had been passed in 1815 and had raised the price of wheat artificially, leading to an economic depression. A concerted campaign for the repeal of the Corn Laws had been going on since 1838. Consequent upon the repeal, the career of [Sir Robert Peel](#) was terminated.

Gauges Act. This was another piece of railway legislation that prohibited the extension of the [7' gauge](#), except on the Great Western Railway and said that a third line of 4' 8½" had to be laid where 7' track met 4' 8½" line.

1847 *Factory Act*. Yet another piece of compromise legislation by the [Whig](#) government, this so-called '10-Hour Act' said that women and children between the ages of 13 and 18 could work a maximum of ten hours a day or 58 hours a week. The precise times of work

were not set down and the 'relay' or shift system survived. Working hours for men were left untouched.

Poor Law Act. This Act followed on from the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and replaced the Poor Law Commission with a Poor Law Board headed by a government Minister. Poor relief became more responsible to parliamentary control.

1848 *Public Health Act.* This was the first piece of legislation that attempted to deal with issues of public health. However, it was permissive rather than compulsory in towns other than [Municipal Corporations](#). The Act established a central Board of Health and allowed Local Boards of Health to be set up if more than 10% of the population petitioned for one. No central inspection was required for authorities that had Boards of Health outside the legislation. Towns where the death rate exceeded 23 per 1,000 were obliged to set up a Board of Health.

1849 *Repeal of the Navigation Acts.* These laws had been introduced in the Seventeenth Century and said that goods being imported into Britain and her colonies had to be carried either in British ships or the ships of the country where the goods had origin. The laws had been modified during the 1820s but finally they were repealed.

1850 *Factory Act.* The law dealt only with textile factories. Women and young persons (13-18 years old) were to work in factories only between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. or 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. but working hours were raised from 10 to 10½ per day.

Coal Mines Inspection Act. The 1842 Mines Act had not dealt with safety in the mines; this legislation attempted to rectify that omission. More inspectors were provided to enforce the 1842 Act and were to produce reports of conditions and safety standards in the mines. The coal mine owners opposed all attempts to regulate conditions in the mines and many of these men sat in the House of Lords; one of the most influential was the Marquis of Londonderry who owned many of the coal mines in the north east of England, particularly around Durham.

1851 *Ecclesiastical Titles Act.* In 1850 Pope Pius IX restored the [Catholic hierarchy](#) in Britain, giving the Catholic Church a hierarchy like that of all Catholic countries. The Ecclesiastical Titles Act was an anti-Catholic measure intended to prevent the newly created Catholic dioceses from taking existing Anglican diocesan names. Ironically, many of the Anglican dioceses had continued to use established Catholic names after the Reformation. The law was repealed by Gladstone in 1871.

1855 *Abolition of stamp duties on newspapers.* In June the final remaining penny of the British newspaper duty was removed and in September the *Daily Telegraph* appeared at the price of 1d. For the British working man, the newspaper became what reformers in the 1830s had predicted: 'the readiest, the commonest, the chief vehicle of knowledge'.

1856 *County and Borough Police Act.* The Metropolitan Police was established in 1829; in 1839 the Rural Constabularies Act was passed. This third piece of legislation obliged the counties to organise police forces, subject to government control and devised a system of inspection already in use in factories, workhouses and education. Grants to the police became dependent on the efficiency of the force: it was estimated that half of them were not efficient. The Act shifted the emphasis from the prevention of crime to its detection.

1857 *Matrimonial Causes Act*. By this Act, divorce courts were established. Women were given only limited access to divorce which could be obtained only on a specific cause other than adultery. Right of access to children after divorce was extended and women were able to repossess their property after a legal separation or after a protection order given consequent upon the husband's desertion.

1858 *Abolition of the property qualification for MPs*: this was one of the demands made by the [Chartists](#). From this date, men did not have to own property in order to stand as candidates in parliamentary elections.

Jewish Disabilities Act implemented. In **1847**, Baron Lionel de Rothschild was elected as an MP for London but objected to taking the oath which included the phrase "on the true faith of a Christian". He asked to be sworn in on the Old Testament. It took eleven attempts in the House of Lords to have the oath changed. Subsequently, [Jews](#) were able to take their seats in both Houses.

1859 *Molestation of Workmen Act*. This Act allowed peaceful picketing in the event of strike action taking place. The Act said that 'no person, by reason merely of his endeavouring peaceably and in a reasonable manner, and without threat or intimidation, direct or indirect, to persuade others to cease or abstain from work, in order to obtain the rate of wages or the altered hours of labour agreed to by him and others, should be deemed to have been guilty of "molestation" or "obstruction".'

1860 *Food and Drugs Act*. This was the first attempt at legislation to prevent the adulteration of food. It was common to find harmful additives in staple foods: white lead in flour, ground glass in sugar, red lead in coffee for example. The new law made the inclusion of additives a criminal offence. However, it was not very effective and had to be amended in The *Mines Regulation and Inspection Act* increased the number of mines inspectors and prohibited boys below the age of 12 from working underground.

1861 *Repeal of paper duties*. Gladstone helped the publishing industry by abolishing the excise duty on paper. This made producing newspapers cheaper still; it revived rural paper works and encouraged the growth of London newspapers and the provincial press.

1866 *Sanitary Act*. It was recognised that the 1848 Act had failed to produce the desired results: this was due mainly to that Act being permissive rather than compulsory. The 1866 Act compelled local authorities to improve local conditions and remove nuisances (health hazards). They became responsible also for the provision of sewers, water and street cleaning. The Act enforced the connection of all houses to a new main sewer; it set definite limits for the use of cellars as living rooms, and established the definition of 'overcrowding'. Every town was to appoint Sanitary Inspectors and the Home Secretary was empowered to take proceedings for the removal of nuisances where local authorities failed to act.

1867 the second [Reform Act](#). This extended the franchise to most urban working men.

Master and Servant Act. This Act amended an existing piece of legislation; strikers could now be prosecuted only for breach of contract. The Trade Unions were still dissatisfied, however, because it was possible for criminal proceedings to take place on the grounds of 'aggravated causes'.

1869 *Disestablishment and Disendowment of the [Irish Church](#)*. This Act came into effect on 1 January 1871. All ecclesiastical property belonging to the Church of Ireland, except churches in use, was vested in the Commissioners. Compensation was set at £16 million: half of the capital of the confiscated property and surplus funds were to be

used for the relief of suffering. The Act also said that no Irish bishops were to sit in the House of Lords. Nonconformist ministers were to be given a grant from the *Regium Donum* (gift of the monarch) The Church of Ireland was to have a General Synod that was elected triennially by the dioceses.

1870 *Irish Land Act*. This law was passed by Gladstone's government and was intended to protect tenants against unfair eviction. Landlords were required to pay up to £250 to tenants who had been evicted unfairly and tenants were assisted in the purchase of their holdings by being able to borrow up to 2/3 of the cost from the government.

Married Women's Property Act. This piece of legislation allowed women to keep £200 of their own earnings.

(Forster's) Education Act. This Act was intended only to 'plug the gaps' in the educational provision that existed. The two religious organisations that ran schools were given grants and the Act provided for the establishment of so-called 'Board Schools'. Education was neither free nor compulsory under this legislation.

[Cardwell's army reforms](#) begin. Cardwell was the Secretary of State for War; his reforms continued for over ten years.

1871 *University Test Act*. Until the passing of this Act, all academics and students at [Oxford](#) and [Cambridge](#) Universities had to be practising members of the Anglican Church. By this legislation, the privileges of the Anglican Church were removed and the universities were open to all with suitable abilities regardless of religious faith.

Civil Service reforms. Posts in the Civil Service were dependent upon privilege and connection with the 'right' people until this legislation. Thereafter, positions were open to all who could pass the examinations. The Foreign Office was excluded from the legislation, however, and continued to be the domain of privilege and connection.

Trade Union Act recognised unions as legal bodies with the right to own property and funds. Unions were allowed to protect these at law and they were also allowed to conduct strikes.

Criminal Law Amendment Act. This took away the power of strike action: although TUs could conduct strikes under the Trade Union Act, this second piece of legislation forbade the use of picketing of any description) even peaceful picketing). Consequently, it would be almost impossible for a strike to be conducted.

Abolition of the [purchase of Commissions](#). This was one of Cardwell's Army Reforms by which officers in the British Army were to be appointed by merit and ability rather than being able to buy rank. The legislation met great opposition.

1872 *Licensing Act*. Gladstone believed that drink was the curse of the working man and wanted to introduce sobriety as a character-reform. He also believed that a sober, hard-working man would be able to save money and therefore have savings for his 'retirement'. This Act

- gave magistrates the power to issue licenses to public houses; where it was thought that there were too many of these, magistrates were able to close down some of them
- public houses now had to close in towns at midnight and at 11 p.m. in the countryside - so that agricultural labourers could walk home and arrive before midnight
- the adulteration of beer was made illegal: it was common for salt to be added to it, to make the consumers thirsty and so drink more.

1872 *Ballot Act*: this was one of the things that the [Chartists](#) had demanded. The Act introduced the secret ballot to all elections, making them less corrupt and less subject to bribery and corruption. The legislation was opposed by landlords and employers who could no longer control the votes of their tenants and workers.

Coal Mines Regulating Act. This insisted on the introduction of safety methods such as fan ventilators, stronger timber supports, wire ropes, improved winding gear and better safety lamps.

Public Health Act. This divided England and Wales into Health Authority districts, each of which had to have its own Medical Officer of Health and accompanying staff. The duties of the Health Authorities were not specified and most Health Boards were unwilling to spend the required money on radical reforms.

1873 *Judicature Act*. This Act rationalised the legal system in Britain by united seven different courts into one High Court of Justice.

1874 *Licensing Act*. This was an amendment to Gladstone's Act and provided for longer opening hours.

The *Factory Act* reduced working hours to 10 per day; it also said that no child could be employed until the age of 10 and no young person could work full time until the age of 14.

1875 *Artisans' Dwelling Act*: local authorities were given the power to buy and demolish slum houses and replace them with modern, healthy housing. Because of severe opposition, the powers were permissive rather than compulsory

Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act. This again legalised peaceful picketing and allowed unions to carry out as a group whatever individuals could do in law. Unions could no longer be charged with conspiracy for taking such action.

Public Health Act: This legislation was the work of Richard A Cross. The Act set down in detail what local authorities had to do in terms of public health:

- ensure that there was an adequate water supply, drainage and sewage disposal
- nuisances were to be removed
- offensive trades were to be regulated
- contaminated food was to be found, confiscated and destroyed
- cases of infectious diseases were to be reported to the local Medical Officer of Health who then had to take appropriate action
- further regulations dealt with matters concerning: markets; street lighting; burials

Employers and Workmen Act: this put workmen and their employers on the same legal footing in cases of breach of contract: breach of contract was a civil offence. Prior to this legislation, if a workman broke his contract it was deemed to be a criminal offence, whereas if an employer did so it was only a civil offence.

1876 (Sandon's) *Education Act*. School Attendance Committees were established to encourage as many children as possible to take advantage of educational opportunities and parents were made responsible for ensuring that their children received basic instruction. The Committees *could* help to pay the school fees if parents were too poor to do so themselves - but this was not compulsory.

[Merchant Shipping Act](#): this was the work of Samuel Plimsoll and was aimed at preventing ship

owners sending unseaworthy or overloaded ships to sea, at the expense of the sailors' lives. The Act required a series of 'lines' to be painted on the ship to show the maximum loading point. It was not until 1890 that Board of Trade officials applied the regulations that Plimsoll had intended.

1878 *Factory and Workshops Act*. All workshops and factories employing more than 50 people were now to be inspected regularly by government inspectors rather than by local authorities (as previously).

1880 *Employers' Liability Act* applied to all manual workers except seamen and domestic servants; it gave to injured employees or their dependents the same rights to recover damages from their employers that non-employees always enjoyed

1881 *Irish Land Act*. This was another piece of legislation passed by Gladstone and it gave to Ireland what Irish tenants had been requesting for many years: the so-called "3 Fs" - fair rents, fixity of tenure and free sale of the tenancy. The Act also provided for the establishment of Land Courts which would decide on what was a 'fair rent'. Unfortunately, the Land League did everything it could to prevent the Act from working and the evictions and violence in Ireland continued.

(Mundella's) *Education Act*. This made attendance at elementary school compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 and 10. Parents had to pay 'school pence' - about [3d.](#) per child per week. Often, poor parents could not afford this sum of money.

1882 The *Married Women's Property Act* allowed all married women to continue as the separate owners and administrators of their property after marriage.

1884 *Third Reform Act*. This extended the franchise to most adult males.

1885 *Redistribution Act*. This Act went hand in hand with the Reform Act: all boroughs with fewer than 15,000 inhabitants lost their MP; those with fewer than 50,000 MPs lost one MP. There were now 142 seats available for redistribution and these were given to densely populated areas. Constituencies were reorganised so that there were 647 single member constituencies of the 670 in existence.

1888 *County Councils Act*. This legislation established County Councils. The old local government boards (about 27,000 of them) were replaced by 67 elected County Councils which had extensive and compulsory powers to deal with matters such as road maintenance, the building of bridges, the establishment of a police force and the administrative duties that had previously been within the remit of JPs. Some sixty towns with populations over 60,000 became County Boroughs with the same powers as County Councils. Under this legislation, unmarried women were allowed to vote for councillors although they were not allowed to become councillors themselves.

1891 The *Fee Grant Act* effectively made elementary education free of charge

1894 *Local Government Act* (often referred to as the Parish Councils Act) . This Act divided the counties into Urban District Councils and Rural District Councils, each with its own elected council. Rural District Councils were divided into civil Parish Councils which had to be elected if the population exceeded 300. Generally, the civil parishes had the same boundaries as the ecclesiastical ([Church of England](#)) parishes. Women were now allowed to stand as candidates and sit as councillors on these councils.

1897 *Workmen's Compensation Act*. This law said that an employer should compensate a

workman who was injured, and the dependants of a workman who was killed at work, irrespective of any negligence on the part of the employer or his other employees. The Act was restricted to a limited number of employments, the so-called "dangerous trades" that included the building trade.

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